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Ruiz, Sacoro Oral History Interview: Class Projects

Martin Tilley

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Interviewee: Mrs. Sacoro Ruiz
Interviewers: Martin Tilley & Susanne Hagan

Hagan: We would like to know if you are a native American or are you from Mexico?
Mrs. R.: No, I am from Mexico.
Hagan: How long ago did you come from Mexico?
Mrs. R.: I have been living in Holland for seventeen years.
Hagan: How did you come here?
Mrs. R.: I was married in 1959, and I moved to the United States with my husband in 1960.
Hagan: Where did you live when you were in Mexico?
Mrs. R.: Nuevo Laredo, Tamolipas, Mexico. Across the border from Laredo, Texas.
Hagan: Can you tell us about growing up in Mexico?
Mrs. R.: Do you want to know about my family?
Hagan: Well, about you.
Mrs. R.: I come from a family of eleven children. I am the oldest one and my mom and dad still live in Mexico.
Tilley: Do you return there often?
Mrs. R.: I try to be there every two years.
Hagan: Do your parents still practice the old style of Christmas?
Mrs. R.: Yes, they still practice Diposadas. This is the nine days before Jesus was born. This is a time of a lot of praying and worship. At this time we eat a lot of Mexican dishes.
Tilley: Could you give us the name of one of these dishes?
Mrs. R.: It is called Buñuelos. This is a very good dish. We eat them all the time. I don't know how to tell you how to make them, but I can show you sometime.
Hagan: At Christmas time, do you share gifts or anything?
Mrs. R.: Yes, we share gifts, but it is different. Things have changed.
Hagan: Did you ever go caroling at night in Mexico during the Christmas when you were a child?
Mrs. R.: Yes, we did but it is not the same in Mexico as it is in Holland.
Hagan: It is too cold here during the winter to do much caroling.
Hagan: What type of celebration do you have here at Christmas?
Mrs. R.: We have many celebrations but one thing we do is play with a lot
of firecrackers.

Tilley: Do you celebrate Christmas like we do at the Fourth of July?
Mrs. R.: Yes, yes. But we don’t have drink. No, only the praise and singing and adoration of Him, and a supper we eat.

Hagan: And what is the Christmas season like in Holland?
Mrs. R.: It is not like the old times. It is to bad to say that, but you know, it is the weather. It is kind of hard to go out, but we have some families who do go caroling. They have been doing it for two or three years now. I think it is nice. It is a better way to have more communication in the community. There are so many types of people in community and they should be brought together, yes, so many types of people.

Hagan: At Christmas time, what do you do to Celebrate it?
Mrs. R.: Right now?

Hagan: When Christmas comes, here in Holland.
Mrs. R.: Well, we celebrate Christmas nine days before the birth of Christ. I usually buy a Christmas tree and put it up right away. Then we decorate it together, my family and I, you know. We really don’t have a specific celebration, just a lot of fun. We are not really interested in gifts. We give just a few things. When I was a little girl, I only got a few things like for example, I got a note book, a pencil and one delicious apple, and maybe some candies. I did not come from a rich family, but my father had and still has a good job. We always had a lot of firecrackers though.

Hagan: For Christmas, do you have American food or do you have Mexican Food?
Mrs. R.: Well, I serve American food. We used to eat Mexican food like pinto beans but any more. At the Christmas meal, we have turkey and we have chickens for dinner too. We eat together on the special night.

Tilley: Mrs. Ruiz, What do you do for a living?
Mrs. R.: Well, I do a lot of work in the community, but on a voluntary basis. I go to school right now, but my poor English, I learn by actual communication.

Tilley: That is one of the best ways to learn.
Mrs. R.: Yes, yes. It is hard, but that is true. I also believe a woman can stay home and be happy.

Tilley: Do you like the American tradition of Christmas better than the Mexican tradition?
Mrs. R.: No, no. I don't think so. I like the old ways, but the weather around here does not let us do the old things. It is hard to get around here during the winter. Too much snow.

Tilley: I can guess that you do not like snow.

Mrs. R.: No, I like it.

Tilley: You don't see too much of it in Mexico.

Mrs. R.: No, no. You know, another thing about Mexico, it is kind of hard to believe, but the Mexican people believe that America is the best country in the world!!

Tilley: It really is.

Mrs. R.: We believe the government follows very carefully the directions of the law. In Mexico it is very different. We have many poor people. People work at jobs but they get very low pay. Food and rent are high and their salaries are not enough to get by on. A person who has a lot of children, is very hard.

Hagan: About the buñuelos, can you tell us about them?

Mrs. R.: I can not do them now, but we can do them later.

Mrs. Ruiz said she would do them for us at a later date, so we agreed. She does them from memory and not from a written recipe. We are going to see her next Tuesday.

End