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Suarez, Ines Oral History Interview: Class Projects

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Oral History Interview

Interviewee: Ines Suarez, her daughter (D) was present during the interview.

Interviewer: Jody Murray

November, 1999

JM: What is your name?

IS: My name is Ines Suarez

JM: Will you state your birthdate please?

IS: [date removed], 1947.

JM: Where did you come from?

IS: Mexico, Mexico City.

JM: Do you have any children?

IS: Yeah, I have two sons and two daughters.

JM: How long have you been in Holland?

IS: Six years.

JM: Six years?

IS: Because I live in Fennville

JM: In Fennville? Okay.

D: She lived in Holland for six years, but first she lived in Fennville.

JM: What was your life like in Mexico?

IS: Better.

JM: It was better?

IS: Yes.

JM: You lived in Mexico City? That is a big city with lots of people.

IS: Yes

JM: Is it different from Holland?

IS: Yes

JM: Is it different from Holland?

IS: Yes

JM: How is it different?

IS: Because there is a lot of people and ... This is better here, because here there is a lot of opportunity for jobs and a better life.

JM: What made Mexico City better? The opportunities are better here, but what was better in Mexico City?

IS: Because in Mexico City, I leaved with my mother and family. Here I don't leave nothing, not my daughters or sons.

JM: Alright. Why did you move here?

IS: I moved here for a better life for my son and my daughters.

JM: Is your family still in Mexico, do you still have family there?

IS: Yes.

JM: Do you still go back and visit?

IS: Yeah, I visited in August. The second week of August.

JM: What was your view of the US before you came here?

IS: Okay, this is a better country, because I looked in the movies.

JM: Okay. Is your view still the same now? Now that you have been here?

IS: No, it is different.

JM: How is it different?

IS: Because in the movies the buildings are big and this is not correct.

JM: Have you experienced any racial discriminations while you have been here?

IS: No.

JM: Is this your restaurant?

IS: Yes

JM: You have had it for six years then?

IS: Yes, six years.

JM: What is the biggest difference between here and Mexico?

IS: This is better here, because it is better for my sons and daughters. They can study more here. In Mexico I didn't have any money for the study.

JM: Did you have your sons and daughters before you left Mexico?

IS: Yes, three of them.

D: She had one son and two daughters before she came. Over there you have to pay for school, for grade school and everything. So she wasn't going to be able to send them to school over there.

IS: Because in Mexico, I didn't have any money, which means no studying. When I young I needed to study. My mother no have any money, no study. Here is great because I no have any money. This country is better because there is equal opportunity for everybody.

JM: How old were you when you came here?

IS: 32. Now I am 52. I have lived here 21 years.

JM: It was difficult because you were older to leave?

IS: Definitely. My daughter, she is better here because my daughter is going to college.

My daughter is studying to be a assistant medical. She is studying now in Grand Rapids.

JM: What college is she going to?

D: Community college is Grand Rapids.

JM: Did you have a job in Mexico?

IS: Yes.

JM: But it didn't pay enough?

IS: No, because it is cheap in Mexico. I only got \$30 dollars a week.

D: It's is a big difference over there.

JM: What kind of job did you have?

IS: I worked as a waitress, the same as here. And I worked

D: At a little stand selling tacos and corns. So it would be outside.

JM: You came from Mexico to Fennville and then to Holland?

IS: No. I come to the state of Indiana. I lived there for fifteen years, in the state of Indiana. I lived in Fennville for five years and then came here.

JM: Did you have a restaurant in Indiana too?

IS: No. I work in the kitchen of a restaurant. In Fennville I worked as a waitress.

JM: So the same stuff?

IS: Yes, it is the same.

JM: How old were your kids when they came here?

IS: My oldest son was seven years and my daughter was five years and my other daughter was three years.

JM: Then they all went to school?

IS: Yes, both kids studied.

JM: Then did they learn English at school?

IS: Yes.

JM: Do you still speak Spanish at home?

IS: Yeah, because I don't speak very much English, working all the time. My daughter, she only speaks Spanish in the house.

JM: Do you think since they know both languages that it helps them?

IS: Yes.

JM: I think that is it.

IS: You forgot nothing..

JM: I don't think so. It is very interesting though.