

Interviewee: Carmen Salinas

Interview: October 7th, 2008

**University of Houston
Oral History of Houston Project
*History of East Texas***

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Place: University of Houston Oral History Offices

Interviewer: Ernesto Valdés

Transcriber: Michelle Kokes

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Abstract:

Carmen Salinas, a native of San Antonio, recounts her family history in the United States, Mexico, and Texas. She has both Spanish and Native American ancestry, both of which are well-documented. Salinas discusses her family history: occupations of her various relatives, their marriages and relationships with one another, where they are buried, both in Mexico and Texas. One of the major themes Salinas focuses on is the various kinds of discrimination faced by Mexican-Americans and Tejanos when she was growing up, as well as into the present. Salinas and Valdes also discuss her research process, the difficulties she has accessing various documents due to racism or reluctance on the part of potential interviewees.

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UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON
ORAL HISTORY OF HOUSTON PROJECT

Carmen Salinas
History of East Texas

Interviewed by: Ernesto Valdés
Date: October 7, 2008
Transcribed by: Michelle Kokes
Location: University of Houston Oral History Offices

EV: This is Ernesto Valdés interviewing Carmen Salinas. We are at the Heyne Hall, Suite 110, Oral History Department at the University of Houston. Today's date is October the 7th, 2008. Carmen, let me have your full name please?

CS: Carmen Salinas.

EV: Do you have any other name, your mother's name or any middle name?

CS: Fuentes, Carmen Fuentes Salinas.

EV: Fuentes? Okay and where were you born?

CS: Where? In San Antonio.

EV: Can you share your birthday with us?

CS: June 9, 1954.

EV: What part of San Antonio were you born, what barrio were you born, where were you?

CS: I believe I was born in Robert B. Green Hospital. My mother, my parents were living at the time on Salinas Street.

EV: On Salinas Street?

CS: Yeah. I don't know what neighborhood that was.

EV: Did you have any brothers and sisters?

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CS: I have four sisters and one brother.

EV: How long did you live in San Antonio?

CS: 70... up to '73.

EV: How old were you you moved? [So you were only like two or three when you moved?]

CS: I was like 18 when we moved from San Antonio to Houston.

EV: Moved to where from San Antonio?

CS: From San Antonio we moved to Houston.

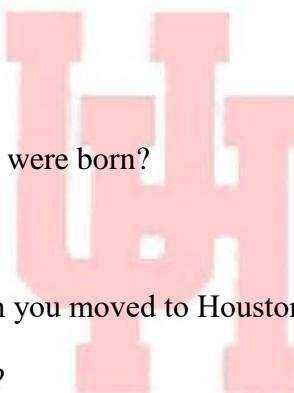
EV: Okay.

CS: That was in 1973.

EV: What day did you say you were born?

CS: '54.

EV: Oh '54. Alright. So when you moved to Houston I guess as a teenager. Did you go to high school in San Antonio?



CS: In San Antonio.

EV: Where.

CS: San Antonio High School.

EV: So you lived in that neighborhood somewhere?

CS: No we lived off of Gen. McMullen closer to Kelley Air Force Base. We were just one block to Kelley Air Force Base.

EV: Okay, what kind of work did your father do?

CS: He was in the produce, in the farmer's market until the farmer's market was a real farmer's market in San Antonio.

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EV: Right over down by the hospital where Santa Rosa Hospital is? [Santa Rita]

CS: Now it's kind of...

EV: Tourist trap.

CS: Yeah, where they sell gifts and stuff. It used to be where they actually sold produce like the one here in Houston on Airline.

EV: I saw that, by the way. It got blown away by Hurricane Ike. So when you were living down there did your father raise his own crops or did he buy it from the guys in the valley?

CS: Actually we used to go pick it up, pick it in the fields and he used to pick his own.

EV: Did you go with him to help, did the whole family go?

CS: Well when we were... well, we would do it on the weekends. Because he had this thing about we had to go to school. So on the weekends he would go out there to these farmers in _____ (4.1) he knew everybody in the area. They would, let us go up there on the weekends and we would help them and we would bring it back to San Antonio produce.

EV: Did he have to pay those people?

CS: Yeah. But it was cheap back in those days. I mean everything was cheap back in those days. I mean we would get a whole truck for probably \$20 for the whole truck of whatever was in season.

EV: Where did you, where do the farmers live that you went to, do you know?

CS: They live like oh I can't remember the area. Some of them were like in between Eagle Pass and San Antonio and I just can't remember the name of the two small towns. But it between became Eagle Pass and San Antonio. There used to be a lot of farmers

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back in those days where they actually grew real crops. You know we go there now and it's all land. They actually used to have cattle, everything, tomatoes, everything.

EV: Did you go down there... you went every weekend right but did he go down during the week?

CS: He did. He did go during the help and he would hire different people to go with him.

EV: God that's kind of a long haul for the weekdays.

CS: Yeah.

EV: I mean Eagle Pass is what 150 miles away from San Antonio?

CS: Yeah it was in between I just can't remember the name of the towns.

EV: Okay. Then you went to school there and did you graduate from High School there?

CS: San Antonio.

EV: Did you go to college?

CS: No.

EV: How did you wind up in East Texas?

CS: Well my mom is from East Texas. My mom is from Nacogdoches and so, you know, that is the only place that we've ever known is San Antonio and Nacogdoches. If we traveled anywhere it was to visit my grandparents in Nacogdoches. When we moved to Houston it was from Houston to Nacogdoches and I know no other place other than the back roads. I can tell you all the back roads in Nacogdoches and that part of East Texas. We always, you know, my grandparents they lived there. So you know when they died

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we just didn't go as much as we used to because we used to go every weekend. They lived off the old Post Road.

EV: What were their names?

CS: My grandmother was Catalina Melendez and she was married to Lorenzo Corsina.

That is what the marriage license said Mrs. Corsina because she was a widow.

EV: Oh really?

CS: She was a widow. She had a little boy when she married my grandfather. He died, Corsina died when he fell off a horse and he hit his head on a rock I guess, or something. Then my grandfather he was in Nacogdoches at the time and they got married. He was a widow as well but he didn't have any children. He was a widower from Mexico. He was a Valdes and they got married and they had three kids and that's how my mom comes in the picture.

EV: Where was he from in Mexico?

CS: _____ (7.8) my grandfather. [Something negra. Piedres?]

EV: Okay and he married a Valdes?

CS: He was married to a Valdes but I don't know too much about it before my grandfather, I mean before my uncle passed away, he was the one that told me. I never knew that he had been married once before but he is the one that told me that he was married to a Valdes, a lady by the name of Valdes and she died and he came over here to the United States and that's where he met my grandmother.

EV: Was that a V-A-L-D-E-S or D-E-Z?

CS: S.

EV: An "S"?

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CS: Yeah.

EV: Like me?

CS: Yes. Valdes. But I don't know much about her other than when my grandparents, they separated, there was no divorce, there was a separation. So when that happened he took the kids and he went back to Mexico.

EV: Really?

CS: So that's how my mom ended up raised in Mexico by her aunts and you know we would, my... I believe that she had a little brother and they had took him away and he died when he was something like 10 years old. He was the oldest one. They went up to my mom first from Mexico [REDACTED] (9.2) and then her father passed away in Mexico. So they were raised by an aunt because they first married a Valdes he... what would have been her stepfather I guess, he loved her so much because he wanted children from his daughter and his daughter never had any children. So when my mom went over there he was the one who took care of her.

EV: That was in [REDACTED]?

CS: In [REDACTED] (9.8).

EV: Alright so then when...did you settle down there and live in Nacogdoches?

CS: No not me. No we just visit. Because we you know... when I started doing the research, my mom's research I found out that just about everybody was related to her in one way or another. So the whole community... I mean I kept going back and visiting and that's how I ended up with a lot of the documents. They would just give them to me because nobody was doing research. So I was over there and you know they would just give them to me. That is how I came across a lot of these originals.

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EV: Did you ever hear of Emma Tenayuca? Did you ever hear about her? She was a labor leader in San Antonio. It was way before your time but I was wondering if you ever heard of her? Because she was a... she has such a strange last name. It was an Indian name that she brought back over. Do you know what your ethnic mix was, I mean from East Texas did you ever find out?

CS: I was a [REDACTED] (11.0) I don't know how to pronounce it. When we went to the conference we had...we had [REDACTED] and we went there. Chief Rufus he is the one that did the presentation there and he actually told me that if you want to see [REDACTED].

EV: Fantastic!

CS: He would have something to do with it.

EV: What's his name?

CS: Chief Rufus.

EV: Chief?

CS: Chief Rufus and I can give you his phone number, his email. Because he came to town. He had some business here in Houston and he and his wife came into town and they invited me out to lunch so, they have a place here and one in Louisiana.

EV: Is it [REDACTED] (11.9)?

CS: [REDACTED] yeah. He has a [REDACTED] over there.

EV: Does he really? Do you speak Spanish in your home?

CS: Yes. [REDACTED]

EV: (laughter!). [REDACTED]. [quero dice?]

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CS: That's right, but I speak it. I've been told all my life that I speak Spanish very funny. It was like, "I could have sworn I was speaking proper Spanish until I was told I was speaking funny Spanish!"

EV: Well when I went from El Paso to San Antonio, because I went to school in San Antonio and then when I got out of the Army I lived there, I got married there and all of that. But they did speak a little bit different Spanish then in El Paso. It wasn't that big of a difference but... if you went to... they all speak different Spanish.

CS: The ones in East Texas speak it very, very different.

EV: New Mexico is... have you ever been to New Mexico?

CS: No.

EV: Aye nia, you've got to go to New Mexico my gosh.

CS: I'd like to. That's one place I want to go to.

EV: You need to really go. Because my first wife was an Indian from Taos, north of Santa Fe. It's hard to distinguish between the Mexican that is still a Mexican and I mean an Indian from here and an Indian from here [redacted] you know. So what is it that set you off and made you want to start studying your family?

CS: My mom really because she grew up in Mexico and every time I would ask her, you know, we would pass by a cemetery in Nacogdoches. [redacted] family buried and every time somebody would die we would be at the funeral and the cemetery I would see the different, you know all the names are different people and I would ask her, "Who's this" and "Who's that" and she would tell me that she didn't know. Then one day I realized she didn't know. Here I always thought she was trying to hide something but then I found out she really didn't know. So I started doing a lot of research at the

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research at the courthouse. I mean a lot of my information was through the courthouse. Because people can tell you so and so and you get another cousin that comes along and tells you, "No that's not true." And then they start arguing to go back and forth. So I just decided to go straight to, take pictures of the cemetery and to the courthouse and then that's how I started inputting what I had together. Everybody, the older ones are dying and the younger generation, they just don't care.

EV: They don't care now, they will later on.

CS: That's when it will be too late.

EV: Did she get to see any of your work that you had?

CS: Oh no, Mom's still alive.

EV: Oh she's still alive, where is she?

CS: She lives right here next door to me. Every time I go she always comes running, wants to know what I found and...you know she knows what I am doing.

EV: How old is she now?

CS: 81.

EV: Oh that's good. Then when you begin to find all this stuff was it, did you hear any stories about your family? What were some of the major stories you began to hear... or rumors the true ones, it doesn't even matter which ones even the _____ (15.7).

CS: Well everybody knows East Texas is very racist, even to today.

EV: Right.

CS: When my grandfather was working in Nacogdoches, when he started to get on the bus, they wouldn't let him get on the bus. Because of course he was Mexican and they didn't want him on the bus. My uncle tells us about that story all the time. _____

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(16.5) my Uncle and he would say, "You know I got on that bus..." of course my uncle looked very American so he could pass for a white person. He got on the bus and he pulled a gun out.

EV: Oh really?

CS: He told the bus driver the next time he wants to get on, you let him on. He lived on the outskirts of Nacogdoches. They never lived in Nacogdoches in town because they were never allowed to go into town.

EV: They couldn't even go into town?

CS: They weren't allowed to go.

EV: When did that change?

CS: Maybe in the '50's.

EV: Until the '50's they couldn't go into town?

CS: Well they were there in the '20's or '30's they weren't allowed to go into town.

EV: Okay, I'm sorry.

CS: You're fine but it's the truth. I mean they were not allowed to go into town.

Where we were at, at the conference from the Old _____ (17.6) Road I would say it was maybe 20 miles where they lived. It might be more but I'm just saying because that is what my cousin was telling me, you know, when they were little him and his cousin lived together and they had 25 cents in their hands and they wanted to go see the movies. They wanted to go into town. When they got there some guy told them, "Hey you little Mexican kids get out of here." He was like, "I've got 25 cents and I'm going to see this movie." He said, "Well, you go see that movie and you go over there and get out of

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here.” He is still alive. Probably a lot of these people that went through all of that, a lot of them are still here, some are here in Houston.

EV: Don’t you get kind of teed off when they call this the “oldest town in Texas...” but because of all the Spanish settlements they are taking all the glory , yet they don’t let you in for another 100 years or something.

CS: Well yeah. They are the ones that suffered more then we [do] now. We go into town and similarly...

EV: I understand but Nacogdoches claims it is the first town in Texas, it became the first town in Texas because of the Spanish settlement and Mexican settlements and then they say Mexicans can’t come into town. I have a question I was going to ask you about your family... oh, when did your mother’s family settle in Nacogdoches?

CS: They were there back in 1700’s. She already _____ (19.4) but I found there in 1773.

EV: 1773. Did they come in from Mexico or from New Orleans?

CS: No as far as I know they came in through... what’s the name of that place? Florida. They came down Florida and though Louisiana and then came down to Nacogdoches.

EV: So did they come from Spain or from Mexico to Florida?

CS: They came from Spain to Florida and somehow they ended up in Louisiana and then they came and worked there way down... they came down with Antonio Villarreal, it was part of a _____ (20.) because he is the first, he does the first _____. He is the Governor of Nacogdoches.

EV: What’s his name? Oh Ivan.

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CS: And he does the first entrance. Then the first [REDACTED] and then when the first [REDACTED]. (20.3)

EV: What was her last name?

CS: Procella.

EV: Procella?

CS: Yes.

EV: Is that Spanish? How do you spell it?

CS: P-R-O-C-E-L-L-A, it's on the birth certificate it states he is Indian/Spanish.

EV: Oh really, hm.

CS: It is the first [REDACTED] (20.6) that I find there. And they are all buried there in the Procella Cemetery in Nacogdoches. All my family. My grandmother, my great grandmother, my great grandfather.

EV: That's the name of the cemetery?

CS: Procella Cemetery [REDACTED] in fact you would have passed it on the way back to Houston. You have this little bitty street in which I rode, you can't miss it you know the whole family is buried there. My research was easy to do because they are all buried there. So I mean some weren't I mean but they are in the area.

EV: Were any of your family part of that Magee-Gutierrez expedition?

CS: No.

EV: Okay. Were any of them involved in any of the revolutions either against Texas Revolution or the Revolution against Spain?

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CS: Not that I know of. Now I know that McGee, that the other McGees when they came into town they took some of the people and some of those people they killed were family. They killed a couple of the Chilumas and the Chilumas were in my family.

EV: Yeah I found one of those in my family Chilumas.

CS: Oh really?

EV: Remind me and I'll show you because I think I have it in there. But I was talking to... let me show you something I just got in the mail. Because this might inspire you to write. [getting something]

CS: Do you want me to get you something to drink? I could get you a Sprite.

EV: Pretty neat huh? Dominguez Chirrino married Mikela Salsol. Was that Chirrino son of Domingo Chidino. They were from a family of Julionio Garza and Flores De Valdes had their children.

CS: I need to make something like this. I need to put all the families together. I've been doing each family separate. But I was thinking about it this morning and putting something like that on different families because you know just about every family has donated something to me that they don't just want to leave it in the closet anymore. I'll go visit them and they will come back with pictures or something.

EV: Well maybe you should get to... maybe we need to put you in touch with some people because we have a publishing house here. I mean that's exactly what I'm trying to do is collect all the Mexicano stories because they don't exist anymore and they need to be... this kind of stuff.

CS: I would like that. That is what I was thinking of this morning that I need to do something like that with an actual system, something where there someone who is from

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Nacogdoches.... He don't live in Nacogdoches anymore but he was always telling me that when he was going to school that all they would do is just call them the Mexicans. "Mexican get out of here. Go on and dig." At _____ (24.1) they were always _____, I hear it all my life... All the Mexicans.

EV: I have to. It was different in El Paso because I thought it was bad in El Paso telling me. I didn't... I did face discrimination in El Paso. I can't say I didn't but it wasn't anywhere near what you all had here. When I came to San Antonio when you were about two years old, I was amazed at how bad it was.

CS: Here?

EV: No in San Antonio. Now a friend of mine who's father used to work in the Farmers Market, he is a Mexicano and he went to college with me, Dominguez was his name. He said, "Man, the discrimination...it's bad out here." And it was. It was just... I wasn't used to it. I wasn't used to that overt in your face kind of shit.

CS: Yeah. See that never happened to us. We were away from San Antonio but we were so sheltered. My father had us so sheltered. So when we was out there we never saw it because he would never let us go anywhere to where we didn't see any of it. Now that I do a lot of my research in Nacogdoches I still see a lot of it. I have gone to, you know, Nacogdoches to the Genealogy library and they have refused to give me copies of the stuff that I had found. I had to go through Andy, I have to ask Andy to get copies for me. And they will do it to him but they won't do it to me and them my family _____.

(25.6)

EV: _____ Spanish.

CS: Isn't that correct Andy? Isn't that correct?

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EV: You have to go get some of the stuff from the library?

Andy: Say what? You have to go get records in the library that they won't give her?

CS: No he can't hear you. (Speaking to Andy) I was telling him about when they wouldn't give me the records I had to go through you to get the records.

Andy: Oh yeah. I mean they are racist and they are proud of it. The lady she made no bones about it. There would be a white person working there they get everything they want. She would ask for something, "Oh we can't. We got a limit of 3."

EV: Golly. Is it a public library?

Andy: No this is the University library. You've got to remember this is East Texas.

EV: No I understand that.

Andy: Well East Texas.

EV: What I'm saying is it's a tax supported institution.

Andy: Oh she got promoted the lady that did that got promoted and they knew she did that. We were talking to the students in there I think I had a black guy and a Hispanic woman that were working in the library and I mentioned "Well if I'm going to order this put it under my name, put it under a white name because if we put it under a Hispanic name they will never get it." She said, "Oh I've seen you've dealt with us before." I said, "Yeah we know how it works around here." They are honest about it anyway.

CS: The school I go to now to get my research.

**EV: And which library, which school library do you use?

CS: The library in Nacogdoches. Do you remember that library in Nacogdoches I forgot already, the University in Nacogdoches?

Andy: Yeah Stephen F. Austin.

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CS: Stephen F. Austin, see that's why I forgot.

EV: Laughter! Wow.

Andy: Of course that's a white guy you've got to remember that. You talk about a white guy that stole the [REDACTED]. (27.3) When everybody wants to give me... when I go to these genealogy conferences and somebody wants to sit there and tell me their whole family's life's story I just say, "Hey my family's friends with Sam Houston I'm from the other side." (Laughter)

EV: Do you have any contacts... excuse me... do you still maintain any kind of contact with the people from Mexico, your relatives down there?

CS: I do actually we just made a trip up there to [REDACTED] (27.8). My cousin took us over there and the house where my mom was raised. We went all in that area. I took pictures of all that.

EV: Is that actually in [REDACTED] or? Do you know if you have any relatives down in what is the town south of there.... Golly! Nava. Nava and Ayenda?

CS: Ayenda my mom had family in Ayenda. She was always talking about Ayenda.

EV: And your mom was a Valdes right?

CS: No my mom was a Fuentes.

EV: Okay.

CS: My mom was a Fuentes. Her father was the one that his first wife was a Valdes but see there weren't any children in that marriage so you know the answer is that she talked about Ayenda all the time.

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EV: These people that you know, that you've made contact... your family and others before, back in the 1700's, before did they own any tracks of land or ranches were they living on land grants of any kind?

CS: In Nacogdoches?

EV: Yeah.

CS: Yes but see from what I understand the history of that San Antonio [REDACTED] (28.9) was the one that gave all these people the lands. He did it readily so there was never any...[cough]

EV: Do you want some water or something? I have some but I'm not sure it's cold.

CS: No that's okay.

EV: It's okay that it's not cold?

CS: It's okay that it's not cold? Thank you. What happened was we know they owned land because when Sam Houston came in the picture, they are selling their lands to Sam Houston.

EV: Oh really?

CS: I found where somebody, a Purcella...who had some land and it said on there that he sold his land for like \$1,000 to Sam Houston. I thought that he actually sold the land to him because he wanted to sell it but then I found out that all kinds of people in that area sold their land to Sam Houston. So I've never gotten the real reason why they all sold it. I don't know if...

EV: Well I did a tracing of some of the lands that were given to the men who fought for... the Tejanos who fought against Mexico and they were virtually... they sold their lands for \$25. It was 300 acres, 600 acres. They don't give away land like that they were

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forced to do it. I'm sure they must have. One little [REDACTED] (30.3) she was a widow and she had like 1,600 acres and she just signed with an X and sold it for \$25. That's robbery. I'm mean that's exactly what they were doing.

CS: That's why I thought Sam Houston... it sounds like he is telling them Sam Houston stole their land because he found out and like you said they had enough. So...

EV: Well we need to start exposing that crap you know.

CS: And I have that. I don't know if I brought it with me but I do have it.

EV: Do most of these families...how can I ask this? Do you know any families who came on the Camino Real and settled in East Texas or do most of them have like you... the old families I'm talking about? Do most of them come like you into Florida, Louisiana? Do you know anyone that said, "Well we came in on the Camino Real." Spain would send and Mexico would send people up here to hold the border against the French. Do you know any of those families?

CS: I don't but there are some people in Nacogdoches that I could introduce you to the older ones. I was thinking that maybe we could do one of our meetings up there in that... Nacogdoches and I could bring in the older ones and see if they would talk to you about it.

EV: Better do it quick.

CS: Yeah because they are getting old and they die. The other day one of my cousins over there, he's 92 years old and they buried him today. So a lot of the older ones are dying.

EV: I guess most of the... a lot of those families up there were in America then.

CS: Oh yeah [REDACTED] (31.8).

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EV: And you said the Chidino is up there?

CS: Oh yeah I am related to [REDACTED]. One of my cousins has a Chidino in their family line.

EV: Okay. Show me some of these documents you have here.

CS: This was given to me by Mindy Lazeren, she married an Acosta.

EV: [REDACTED]. (Spanish) (32.2) I hate to turn this off and turn it back on.

CS: I can't read it to you. I don't read Spanish.

EV: The Cortinas family are they from Mexico?

CS: I have no idea other than this is [REDACTED] Maggie Cortinas, the Cortinas are in Nacogdoches. This is the grandmother was Kate [REDACTED].

EV: Kate [REDACTED].

CS: And that is Lawrence Cortinas. That's the son... my grandmother's first son.

This is Maggie and these are her sisters, all those are her sisters, the Cortina clan. Cora,

she lives here in Houston. Flora is 81 or 82. Cora can tell you a lot of the people in

Nacogdoches if you want to let me know and I can call Cora and this is Carmen Leola.

That's the one that I told you is always talking about that would be called a Mexican.

That was our family reunion in Nacogdoches. Carmen lived here somewhere like oh

what's that something like Liberty something coming out of Houston. It's like going out

of Houston right on the outskirts of Houston.

EV: Which way?

CS: 59 going out...

EV: Going south or going north to Nacogdoches?

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CS: No going to Nacogdoches I just can't remember the name of if. I can't remember it. My brain's gone. That's my great grandfather Andrew. That's my great grandmother Lou and my grandmother.

EV: This is your great grandmother and this is her daughter?

CS: Yes.

EV: _____ (34.1) Golly!

CS: This is my grandmother here _____ off the car.

EV: Did you get all this from your family? They gave you all this?

CS: Yes. That was given to me by cousins down the line. Then the Purcellas. These are the Purcellas that moved to New Mexico and they spell their name different. They spell their name with a UR.

EV: Yes.

CS: That's the Purcellas that go to New Mexico.

EV: Do you know where they went to New Mexico?

CS: I want to say _____ (34.5).

EV: _____?

CS: _____ about somebody on that line over there and realize I was doing that and she wanted to give me that as part of... so I would include them in the book.

EV: You need to make it a point to go there.

CS: I do. I've always wanted to go to New Mexico. Then when she send me those, I told her I wanted to go because she even gave me the names of the cemeteries and where everybody is buried.

EV: And you think it is in Taus?

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CS: I believe it is but I can check for sure.

EV: You might [REDACTED] (35.4) to talk in Spanish up there because every time you say Puentes is that right?

CS: Yeah.

EV: And you are meaning Puentes with an e?

CS: Yeah isn't that what I said?

EV: No you are saying Puentas like it was a "W." That's what they do in New Mexico. They don't say...because you say Fuentes but you go Wentes. They do funny pronunciations like that.

CS: I never noticed that. That my uncle from Shepherd. That's the one that it's belonged to my grandmother, because there was only two that died my mom and him. And he just passed away recently. But I keep that because of the name. Because his name was Francisco, his father was Francisco Francis and they just named him Frank. So that's why I keep that. These are original copies (and I've been meaning to put this into a book. I haven't done it. They are death certificates of the people in the town. You know like you were telling me about the Shirino. If there is one here... this is all the Spanish people that died, they are in this.

EV: I'm having a hard time getting my arms around this thing. You tell me that even if you go down to Sam Houston library, they will not let you use that library?

CS: They will let you use it. They won't let you make copies or too many copies. They will only let you make like three copies of the stuff they have in rare books. They will let you look through it but when I ask her if I can have a copy of the whole book

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because all the books... the whole thing is on different families. She told me I could only have three and that was it.

EV: Three pages?

CS: Three pages and then she walked off. So I told Andy well I have to come back and he says, "Why" and I said, "Because she said I can only have three pages." Then he said, "Bullshit" and grabbed the thing and took it over there and said, "I want a copy of everything here." He said, "Okay" and he started copying.

EV: [REDACTED] Spanish. (37.4).

CS: Well you see that's what they want and I won't give them that satisfaction. I will not. I mean they would love for me to get mad and cuss them out and call the cops on me and you know... Now here is says on there, you know I kind of did this so I would know what cemetery they were buried. Like this is the Lazarene and the Morale cemetery but usually the people that, all the people there in the Nacogdoches...

EV: Morale that's the name of the guy... that's the family right?

CS: No that's a cemetery.

EV: But it's not named after a family?

CS: No.

EV: This guy Navarro the guy I was telling you about, his family came to East Texas, to Nacogdoches from New Orleans.

CS: Could it be M-O-R-V-A-N because there is a family there but I don't know how to.

EV: It could be. I'll have to go look at my notes.

CS: This is a Catholic Church and the Catholic Church is next the cemetery.

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EV: Do Mexicans go to the white Catholic Church?

CS: No they go to the...

EV: Can they go to the white Catholic Church?

CS: They can do anything. They can go in there if they want to. A lot of the older ones they know that they were never accepted there so that's why they have the Morale Church.

EV: That would happen here in Magnolia.

CS: Really?

EV: They have the Cecelia Church right across the freeway in Magnolia. It was immigrant Mexicans. That's why they built Guadalupe.

CS: You know I don't know too much of the history with Houston. That's one thing that I do have to say that I don't know when I ask people and nobody can tell me because I says, "You know when did the Mexican people come here? When did... where did the Mexican people live?" Because if it happened in Nacogdoches I know it had to have happened here.

EV: Well see when... there was no Houston back then. So the people that were settled around here were just a little bit north of here, you know just around the Camino Real. Some must have come in here because the Chambers... the Anawak was a port entry. I mean you would land there and you would have immigration there. So there had to be some. Some pronounce it Aniwack. But where did that name come from? Nobody can tell me that. I mean I used to be the parole officer in that county. They couldn't tell me where it came from. They don't know.

End of Side 1

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EV: What eventually happened was, you know there was a Harrisburg here. They set up a little town called Harrisburg. Santana, on his way to San _____ (.5) destroyed it, burned it to the ground. After the revolution was over they came back and they started rebuilding Harrisburg. But it... then Houston was a little back community that joined the bayou. The one that rose up fast because it was a port of entry was Galveston. So Galveston became like the Wall Street of the south. You understand so far?

CS: Yes.

EV: What eventually happened is just as the time that they were getting to be very, very big... they were the first ones to have electric lights, telephones and all this stuff, the storm hit and it wiped out Galveston. So Houston in the meantime was growing. While Galveston tried to rebuild itself they also re-dug the ship channel. That is where many, many Mexicanos came up here. So you have the discovery of oil in East Texas, you have the ship channel and then you had the railroads coming in. So all that grew because Mexico had a lot of experienced railroad workers. The Mexican Revolution forced them to come out so they came here. So you had all these things that drew the Mexicans here and then when Houston kind of built itself up. By the time Galveston had got itself built up, Houston was already established with banks and financial institutions were here and then Galveston was over there by itself. So it wasn't until after 1830's maybe 1850's that Houston became to grow. So it wasn't even a city.

CS: I know the railroad had a lot to do with East Texas because my great grandmother she remarried when her husband passed away because she remarried and she married a

_____ (2.2) and he was from Larado. He worked in the railroad. So I thought I'd
_____ (2.4) and I thought "I don't know who his family is." But on the census they

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were saying that they were working on the railroad. So that is what happened to Texas was the work. Some of them stayed, they got married to some of the people here. Some of them got married but they left. [REDACTED] But some of them were willing to stay. They tend to stay in the outskirts. That's what I said at the conference. I wish I had a little mini Juan or Charlie to take a trip to the area where we live because we were in town. So on Highway 7, they all live on that strip. The Morales Church is where they all go to. They all get buried next to the Morale Cemetery.

EV: What are these pictures over here?

CS: This is the one I put together. This is the one that it took me eight years to put my mom...

EV: Really?

CS: Yeah. It just kind of gives and idea of where I've gone to research, whether I found it at the Census.

EV: Have you ever used the Mormon church stuff?

CS: No, there's a lot of stuff that I have never used. But I'm trying to get... Now a lot of this here. I found this in the court house. They had cattle grounds. You want a copy of that one too?

EV: Yeah absolutely!

CS: Those are the cattle grounds but I have found other people that you know where in the family. If I have them it is because they were in the family, not because... I didn't copy the whole book. The whole book is a whole lot. But that was just from some of the families.

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EV: You know my copier is there but I won't be able...Do you have other copies of this or is this the only copy you have?

CS: That's the only one, but I can get you some and send them to you if you want those?

EV: Are you sure?

CS: Yeah.

EV: Oh okay, fantastic!

CS: Yeah I can send you some copies. That's not a problem.

EV: You're going to send copies?

CS: Yeah I can send you copies if you want them.

EV: Yeah I mean I can get these but I won't be able to get to them tomorrow because that's the only room that has it.

CS: Yeah I got these at the courthouse. I was just going in there I was just looking to see what was there. Like these are the Acostas you know their cattle ground and this was one of them. Purcella...this the one where somebody else Purcella... this is my great grandfather and that was him. He was a little snake. And this here I found on the

_____ (5.5)

EV: _____?

CS: Yeah. That's his original hand writing, that's Antonio _____ original hand writing.

EV: It's so hard to read these guys, the handwriting from back then. What is this do you know? Oh _____. (6.1)

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CS: He is writing a letter to somebody saying he's going to San Antonio from what I understand.

EV: Did you record any of the conflicts that they had between the Spanish and the Indians in that area? Most of what I have found is it was fairly peaceful. I mean they didn't have Indian wars like they did in Mexico and New Mexico. With the Apaches and Comanche's.

CS: There is a story there somewhere that the reason why he leave that area, one of the areas that they were supposed to go back because there was Indian raid. But there was never anything written or said or anything other than like a [REDACTED] (6.9) and I don't know.

EV: Yeah because I don't think they had that much...

CS: These are some pictures that I pulled out real quick since you said you wanted pictures and I think this is one of the Ariellos. I think that was his wife. I just kind of got the book and found that's George...

EV: Now are you married into this or are these people that you are helping?

CS: They ended up being in my mom's family line because they are so big that really...

EV: Geese!

CS: Now she's from Monty [REDACTED] (7.6)

EV: From what?

CS: Montey how do you pronounce it?

EV: Monclova! (laughter) You've given me some creative pronunciations.

CS: He is George Ariola, I believe he is George Ariola is that what it says?

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EV: Yeah.

CS: George Ariola and that's his wife. And those are some real old pictures.

EV: Beautiful.

CS: This is Mary Lazarene. That is the Lazarene Cemetery up there on Highway 7.

EV: Lazarene? _____ (Spanish 8.3). Where did that come from?

CS: The earliest I have found it is in Mexico.

EV: Lazarene?

CS: Yes. I actually found it and they say they came down from Mexico. Now where they came from...

EV: You'd think it would be Jewish?

CS: Possibly. It's possible. I've never really looked that far. But these are the Ariolas. These are the Ariolas that come already to my mom's family, the Melandez because that is Amanda Melandez and her family. That James Ariola. He's the one that used to do the family reunion. But he's been sick and they haven't done one.

EV: Who's this? Cousins Lizzy oh Lizzy Ariola. The 10th anniversary of Albert Church.

CS: I think he died and that's why.

EV: Is he Mexicano?

CS: No.

EV: _____. (9.5)

CS: No he is American. But Lori Jane ...

EV: Treino?

CS: I think she was an Ariola though. That's her married name.

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EV: Yeah she was the daughter of Frank and [REDACTED] Ariola. She was Baptist.

CS: She just thinks she is.

EV: God you're like my sister who has gone crazy on this thing. You are the same way. Then she calls me and tells me, "I found [REDACTED]" (10.1) and I don't even know who the hell she is talking about! She found some of our family in Brazil.

CS: Yes.

EV: [REDACTED].

CS: Ariola too. She married into I think his mom.

EV: There is a... in the current issue of Newsweek, I just got it today, there is an article on [REDACTED] that had to come into the country illegally but because she is a [REDACTED] (10.7) and that is how she was able to sneak in, but she still couldn't get a social security card, she couldn't get this... Finally, when amnesty came in she was able to get her card. But she speaks of the fact that because [REDACTED] no one ever questioned her. It was a very interesting little article.

CS: The Ariola people, the younger generation they did [REDACTED].

EV: Has there been a lot of intermarriage up there with Anglos?

CS: Yes. [REDACTED]

EV: But [REDACTED] right?

CS: Now.

EV: More now?

CS: Yes.

EV: Do they admit that they have Mexican blood?

CS: Yes.

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EV: Really? Are there any trouble in the schools for the kids or anything?

CS: No.

EV: No?

CS: No.

EV: The schools aren't segregated?

CS: No. This is the younger generation. They might have at one time but not now.

EV: Did you ever meet any of your family of Cadone? How do you pronounce Kadone or... the Indian?

CS: Kaden.

EV: Did you ever meet any of your family in Kaden? I know they probably keep lousy records.

CS: The older ones. The older ones yeah.

EV: You know I can't get into the Alabama Coushatta. I've been trying to get in to talk to them. They are hard.

CS: Oh they are very hard to get a hold of.

EV: They are easy to get a hold of but they hard to get to... let you talk to them.

CS: She was going to be there.

EV: I saw that. I talked to her on the phone three or four times and I got... I interviewed the guy who wrote the book on the Alabama Coushatta, a guy by the name of Hook, Jonathan Hook, but she told me well, "You be careful what you interpret from Hook's stuff." And I said, "Well you talk to me... you won't talk to me." "Well I'll talk to the fathers... the guys that are in there, the chief's and stuff but [REDACTED]."

(12.8) They won't talk.

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CS: This is my grandfather's first wife that was Aida Sanchez. She divorced him because he was a poor man and he couldn't get her a maid.

EV: Is that what it said in the papers?

CS: Yes. It says on there "He's a poor man and can't get a maid."

EV: Geese!

CS: I couldn't believe it I was like what?

EV: Is that this small part right here.

CS: Yes. She said that, "He is a poor man and he can't afford a maid." So that's what that is about.

EV: [REDACTED] (reading – mumbling) (13.4)

CS: So that was his first marriage but he didn't... he never had any children with her. I think she had children.

EV: Well [REDACTED]. (13.8)

CS: That's really, that's all I have other than, you know, I have found records in Louisiana. I have found them in French.

EV: Of your family?

CS: Yeah that were in French. I had them translated into English. When we took the trip to [REDACTED] we went to the university there and talked to the lady there, the genealogy there but you know [REDACTED] (14.4) how you can find French records. She said all the records are there and you can look but they do not translate for you.

EV: But that's [REDACTED] you know customer. [REDACTED] what's his name Tom... remember you said, "One of your customers came in and he knew me."

CS: I was wondering what you were Tom [REDACTED] was..

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EV: Remember that? Well that's his office there.

CS: Yeah he told me. I haven't seen him in a while I forgot. He told me that he had been talking to you.

EV: What is his first name again I forgot his first name? Tom right?

CS: No. I can't remember his name. But that lady there at the library was showing everybody how to look for your records that are in French, there are French records there and Spanish records there. She said, "They will let you look through them but they will not translate them for you." I guess because it is a lot of trouble.

EV: Oh yeah and translators cost a lot of money.

CS: Yeah I found all of them there.

EV: Sometimes if I see, French is so much like Spanish it's easy to translate if I see it in French. But it has got to be pretty clear.

CS: It's pretty clear.

EV: You know this is 100 some odd years ago. The 1st of October...

CS: They were baptizing the kids.

EV: How interesting 1840... Gosh I've got to get with Mr. Molado right there. He's got books just like you do, just like this of all his family.

CS: Well you know I've worked on so many families...

EV: Do you do this for them?

CS: No.

EV: You don't want this history to go?

CS: You see I'm doing it on all the families in Nacogdoches because nobody was doing it. All the people there, they were... that I was go over... they would have them in

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their closets and files... but they weren't doing anything as far as putting it out there. So I went to one of my cousins and I asked her if she would give me what she could and that's how I started doing everybody's in our family. There are 135 in our family. Then I started doing them all. I had that at home. I had like a shelf like this and I decided to [REDACTED] (17.2) because if I get something I just put it in a pile. The reason I haven't done it in so long is because I've been doing the conference so I had put everything on hold. So when I started getting the papers back together where there was [REDACTED] like this here. These are the death certificates of everybody that I want to put that together in a book. There is a lot of things I want to do. I just need to get it done. But that was the reason why I started doing it.

EV: Have you thought about maybe getting a grant of some kind to do this?

CS: You know when I was doing a conference I was trying to get somebody to give me a grant and no one would give me one. I went to everybody from [REDACTED] (18.0) all the way down to Nacogdoches. Nobody wanted to talk to me. They doing to you what they were doing to you at the Alabama Coushatta. As soon as I got over there everybody got serious with me. Said, I'm not even going to mention his name, when we got up there he had the nerve to call me on my phone and leave me a message and tell me to stop by and I could check if he had [REDACTED]. Now he wanted to get serious because I had sent him a letter, had sent him an email, had call. I had done just about everything. I couldn't get nobody to help me.

EV: Have you, have you ever been in membership with the Hispanic group here?

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CS: Yeah I was a member of [REDACTED] (18.8) and this last time I signed up to be a member of [REDACTED]. They have invited me to their meetings. I've been to their meetings before.

EV: [REDACTED]?

CS: Yeah but they are so far. To me that's far.

EV: Right over here on Telephone Road?

CS: Yes.

EV: Where do you live?

CS: In the Heights.

EV: God that's not very far.

CS: See I don't drive on the freeway.

EV: Oh.

CS: I'm limited to my driving. The reason why I'm here is because Andy brought me. So you know... they have invited us. We have been up there. Like I said I did try to get a grant and I would like to get one. What I would like to do is I would like to get one because I would like to get a copy of all the books by Robert B. Blake. It has all the information of all the descendants. He used to work at the courthouse in Nacogdoches and what he did is he put all these records into books and there is like 50 books of Robert B. Blake and I would like the collection. For that I would need a grant. There is no way I could afford it. I've been doing it on my own. I've copied three books already. At the university in Nacogdoches has them behind in their rare books. If you want something they have, as far as an putting in an index file and you go through the index file and you see the name you give them Valdes they go in the back they pull it and they bring you

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that book only. That's the only book that you see. Houston has the whole collection on the shelves of Robert Blake and that's how I am getting my copies.

EV: The same selection?

CS: There is only three.

Andy: Nacogdoches has an index.

CS: Yeah but they have them in the back. You can't touch them.

EV: I can understand why they protect them. I can't understand why they don't give you access to them. But they give you access right?

CS: To the index.

EV: The index. So they have to go get the books to you or something?

CS: Yeah.

EV: Or something. See because when I went to the National Archives in Washington, it's the same thing. You go through an index and then they bring it out to you. Then, I understand it may have changed, then they brought you the original file and some of that paper was real brittle and [REDACTED] (21.3) because when I pick up a file of my great grandfather, great, great grandfather it starts falling apart in my hands. So you have to be real, real careful with that stuff. The people... that's why you can only go in there with pencils and, you know, wear gloves and that kind of stuff.

CS: See the index that they have in Nacogdoches it will just say, "This is the title to [REDACTED] (21.6) Governor." That's what it will say. But it doesn't say what it is about. So when I went in to make these copies this is how I found the copy of my great grandfather when he sold his lands to Sam Houston. Because they are actually letting you look through the book. Before they realized what they have in their hands I want to make

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copies of it. I have already been able to copy three books. Because like there is like 300 and something page books. So...

Andy: It's difficult to do research because you have to ask for every file you want that is listed because you don't know what's there. And they won't give you access.

CS: It's real hard to do research in Nacogdoches.

EV: I don't understand they say you can only look at three books a day or three files a day.

Andy: [REDACTED].

EV: Okay well this is Stephen F. Austin, okay. I'm not going to sleep tonight because this pisses me off so bad! (laughter)

CS: See this is what I tell Andy that's what they want me to do. They want me to get upset. They want me to start hollering. They want me to cuss them out so they can call the cops on me. I will not give you that satisfaction. I will not. I mean as much as it, you know, incites me I will not. I will not. But, now I have been told, "Come back you can only take three copies." And I tell Andy "We got to come back." And he say, "Why?" and I said, "Well they won't give me copies." He grabs that thing takes it to them and tells them I want a copy of everything and they give it to him. You know, this happens to me two or three times. It's not just a one time thing.

EV: Well when do you think you can get me... Let me get off this I'm going to get... I won't sleep tonight. Ill sit there and think of all kinds of things. When do you think I can meet the chief Rufus?

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CS: You know I don't think I have his number on me. I can email you his number and he said he is willing to talk to you because they are getting ready to do a pow wow up there in October.

EV: Oh really?

CS: He wanted me to invite some friends to go up there. He said he is willing to talk to you because he had something to do with the Camino Real over on that side of Louisiana.

EV: Oh and what about... does he live... you said he lives here right?

CS: He has a place here because he's got a business here. So he comes in and out of Houston all the time. He's always here.

EV: And then you talked about Cora Cortinas and Tom Arolla.

CS: Now Cora lives here in Houston and Tom lives out in the outskirts of Houston so if you want to you I can probably get those people together and have them talk to you, because these are the older... these are the older folks.

EV: I mean I would love to do that but I need to talk to them one at a time. You can imagine what happens to the transcribing if I get all the people talking at the same time.

CS: Yeah well they speak English only.

EV: That's fine. I mean I don't have a problem with that. But when we start writing down the conversation it is hard to say who is saying what.

CS: Oh okay.

EV: So it's always best to have one on one. We had... I've tried to interview two at a time. It's real hard on the transcriber to do that. That's the one that has my article on the Galveston Opera House.

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Andy: I was reading about [REDACTED]. (24.9)

EV: Oh really?

Andy: Because they lost all the records. There was a big hole in the record room.

EV: Okay is there anything else you want to say for now? We can continue again because I'm sure I will want to talk to you further. Is there anything you want to add to this right now that I haven't asked you about?

CS: I can't think of anything at the moment. Like you all write it down?

EV: That's right and then I write it down. Alright! I don't mind if you want to write it down that's fine. Because I will file it away with this thing. Because once this is typed up and I can... we can read it. I'm going to think of other things maybe I should have asked you about. It's okay to call you back and fill in the wholes okay?

CS: Oh that's fine. You can call me anytime or you can email me and in the meantime if you want I can get a hold of Cora because she lives closer here.

EV: You know... who are the two guys that you had from... the two Indian guys that were at the concerts?

CS: Oh those were [REDACTED] (25.8) people. I don't want to have nothing to do with those people anymore. They just done me dirty.

EV: Why? Who the Indian guys did?

CS: No neither one. The one that was in charge of the group.

EV: The white guy?

CS: Yeah.

EV: Who is he?

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CS: He was the one in charge of that whole group, that organization. He came from New Orleans. So I flew him from Houston because there was no other way to get him to Nacogdoches. I had my son pick him up and take him to Nacogdoches and then when he got over there he... I was going to bring the other one from Oklahoma because they drove, they didn't want to fly, they drove. So I paid for their mileage and then one of the girls at the front desk went and told them that I had a credit card on file and they were charging stuff on my credit card.

EV: All of them? I mean the Indian guy and the this guy.

CS: That [REDACTED] (26.8) Sanchez charged stuff on my credit card. I had to go to the front desk and put a stop to that.

EV: You can deny that you know to the credit card company.

CS: Yeah when I went to the front desk with it, they were surprised because they went up there and they told them that I... how he found out was one of the girls at the front desk told him that my credit card was on file. They were trying to find me that night. He was trying to get a room for one of the guys that rode with them, that came in, but one of the last guys and he wanted me to comp him the room. She says, "Well I have a credit card on file on her." Then the girl, he found out, and he started charging on my credit card. He knew that I would have trouble... I had so much trouble. Now the older one, the old man, if you can get a hold of him and talk directly to him, I think you can get a lot out of him. Because he was talking to me and a lot about himself, and he had a lot to say. But never again through me, never.

EV: Yeah but I was wondering about the... let me ask you a little bit more about the Alabama Coushatta. You've never been able to break anything?

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CS: No in fact, I have begged her, called her, pleaded with her.

EV: Is that Patricia or Pat or something.

CS: Miller.

EV: Miller.

CS: Yeah and I had called her and, "Oh yes we are going to get together. We are going to do 'this' and 'that' and 'the other'. We're going to be around so and so..." And I said, well we even went as far as putting her picture in the newspaper because she said she had committed that she was going to be there. Well, right at the conference on Saturday morning she sends me a message that one of the girls informed me that she can't make it.

EV: The problem with all of that is, and I sympathize a lot with the natives, my family is Native American you know. But they, [REDACTED] no one gets the record straight. Then when you want to talk about it, they don't want to talk to you about it. Then they get "P'd" off at the politicians and the archeologists. They will give you, you give them an opportunity and [REDACTED]. (28.7)

CS: I think Chief [REDACTED] you could get a lot out of him. When we went on that field trip it took him two hours to do the presentation. I had to tell him to tell him he had to go because we were still in the boat and we still had like five more museums we wanted to see and he had us there for two hours. I was like, "Lord." I said, "Go tell him that we've got to leave." And she said, "Well you know do you have a limit that I can tell him?" "Yeah like right now." But he can talk. He can talk and he can tell you a lot about that because he had something to do with that coming out of the ash.

Interviewee: Carmen Salinas

Interview: October 7th, 2008

EV: Let me ask you, when you say he had something to do with Camino Real what do you mean?

CS: He is something, he is in the, there's a _____ (29.3) organization up there in that area.

EV: Oh really?

CS: He has something to do with them. He is something. I'm not sure if he is the president, or vice president. He has something to do with them. I think you could, I think he would talk to you. Like I say, he lives here most of the time. He has a business here in the city. He lives here in Houston a lot.

EV: Do you know what he does?

CS: Something to do with the water.

EV: Alright. Well okay. This is the end of Side B, Tape 1

THE END