

Washington County Museum  
Oral History Interview with Theresa Clark  
At Washington County Museum, Hillsboro Civic Center  
February 19, 2013

Informants: Theresa Clark  
Interviewer: Beth Dehn  
Transcriber: Pat Yama

B: Beth  
T: Theresa

B: This is Beth Dehn for the Washington County Museum interviewing Theresa Clark at the museum's new location in the Hillsboro Civic Center. And today is February 19<sup>th</sup> at approximately 1:30 in the afternoon. And today we're going to be talking about the Bracero Program and Theresa's work experience as I believe as a Payroll Accountant.

T: Yeah I did the payroll. I was in accounting. We did payroll for approximately 400 Braceros.

B: Okay and this is a town in California where Theresa worked from approximately 1956 to 1958.

T: I did work in 1960 for approximately August to October.

B: Okay perfect. And then to sort of finish, you're now a resident of Forest Grove?

T: Yes I am. We came to Oregon in 1966.

B: Okay great. So let's—where can we start?

T: Nineteen fifty-six?

B: Let's start with then.

T: I went to work for Mr. Warden. I went to interview at bank. All they could pay me was \$180 a month. That's where my father wanted me to work. It was a nice clean job. I had references from the Police Chief ???, references from the City Auditor and a reference from Mr. Williams who was the supervisor out where my father worked. My father had worked there for probably—quite a long time—since 1937 and so this is 1956. But the bank didn't tell me anything. It didn't look very good so I went out and interviewed for Mr. Warden and he gave me a job right away. And he was paying me \$95 a week.

B: Oh wow.

T: And he paid for my gas to go out 30 miles. And I did all the payrolls. I did the State taxes and like I said we did taxes for 400 men. And we did the payroll every other week and we paid them cash. So we'd go get the cash—it was \$80,000 every other week. And we paid cash so we'd have to get you know twenties. We paid in the separate amounts and we'd have to get them all

balanced and everything and then we'd go and put them in envelopes and then we'd have pay day and then we'd pay them. And you know I'd have to count it in Spanish.

And it was really interesting because I was raised by Mexican parents. Both my sets of grandparents were from Mexico but my mother and father only spoke English to us. So I understood Spanish but I didn't speak it very well because they didn't make us speak it. I understood Spanish very, very well but because I had a Spanish surname—Ortega, everybody thought, *she speaks Spanish*. But I didn't. I understood it very well but mostly—I could speak it fairly well but I couldn't really speak it so that—they could understand it. And everybody said, "Well you have really good accent" but I didn't feel comfortable like I did with English.

And so I used to pay them and when they'd ask me questions I'd just kind of stumble. And so one time I was talking to one of the English fellows that was there and I said something rather stupid like, "Man these guys you know they're not very smart" or something like that. And one of these men he just came unglued. He was a teacher of English in Mexico and he said, "You know young lady," he said, "you should be careful who you speak English in front of." And he just read me the riot act. And I was so embarrassed because he spoke English better than I did. And I was just really embarrassed so from then on I watched who I spoke English in front of. And I really learned Spanish a lot better.

He helped me a lot to understand my own culture, because I really didn't know the Mexican people. Because we all come from different cultures and my grandparents were from Chihuahua, Sonora. I was Calientes and they all have different ways. And some of these people were from Michoacán and different areas of Mexico so I learned to find out where they were from and it was really interesting.

So I learned to find out where they were from and I learned to help them. I would send packages for them. I would send money orders for them and tried to help them with sending things. I remember one man wanted to send an electric sewing machine. And I asked him, "Do you have electricity in your house?" Well he didn't have electricity in his house so he couldn't really send an electric sewing machine to his house. He needed a pedal. So we tried to convince him that the electric wasn't good.

But they picked tomatoes by the crate by the number—like 13 cents a crate, 12 cents, 11 cents, 10 cents. Some of them at first came and they'd hold the tomatoes and so they'd have a crew boss that would go out with them and make sure that they took all the weeds out. And then that was like in September they would go out. But we had an inspector that would come and inspect us to make sure that we had beds for them, had mattresses for them and that we only charged them a \$1.75 a day. And that was for the meals and their beds. And we made sure they had running toilets for them. They really didn't know about running toilets and using toilet paper. Sometimes they would just use catalogues and they would plug up the toilets.

But we would have toothbrushes for them and toothpaste which sometimes they didn't know what to use so we would have people that would show them. We would call some of them touristas because some of them came they'd be all dressed up. Those are the ones that we knew were just there to make a little money and then maybe disappear. The ones that came with huaraches and they really didn't have clean feet, they came because they were poor and they came there just to make money. And they would send to sancho. And one time I asked my boss, "Who's Sancho?" because we had this man named Contraez who was Mexican-American. Like me he wasn't really from Mexico but his family was.

So I said, "Nash" because his name was Ignacio but they called him Nash. I said, "Nash, who is Sancho?" He said, "Well that's the man that takes care of his wife while he's up here." And I said, "What do you mean takes care of him?" He says, "Well honey you're too young and you don't understand." And so he tried to explain it to me which was totally embarrassing coz I was pretty young and naïve at 18. And so he tried to explain it to me. I said, "Okay, okay I understand." So anyway he says, "He takes care of the money and the woman while he's up here." And I said, "Okay, okay. I understand."

And so they would send money, practically 80% of his money went to Mexico and he kept very little of it for himself. And one time I saw a line out to the field and I said, "What are these guys all standing out in line? Every pay day you see this line." He says, "Well there's a woman out there." And I'd say, "Well what the heck is a woman doing out there?" He says, "Honey you don't want to know what the woman's doing out there." And I said, "Okay don't tell me because I don't want to know. I have an idea what she's doing out there."

But these men worked very, very hard and it was stoop labor. And I mean they would work from—they got up at six o'clock in the morning, went out. They had breakfast. They had lunch out in the field. They came home [at] seven, probably had dinner and then they just kind of mill around. And I used to get really upset after—oh gee I worked there for quite awhile before I bought a brand new car—'57 Bel Air Hardtop which was my first brand new car. And it was a silver car and they'd lean up against it and scratch it with the brass on the jeans. And I use to tell my boss, "Oh I get so mad because they scratch my car." He said, "You now it's because of them that you have that car so you shouldn't get so mad at them." I said, "You know I never thought of it that way." So then after that I didn't get so mad.

But they did, they worked so very hard, in the sun and they never griped about their pay. They never complained.

B: Do you remember how much they got paid because you said it was a \$1--

T: The most I ever remember they got paid like 10, 13 cents, 14 cents, 15 cents. But they got paid probably a couple hundred dollars every two weeks. But they worked very hard for that money, very hard. You know like eight, ten hours a day. And some of them were—that tended water, now they got paid like \$1.25 an hour and they would work like ten hours and they would make more money.

B: But that's seems good because some things I was reading said they would have to pay as much for their room and board as they would for the--

T: No. They paid a \$1.75 a day. They could pay no more than that.

B: So they were actually making money.

T: They were making money because we could not charge them more than \$1.75 a day and that was for their meals and for their room and board. And they fed them pretty darn good because I used to eat there. I'd eat lunch there and sometimes I'd eat dinner there. And the thing is that they would feed them tongue which is something they're use to. I got use to it. I mean it was just like a stew and I ate tripe. I ate tripe at home. I like tripe. We would feed them things that they would eat at home so they would feel comfortable.

And the cook was Mexican. I got to be real good friends with her and as a matter of fact she came to my engagement party. I know she felt really uncomfortable because the girl who gave me my engagement party, she was rather rich. She had Fostoria glasses and this girl says, "I don't know which forks and stuff to use." I said, "I don't know either. Just use the ones I'm using co's I don't know either."

But I told my boss, I said, "I used to go get \$80,000. He'd get 40 and I'd get 40." I said, "What would you do if I stole this money sometime?" and he said, "Honey if you're going to steal, steal a lot co's they're going to put you in jail for the same amount of time." And I said, "Well I don't think so co's I don't want to go to jail."

B: They sound like good employers though.

T: Oh they were. He was a sweetheart. I loved him very much. He used to call me 'Sunshine.' You get a lot of book work but it was always balanced. One time I came back from the bank and I had \$200 too much and we tried to balance that thing and I came out \$200 too much and we just couldn't get it to balance. So I called the bank and I said, "You know we have \$200 too much and I don't know what happened." He said, "Oh my God I'm so glad you called because we're short \$200." He's, "Can you come tomorrow and bring us the \$200 back?" And I said, "Sure I'll bring it back to you. We don't want it. We can't balance." They had given me \$200 too much so we had balanced. We didn't know what to do with it.

B: Now did the farm run all year round or was it mostly just for seasonal crops?

T: We worked from September to October but I worked practically all year round because I worked for the asparagus farmers on Roberts Island in August. He kind of farmed me out. And then I went to work in Reno for some farmers. He kind of farmed me out so I would work all year round for him.

B: That's nice.

T: He trusted me. As a matter of fact we went to Fallon, Nevada and he took me there and he took me into a place where they thought I was Indian because I look like almost anything. I look like I'm Italian. I look like I'm Jewish. People have taken me for almost anything. And he said, "Oh my God, put your glasses on. You look like Indian. They may not let you come in here. And I said, "Oh, okay." So I said okay and he said, "They don't let Indians in here." And I said, "Oh my God. They won't let Mexicans in. They won't let Indians in. Gee whiz, what a bunch of jerks."

So anyway, yes I was taken for a lot of different things and as a matter of fact when I got married I went to Virginia. And I was standing in line for the unemployment and this man was standing behind me and he said, "What are you?" And I said, "Well I don't understand. What do you mean 'What am I'? I mean I am an American." And he said, "Yeah but you're something else." I said, "You mean, well my grandparents were from Mexico if that's what you mean." He says, "Yeah well how long have you been speaking English?" I said, "Sir I've been speaking English all my life." And he says, "Oh."

B: They just don't get it, yeah.

T: I worked for Kaiser for 30 years and I used my Spanish a lot. And there were three of us. I'm a redhead, the other one was a blonde and the other one was a redhead. I was speaking Spanish to this man and this woman behind him she got really upset and she said to me, "I wish

you would speak English.” And I said, “I do speak English ma’am. What can I help you with?” She got really annoyed and she said, “Well I’m going to go speak to this girl over here. She’s blonde.” And this girl says, “Ma’am, I’m Mexican too” to her because she is Mexican. So then, “Well I don’t want to talk to you either.” So she went to speak to the other girl and the other girl says, “Well I’m Mexican too so what’s your problem?” And this lady just walked out mumbling to herself.

So you know it’s just really disconcerting to all of us that this woman was so racist that she wouldn’t speak to either three of us—one’s a blonde, one’s a redhead, the other one I don’t know what she was. She had dark hair too. But we’re all Mexicans but we all spoke very good English. We all spoke Spanish so what the heck was her problem. We couldn’t understand.

B: Right. Is that part of California where you were living, is that fairly integrated with Mexicans and—

T: Well this is here in Oregon!

B: Oh this was in Oregon, okay.

T: This was Oregon at the Kaiser Facility at East Interstate. In California, of course I was working in Cornelius, I mean there and Vernalis I never—I was with farmers. I never had that problem there because I was working with farmers so they all treated me the same.

B: And the men themselves the Braceros—you had some chances to talk to them and [inaudible] money.

T: Yeah before that I worked for a theatre that was a Spanish speaking theatre. A young man came up he was blonde like you are, blue-eyed with red hair. And I told him in English that American theatre was up above and he told me in Spanish he didn’t speak English. [both laugh]

B: So you just never know.

T: No you never know. So I got to be friends with him and it was really interesting. And then when I went to work for Mr. Warden I saw there were so many different colors you know. And it was sad for me because some of the young men that were only in their 20s were so old. They looked like--

B: That was from hard work.

T: Oh yes—30, 40 years old they looked and they were only like in their 20s because they worked so hard.

B: So stoop labor and this a question I had when they were putting exhibits together, it’s mostly just working with your hands, is that right?

T: That’s right.

B: So there really aren’t any farm instruments at all? It’s just--

T: Just a hoe, hand. A hoe, that’s mainly what they did with hoes or picking with their hands. Or melons, they picked melons and that was with their hands and carrots. My brother and his two

friends—they weren't Mexicans but they came out. They were going to pick carrots. Well they were going to make a lot of money. And they came – they couldn't even finish a row! I had to go out there with my high heels to try and help them co's they had to finish the row before they could leave. They never came out again. That was the first day. They couldn't even finish a row and they came out at 8:00 in the morning, they were still there at 5:00 at night.

B: And the other guys are--

T: The other guys had already finished and gone home. So it's very, very hard. I mean they were bent over all day long in the sun. Bent over. And Americans don't want to do that kind of work. And so it's not like they're taking work from anybody. We use to have winos that they'd go down—

B: I've heard of that.

T: Pick them up and they bring up busloads of winos. Those winos would only pick enough to get a bottle of wine and then they'd quit. Come and pick up their pay and then they were done. You know they'd make \$2 or \$3 and then come get their pay and sit on the bus until it's time for them to go home.

Bracero was a hard working person who did stoop labor and they worked very, very hard. And that's why the farmers like them. And now that they have the farmers here that they don't have Braceros but they have immigrants that are, you know they're not citizens--

B: Undocumented yeah.

T: They do the same thing. They work very hard. They bring their kids. And the kids work hard and they become something because they know that education is the only way they're going to get out of the fields.

B: Do you know how the farmers hired Braceros because at this point in time it was still a national program right.

T: It was a national program and what happened was that the contractors went to the border— well actually that wasn't true. We had an organization in Stockton that brought the Braceros from the border. And then the contractors that go to this organization and they would pick up the Braceros there and they would bring them to the camps. And that's how they got them.

B: Okay and then I was happy to hear you say there were people evaluating the situation.

T: Oh yes, they were from the State of California and we had Mr. Ludwig and he came every month. And he came and he checked out the camp. He ate with us. He checked out to see how the payrolls, how much we paid them. He wanted to see if we charged them, how much we charge them for their room and board. He came and checked where they slept, what kind of rooms we had for them, how many beds we had for them, what the toilets were like. And he ate food to make sure that we fed them right. He went out to he fields to check that they weren't abused. I'm sure they did that with all of them but I know that he came to ours. He was very, very good and just because we were friends he didn't just come and check on us and take our word for anything. He checked on us.

B: So there really were inspectors.

T: Yes there were inspectors.

B: Oh that's good. And then the other that we've been told was at the beginning of the program at least 10% of the pay check was deducted as sort of a savings and this may be in the 1940s—

T: No, not in California.

B: Okay.

T: As I remember it they paid into the Social Security.

B: Yeah I think that's what it was.

T: Yeah they paid Social Security just like everybody else.

B: And then the idea was that they were supposed to get that when they—okay.

T: They got that back because they paid into Social Security. If my memory is correct they even paid into the State income tax. No, they didn't because California didn't have State income tax then. They just paid into Social Security.

B: And would you see some of the same men come back every year?

T: Yes.

B: And was it, I guess maybe the first question is was it seasonal type of work or did they stay?

T: Yes it was seasonal. Seasonal work and some of them came back. Like the turistas would come back. Some of them would stay. We had three forestas that came back three years in a row. Some of the seasonal workers came back. Some of them, especially the school teachers—I told you the school teacher—he came back three years in a row that I was there. The seasonal workers—there were a lot of the irrigation workers that came back and of course the people that were the **robases** were there. And I got to know a lot of them. They became my friends.

I think most of them were citizens of the United States. I never asked them. They may have been, you know they may have been people that weren't citizens. I don't know you know I never asked them. But all of them had a lot of children. And I see names that are names and I just often wonder if sometimes it's their children. I see names and wonder if those aren't their children because they're unusual names.

But they were such industrious people. And the wives would have children in the doctor's office because they couldn't afford the hospitals. I'd usually take the wives to the doctor's office and they'd have the children in the doctor's office and I'd bring them back.

B: So some had families there.

T: The **robases**.

B: The robases,

T: Not the man. The Braceros didn't. They didn't. They did have some families that came later in the season after the schools were out. They came after the schools were out they'd bring if there were some families that came. But I don't remember too many of those. They were mostly all Braceros that came from Stockton where they brought them by buses. They'd have two, three buses full of people, of men, Braceros. And you'd see them downtown. We'd take them to town where they could buy great big trunks. They'd buy pants. They use to like to have women measure them for pants [both laugh]. Or they'd sit on a curb and eat ice cream because it was sweet and they weren't use to that.

My father was in the hospital with one and he taught one to brush his teeth—told him how to brush his teeth.

B: Do you remember items that they bought with their money?

T: Yeah. They bought trunks, pants, things for their wives.

B: Were jeans something that was American versus something that they would have?

T: Oh yes, jeans.

B: So jeans were kind of like a status.

T: Jeans and just regular pants, like cotton pants, cotton pants. They'd roll them up you know because they'd be too long co's most Mexican men are not very tall. And the jeans they'd roll up. But you see the cowboys they roll up their---

B: They do the same thing, yeah.

T: Shirts, ? shirts. And of course the turistas always bought those silk shirts. But they always wear the huaraches and when they were picking tomatoes of course they're feet would be green like my socks are green.

B: When you think of the word Bracero what kind of connotations come to mind?

T: To me? To me it means a very hard working person. It doesn't mean lazy because I never saw a lazy Bracero. Never. Never. A turista maybe but not a Bracero. He was very hard working and he didn't lay around very much. Not the ones I saw. Generally they went to bed early and you know I see some that think that they always were fights and stuff but I never saw them in fights. I saw them as hard working, in bed early, reading magazines. They would buy the Spanish-speaking papers but I never saw them. Maybe I didn't stay late enough but I used to be there at 7:00 at night so if they were going to get in fights. And drink Pepsi—they wouldn't drink anything but Pepsi.

B: That's funny. So those are kind of the big things. So when you finished working with the farm because I think the Bracero Program officially ended in about '64 or '65—the official.

T: Well I was there in 1960—let's see I came back in 19—let's see I got married in '58 and I left. I went to Virginia and then my son was born in 1960. And my husband went over to England so my boss said—but I had to earn the money to go over to England so he said, "Why don't you come back to work." And so I went back to work for him and helped his bookkeeper do some bookkeeping like I had done before and I did the same thing.

And what was really funny was the young Mexican men thought—well she's married you know, she'll go out with me. And so I told them, "I'm married." And I'd show them my wedding rings. "That's okay. Married is good." I said, "No, no, no. Married is not good. I don't go out with men." I said, "I have baby now, not good." But I had fun. I had fun with them because I could enjoy them and I didn't have to work because I wasn't a teenager anymore. And I understood them a little better. And I could speak Spanish a little better. And the girl that was there was single. She said, "Oh they just make me so angry." And I said, "I don't get angry at them anymore because I understand them better and I live life a little bit better and I'm more mature."

And so I earned the money to go to England and glad to be with my boss because I love him so much. And I just had a great time from August to October. It was good. It was a good time. I really had a good time.

B: And then how did you end up in Oregon?

T: My husband went to school in Santa Barbara. He was a photographer. And he came for an interview here in Oregon. And he came to interview and fell in love in love with Oregon and I followed him up and I hated Oregon. It rained the first 33 days I was here. And my youngest boy got the German measles and then my oldest boy and I got the German measles. And it just rained and rained and rained and I just thought, *oh God*. And my father died just before I came up here. He was 48 years old. He had a heart attack. And I just didn't like Oregon. I tell you if my husband would have wanted to go back it would have been nice.

But then I just fell in love with Oregon. I've been here since '66 and I wouldn't go back to California if they paid me. My oldest boy lived in San Jose and my youngest boy lives in Colorado and they both said "Well if dad dies"—my husband was very, very sick. They said, "Well if dad dies you know well you should come to live in Colorado." My oldest boy said, "Well you can come and live in California." And I said, "No, I'm not coming to live with you in California and I'm not coming to live in Colorado. I'm living in Forest Grove and when I die I'm going to be buried with your dad and Tracy and that's it. I'm not moving to California."

B: You're staunchly here then.

T: Oh yeah I'm here. I'm going to be buried in California but I'm not living there. I love Oregon.

B: I know. I do too. I'm not even from here but— Do you see connections between the Bracero Program and you were sort of saying and migrant work that happens now?

T: Oh yes, yes here.

B: Kind of the same.

T: Yes I went out to the nursery and they have a lot of Mexican people there from Michoacán. And when I worked for Kaiser I went out to do some instruction and I did some blood pressure work because I speak Spanish and they asked me if I'd do that. And I said, "Oh yeah I love that. I love that kind of stuff." Because I was in Membership Services so I went out there and I did that. I just loved it because I love people and I love Mexican people especially because they're very, very wonderful. Not because that's my culture but I love them. They're very loving caring people.

And the nursery people are like that. There are a lot of Mexican people in that. And the people in Cornelius and the people in Forest Grove there are a lot of Mexican people out there. The nursery people there are a lot of Mexican people that are in that. And I think that there are a lot of people that would have been in the Bracero Program that are up there. And they're very much discriminated against I think. They have Adelante Mujeres out there and that is a very great program.

B: It's a great organization.

T: And when I first came to Washington County I was very upset about the LA Times because there use to be a lot of racism and there still is, there's a lot of racism. My husband was a mayor of Forest Grove and I think that if the people of Forest Grove would have known that I was Mexican, that that was my ancestry, they would have been really upset because there's a lot of rednecks out there.

There are because when I was in Cornelius I was sitting by a man and he was just really being not very nice about Mexicans. And I said, "You know sir I need to tell you that my grandparents, both sets of my grandparents came across the Mexican border and they were both from Mexico." And I don't know if they came across legally. I don't think they were. I know my grandpa wasn't. He came from Chihuahua. And he said, "Oh some of my best friends are Mexicans."

You know I just wanted him to know because my husband has stood up for me. So one of his people that he was in the Air Force with, he said he was talking about Mexicans and how terrible—this was in Utah, Mormon country. And he was talking about these Mexicans. He said, "Hey Sarge, I just want you to know that I'm married to one of those Mexicans." And he said, "Cal I'm sorry." He says, "Well I just wanted you to know." He said, "I don't like the way you're talking about them because I'm married to a Mexican."

There are still people out there that just downgrade them and maybe that's why when I was renting I made sure when I left that place—I had little children—I made sure that I cleaned that just as clean as I could because I didn't want them to say, "Oh gee, they left it dirty. I know she was a Mexican so that's why." I don't like that.

B: Yeah. I'm just curious if you think the conditions that Bracero Program were sort of better for those men than maybe for families now? I mean I don't know how to judge that.

T: Yes, yes. I would say that they were better there. When I was in that Bracero Program there was also in Westley they had—well here in Oregon they had those little farm houses. That was unconscionable the way they had those families living out there. They had those families living so awful. My husband went out and he helped those people with blankets when they were living on those farms out there. And the farmers yeah, they brought them out here and then just left them. He tried to help them.

Now he is an Anglo. I mean he's English, Irish, Norwegian and Dutch but he said he just happened to be born but he's a Mexican at heart and he loves Mexican people. I don't know if that's because he married a Mexican or what but he would just bend over backwards to help them. And he thinks that those farmers—they bring them up here and give them all these ideas that they're going to do all these things for them and then they just let them suffer. And he hates that because he knows what the Bracero Program that we had and what we did in California. And here they just let them suffer. So I think that it's terrible the way they treat them here.

B: Yeah well that's kind of one of our questions if sort of an organized program succeeded versus what's happening now because it seems like Bracero Program may have been one of the first times we saw a large migration of Mexicans in a national area. But then what happens next?

T: They didn't do anything here in Oregon. And Oregon is so progressive. That's why I don't understand why they didn't have a program like we had in Sonoma County.

B: Because the program here ended in '46. Well Washington County I think in Oregon itself I think it ended in 1947.

T: Yeah but I don't know what their program was like but the program we had in Vernalis with them coming and having someone checking on us and making sure that we're doing the right thing, I thought was very proper.

You know if I had gone to work for the bank I would have only gotten \$180 a month. I made more, \$95 a week. Do you know how much that was in 1956 for me, a teenager? That was a lot of money for a teenager. My father was so upset with me because I wouldn't take that job at the bank. That was a very prestigious job. And the banker got mad at me because I wouldn't take it. And when I went to Mr. Warden and told him I was offered this job at the bank and I had already made my decision he said, "Well I assume you're going to take the job at the bank." And I said, "No Mr. Warden." Even the shop why would I want to go work at the bank at \$180 a month! I can't even pay for my car. Well I was paying \$40 a week for my car. I paid my car off in two month because I paid it every week.

B: Wow you could—and you got the fancy '57.

T: Well with buying the Ford and it was payments for \$45 a month and I paid it off in two months. My father got money back because he went and bought it for me. And I said, "Daddy you know you bought a '52—I think it was a Ford stick shift. I said, "Daddy you know I want to buy a better car" Co's was driving his Packard, '40 Packard. It was brand new when he bought it. I wanted to buy a brand new '57 Bel Air hard top. It was \$2300 when I bought it and he was so proud of me because I was only 20 years old.

B: You got a brand new car.

T: I had a brand new car and he was so proud of me. He had to sign for me but then I got married when I was 21 and he was so proud of me. I left it with him because I couldn't afford the payment with \$70 a month and my husband was only 17 when we got married so I married four or five years younger than me. So when we went to Virginia he was only an air man, we couldn't afford—I wished I would have taken it with me. We couldn't afford it because I'm really good with money. I don't know, God has been very good to me.

B: Interesting. Well do you have anything else that like any specific memories of one of the Braceros or some conversation you've had or something.

T: I had conversations with this one Bracero how he came over here illegally. I know his name. I know how he came over here, how he took the name off of a cemetery. He was a cousin of his and how he really got here because the cousin, he was the same age and how he got his Social

Security Number from that. And he's probably still here illegally. I'm sure he's ??? by now because he's my age. I'm 75.

And how I found that out was because he talked. And he had been a Bracero at the camp and he told me he had a cousin and I happened to see him at this Spanish-speaking theater. I said, "You're here?" and he said, "I'm here illegally too" and he told me how he'd come here illegally, how he came here illegally. I said, "That's really good. I'm glad." He says, "You going to tell on me?" I said, "Why? It's none of my business if you're here illegally. I can't do anything about it." He says, "Well you can tell on me." And I said, "It's not my business."

B: He's a smart man if he figured that out.

T: Yeah because they had the same last name, same first name. They were born the same year.

B: Impressive.

T: Yeah. He was very smart. So he was going to college and I thought—hey, he's going to be an asset to the United States. And that's what I think about all these young people. They're going to college they're going to be an asset to the United States. I don't know whatever happened to him because of course I left. I left so I don't know what happened to him.

B: Probably for the best.

T: Like I said about the red haired, blue-eyed guy, I got to be really good friends with him and he was a Bracero. He wasn't from my camp because I wasn't there at that camp at that time. He told me his parents were German but he was from Mexico. We used to talk a lot. And he loved the United States and he wanted to come here and live but I don't know if he ever did. But he used to come here every Saturday until he went back to Mexico. But he had blue eyes like you. He was very fair like you with red hair. He was just the handsomeness kid you ever saw. He used to come here every Saturday to see me.

B: He likes you.

T: Yeah, too bad I had a boyfriend.

B: Is there anyone else we should talk to that you know in the area? Because we're still trying to—

T: No I don't know anybody here. I really don't. I haven't talked to anyone here. Do you know Theresa Clark? Yeah her name is Theresa Clark. She went back to her name.

B: She has your same name?

T: Yeah her name is Theresa. She's got a Spanish surname now. She used to be a Clark but I don't know what her Spanish name is. I don't remember it. She was a Clark.

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