

12-3-1984

Interview no. 758

Raquel Windsor

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Interview with Raquel Windsor by Rubén Moreno, 1984, "Interview no. 758," Institute of Oral History, University of Texas at El Paso.

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UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO

INSTITUTE OF ORAL HISTORY

INTERVIEWEE:	<u>Raquel Windsor (1907-)</u>
INTERVIEWER:	<u>Rubén Moreno</u>
PROJECT:	<u>Class Assignment</u>
DATE OF INTERVIEW:	<u>December 3, 1984</u>
TERMS OF USE:	<u>Unrestricted</u>
TAPE NO.:	<u>758</u>
TRANSCRIPT NO.:	<u>758</u>
TRANSCRIBER:	<u>Rubén Moreno</u>

BIOGRAPHICAL SYNOPSIS OF INTERVIEWEE:

Born in ~~Brown~~sville of Mexican parents, lived in Rio Grande area of Texas as a child. Her uncle was Mexican Consul in Corpus Christi and Houston.

SUMMARY OF INTERVIEW:

Experiences of being a Spanish-speaking girl of Mexican heritage living in South Texas during the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s.

Length of Interview: 1 hour, 45 min. Length of Transcript 47 pages

Raquel Windsor
December 3, 1984
Ruben Moreno
Class Assignment

M: My name is Ruben Moreno and I am interviewing Raquel Windsor of 4255 Algonquin.

W: 6255.

M: 6255 Algonquin, and this is part of an oral history project for Latin, Mexican-American History.

W: For what?

M: Mexican-American History.

W: Mexican-American. Oh well, then you're right there.

M: Mrs. Windsor, where were you born and when?

W: I was born in Brownsville, Texas. Brownsville, you know how to spell it don't you? Oh, you're not going to write it down?

M: No, I'm just going to get it on the tape recorder.

W: Oh, you're recording it. Brownsville, Texas. I was born June 26, 1907, 77 years ago. I'm going to be 78 in June of next year.

M: What ethnic background were your parents? Where were they born?

W: My father. You want to know where were they born and what you mean by ethnic means what kind of people they had as their parents or grandparents?

M: Right.

W: As far as I know they are strictly Indian-Spanish. Now, many people when we were growing up and so on would speak of my dad, you know. They would ask him if he was Spaniard and he would say, "No!" I am an Indian, a Mexican Indian." So I don't know if that's true. I have some pictures of my dad and Indians are not very (laughs) hairy and my father had, at

that time... He was a very handsome man and he had a big mostacho. When he was about 33 you know he became a widower. And Papa spoke Spanish. The only English language he knew and he used to kid about it and that's how I came to know about it. I saw him years, many years after my marriage and he said, "Raquel, the only English I know is 'How much'". He would buy all of his agricultural equipment in San Antonio and then he had to pass it across the river and pay, you know, what is is called? You'd have to pay duty.

M: Some kind of tariff?

W: Duty and everything to pass everything over there. Papa, now he worked. Oh, when he married my mother, my mother was a Texan. Now my father claimed to be, as I told you, a Mexican Indian. But his sister Maria Resendes Olvera used to tell me--she was his youngest sister--she used to say that their family, you know that's the Olvera Resendes, had came here from Spain. But she never lived in Spain or anything. She had heard that among the older people and though they would come here all the way to Rio Grande I think it was, and they had cattle, you know, to sell. It was business. They stay there, you know. Some of them settle there. Rio Grande is right across from Villa Acuna. So I don't know about this story about him being puro indio. Anyway, he speaks only Spanish and he is muy Mexicano de costumbres viejas but very modern in business and a very fine architect and all the money he would make building churches, building houses, building bridges he spent the money on land in Mexico.

M: So he would buy the land in Mexico?

W: So he would work. He did an awful lot of building. See, my mother was born in Texas, in Brownsville, Texas. My grandmother, her mother, was Eugenia Raynor Pena, and she was born in Ohio. My grandmother spoke

beautiful English--perfect, because she grew up in that part of the world where everyone speaks English you know. Here in la frontera, we all speak Spanish because the family at home all speak Spanish. See, I didn't know English at all until after I married because my mother died when I was very young. She died in 1917, and I was very young. She died in 1917, and I was born in 1907 so I was going on about 10 and my dad didn't know what to do. They had been living in Texas because she was Texan and they were living in Brownsville.

M: They got married here?

W: Yes, they got married in the Presbyterian Church, 'cause all my mother's family were what you called Protestants among the Mexicans. Gente Protestante. My grandmother was a Methodist, my uncle was a Mason and a Methodist--that's her younger son, my mother's brother--and on my daddy's side he was a Mason but he was a Roman Catholic. He had grown up as an altar boy in the Roman Catholic [Church] in Mexico, and his sisters were strictly Roman Catholic people. So I had a whale of religious education because I go and spend a few months, you know, with Tia Maria. I have pictures of myself in my First Communion and she had me attend, go to confession Fridays and go to church on Sundays and I understood the Roman Catholic teachings and then when I came in the summer to be with my grandmother's family in Texas, there were Methodists, Presbyterians and depending upon where they were living. See, grandmother was a teacher. Is this too long for your recording?

M: No, no that's fine. That's fine.

W: Grandmother was teaching at Kingsville. The school still exists. It was called the Tex-Mex Presbyterian School or the Tex-Mex something. The school is still there. They had 300 boys.

R. Windsor

M: In Brownsville?

W: No, this was close to Edinburg. Kingsville, Texas, is close to Brownsville you know. It's just like going here beyond Las Cruces, you know, but Brownsville is the key city right by the Rio Grande and the Gulf of Mexico. And then there's San Benito and McAllen and Dona and little towns one after another like little towns here, Odessa and all these places around here. They married in the United States 'cause my mother was a Texan and they married in the Presbyterian church because I guess he thought God is everywhere. That is their idea. You know I have a picture of my dad's truck en el rancho in 1950 or so--I'll show it to you later--and right in the front of this truck. It was a truck that carried the cotton, a la despepitadora, mills. Take it to the mills, you know. And it says "Dios Adelante". Papa was very religious but he never... He acted; he didn't talk about it, you know. He never talked about God or anything but he did have a--you can see it there in that picture, "Dios Adelante".

M: It was a kind of a hidden faith.

W: Yeah, yeah, and I think it help him a great deal in many ways 'cause my Papa told me in 1951. I didn't see him a long time after my marriage and when he came to visit with me, he told me that he had lost and made a fortune three times. And that's when he said, "Hija, cuando yo nací quedé huérfano muy chico." He said he went to work when he was 12 years old. Learned carpentry with a friend and he was getting--I can't remember-- might have been \$3 or \$6. It was a very small amount of money every week, and he'd bring that to his mother. He says to support her 'cause he was an orphan. To help her, you know, Mama Regina as we called her. Now I remember. She was tall about 5 ft. 8 1/2, 9" with green

eyes. Definitely she had an air of...Papa said she was Indian, but all of them looked very, very...it [would] be hard to tell what they were. You know they could have been Italians, they could [have] been Syrians, they could have been Mexicans, mixture with Indians and so on. But the puro indio es diferente, and they can't grow a beard. They have no hair so. I didn't know that. I found it out through the years 'cause Papa would kid about, "he was puro indio", and I think it's because he lived in Mexico and he liked Mexico and that saved a lot of explanation, you know. Papa wasn't interested in genealogy or appearing to be great. He was interested in his work and increasing his ranchos. Todo el dinero que se ganaba in los estados Unidos, you know building churches, building bridges, building houses he would invest it on land.

M: Back in Mexico?

W: Back in Mexico alli como unas ciento-cincuenta millas de Matamoros, Tamaulipas. That's extreme south from here, you know; and then he had el Venadito that was one of his ranches which I remember; and then later on he bought land deeper into Mexico, you know. After mother died about a year and a half or so later he never came back to the United States. He went back to Mexico to his lands and most of the land was, how would I say, como bosque. You know I mean they lived on lots of acres of land because land was cheap, you know, at that time. That's been 70 years ago.

M: What year was that?

W: 'Cause I'm 77 and I was 10 or 12 when Papa was buying these lands. And in those days Mexico would sell you enormous amounts of land for very little money, but the problem that Papa had was there was no irrigation. See? And when he came to visit me in '51, he told me that three times he

had lost and built a fortune. He said there were times when he didn't have five cents to ride from the city to the border, you know to the bridge, because he would have everything ready. Maybe he had invested \$5,000 in the land, you know, rotating crops and things like that; and then something would happen. A big drought on the river, y ahí viene el río y ahí viene el río; and I remember that Papa didn't sleep all night. There would be big pots of coffee and he'd get many men and they would go--I don't know, 25 men--they would go with him to work and see if they could... They would take sacks and sacks and sacks filled with dirt and so on trying to stop the river, el Rio Grande.

M: Kind of like a dike or dam?

W: Yes, to protect the farm you know, and usually that's where he would lose. They didn't have irrigation, and so when he began to really make his second fortune because at the beginning Papa was more of a merchant, you know. He had a...me acuerdo yo, tenía una tienda muy grande. It was a wholesale store and he called it El Borrego; and he had a beautiful borrego, hanging up there back and forth. That was in Brownsville just before my mother died. El Borrego and then when he moved to Matamoros he called it--como se llamaba--Maybe it will come later on but this is another part that's very strange.

I grew up after my mother's death, and I was very young. I grew up strictly with people that Papa would hire to do the work at home. He put me as an intern in a convent because to his way of reasoning, he said, "What can I do with two little girls," 11 years and 9 years, and he didn't want to leave us at home. He was gone a lot of the times with his interest in things he had to do. So he would hire a family, a good woman and a good man with their children, with their men, you know, young, 18,

19. And what daddy would do: the woman would take care of us. She would fix the meals for us and do the washing and all that. He'd take the man to the ranch with him and the young men to work with him. And he would tell me, "Raquel, tu eres la mayor. You look after your brother that he's bathed, that he has his clean clothes." Whoever the servant happened to be--I can't remember. I remember only one, Antonia Nieves--he said, "Always do what the servants tell you. Never argue with them. They are everything to you. You got to trust them. You got to depend on them because I'm going to be gone for 6 weeks." I remember he would have his moral; he'd get on his horse and his gun, and his moral con biscochos, comidas, carne seca, you know. All those things I learned by watching and seeing, you know, and he would leave us with absolute strangers. This is during the summertime, and I learned to love those people as if they were my own family. Whoever it was, you know. I never thought of them simply as criados; son mujeres ignorantes, son pobres. Al contrario, you know, I found that, well they cooked my meals for me; they had my clothes clean; they close the doors sometimes, you know, at night and all that. So I would take care of my sister and my brother, so I was so old you know--I was 11, 12--And Papa would be gone and then when he'd come in everything was just right, no problems.

M: This was back in Mexico right?

W: All this was after my mother died when we moved to Mexico. I was in Mexico. See, I was born in the United States. I was baptized in the United States in the Presbyterian Church. My mother's, well, they were really Methodists, but my mother would go to any Protestant church according to the town we were living in. See, Brownsville only had the Presbyterian Mexican Church, and she could go to the big American

churches that spoke English and all that, but she always preferred to go to the Spanish-speaking groups, you know. They didn't have a Methodist; they only had Presbyterian, so that's where we went. Then when I lived in Corpus. That's later on when I came to live with my grandmother after my daddy's second marriage. Then we lived in Corpus Christi, and my mother brother who was older than she was, he was the Mexican Consul. He had been educated in Mexico City, and he wanted to be a minister at the beginning, and he wanted to be educated in Mexico, 'cause he wanted to work among the Mexican people. He spoke beautiful English because he had his primary training in the United States, but he went to Mexico City and after he had been there a year or so, according to what if I remember correctly to what grandmother said, he decided he would go into the consulate business, government work, and he changed his degree. So when he got out of there, when he got his university degree in the University of Mexico he got in the Mexican Consulate. Started as a secretary in the Mexican Consulate in Corpus Christi.

M: What year was this?

W: Corpus Christi, Texas. He wanted to be a Mexican, work for the Mexican people in the United States, and to do that you had to be educated in Mexico. He was of Spanish-speaking people. I mean he was not a German educated in Mexico or an Irishman. He was a Mexican. Well, and so my uncle came to Corpus Christi. By the time we came to live with him and my grandmother, the churches... Church life was very important in my life. I didn't select that. It was just the way I grew up. It was life. If I was with my father's family it was baptism. I was baptized also in the Roman Catholic Church when I was 11.

M: So you were baptized in both churches?

R. Windsor

W: Yes, because I go live with my daddy's family and Tia Maria, she felt that it was her duty. You just simply don't let a girl grow up and she's not baptized, because she did not recognize the Presbyterian training. She didn't know anything about it. And so she had me baptized in Matamoros, Mexico. Matamoros, Tamaulipas, the state of Tamaulipas. Which is like Ciudad Juarez and El Paso. Over there era Matamoros, Tamualipas and Brownsville, Texas, but I was born in Brownsville. After my mother's death, my dad did not want to stay in the United States anymore. He never came back to live here.

M: Never came back again?

W: Never. He went back to Mexico. He had lands there and he had been piling up his money there. He had a goat ranch and he had a cow ranch, and oh Papa had all kind sof business going on. And he would take me with him sometimes. You know, at 3 o'clock in the morning I'd get on the horse with him and we sing songs and Papa was, oh he was just precious. I sure felt very bad, because uh, well, I was a little... It was my aunt's counseling, my aunt, his sister Tia Maria, that I was talking to you about that had me baptized and had me make my First Communion. I have pictures of myself, you know, with my rosary and my candle, and oh-boy I had all kinds of saints and things. I believed everything.

M: Very traditional.

W: Well, I loved that kind of life you know, and I liked everything they told me. And the strange thing, and this is really very rare, all of my mother's family: Tio Elizandro, my grandmother, Tia Chole, and so on and my father's family: Tia Maria, Tia Chole, they loved each other. They respected each other; there never was any arguments about religion. Each one minded their own business. My aunt Tia Maria had never read a Bible

in her life. I gave her the first Bible after I grew up to be 21, 22 and I help her read it and so on, and just because I thought she would love it and she did. And it didn't change her faith for the Roman Catholic Church at all. You know it gave her enlightenment, see? It made her understand it better.

And so I learned many things from my family because I lived with so many different people. They were all relatives you know, but we didn't have a mother and then my dad inculcated. Nos inculcó que tratáramos bien a los criados, a los sirvientes, porque después de todo ellos eran los que nos daban vida: la comida, el alimento, la ropa, everything. So that you know I grew up completely without having any sense of superiority toward anybody, and I still do it, you know. I get along with what most Anglo-American people and the snob Mexicans would say [are] trashy people... People who don't speak English, people who don't have any background or education, but they are clean, wholesome people who just work, you know.

So it's been nice. It was a good life, I think in a way, of course it might have been better; and to make it short, see my father remarried again. It was my aunts. She loved Tia Maria; she was the older sister, the one that would take care of us in the summer. And she Tia Maria started saying, "Julio, cástate. Estas niñas necesitan tener hogar, que estas niñas ya no estén encerradas." Well, Papa didn't want to get married; he was too busy. He had too many interests and things, but finally he decided that maybe it would be a good thing, you know, to have a mother for his children. I had to live with Tia Maria in Camargo or near Tamaulipas somewhere, wherever her family lived, you know, her husband, and this way we would be with Daddy, you know. So he got

married. Oh, I cried; I thought it was the end of the world when they told me Papa was going to get married. I just felt horrible. I felt like I was losing a world and I cried, but Papa never knew about it, you know. My aunt knew about it and she would tell me that it would be nice and that I would have a mother and this and that.

Well I only lived in the home of my stepmother about one year and my grandmother, that's my mother's mother, Eugenia Raynor Pena, the moment she knew that Papa was getting married she started coming over to visit my stepmother. She would bring her nice things, you know, beautiful towels from Texas, nice gifts, things for the home and all that, and making friends with her--making friends with her--and she would say to her in front of me, "Yo quiero que tú me ayudes a que Julio me dé las dos niñas. Yo quiero llevarme a los dos niñas de Elvira--that was my mother--a las dos ninas de Elvira a vivir conmigo." Y, y, my stepmother, she liked that. You know she thought "por que no?" Ellas son de Resendes Pena, y she was expecting a baby anyway. So she had her first baby in 1920 and in about two, three months, I thought the baby was lovely. I used to sing songs to the kid and rock her in bed, but about six months after that, my grandmother came to see if it was possible to bring us to the United States for a visit. My dad was very much against it, you know. I was then 15 because I was an orphan since about 12 and he married about 4 years afterwards. Papa didn't want me to come to the United States. He wanted me to stay here, because I was his favorite, you know. He had plans for me; he was going to send me to the university and all sorts of things; but my stepmother thought that I would be happier with my mother's family and without arguments or anything finally after nearly a year after my grandmother started trying to get us here, I

came to live with my grandmother and Elizandro Pena, her son, the one I told you was the Mexican Consul in Corpus. And I never went back to Mexico until the time that I got married. I stayed with them all these years, and oh, I don't know why I wasn't sent to American schools. I was old enough probably. I'm sure that I would've learned English, but we never thought about it you know. I belong to the Latin American Club, and... I read extensively en Espanol, and my aunt read extensively. Tia Chole, la esposa de m' tfo, she and I were very good friends and I continued my piano lessons and my paintings that I loved to paint. I never had a teacher, but I just love to paint, you know. On and off I'd have spells of painting; I have some nice drawings and oil paintings and things; and practically everything I've done, it was something I like. And so that's about the background that I had until I met Windsor later on and got married when I was 21.

M: This club, was it here in the United States? This Latin American Club?

W: The club that we visited? In Corpus Christi, I lived in Corpus Christi. In Corpus Christi we attended the Baptist Church, because Corpus did not have Presbyterian Church or Methodist Church. We attended the Baptist Church. My uncle got very heavily involved in protecting very poor Mexican people. That was part of his job; that's what he was there for.

M: Your uncle who was the Mexican Consul?

W: He worked an awful lot with the Mexican people. The Mexican people would go to the Consulate for advice, for counseling, for protection. I was too young to understand what was going on although sometimes he would tell incidents at the table when we were all having dinner; and I remember in particular that he said that he probably was going to have to be moved from Corpus Christi because he was making a lot of enemies among

very wealthy cattle people and American people that dealt with Mexicans. And he said, something about some very simple Mexican people that owned...well maybe they had two, three acres of land...that a lot of sacrifice, and they borrowed money for their crops and, for their little chozas, and then something happen and the crops failed and they couldn't make their payments and so on. And the rich Americans that had helped them would, well, "You can't pay," so they take everything.

M: So they would take the land?

W: They would take the land; they would take the home. Then they would come to the Mexican Consul, you know, because they didn't know what to do and in many instances my uncle caught on that some of these things were, well, they were just too...the people were too simple-minded and they were being taken. And so he became very heavily involved trying to help them to at least maintain in some way you know, through small payments or borrowing money, to help them. They didn't speak English.

M: Which made it harder.

W: Well, that's why, and they were simple people but they were hard working people. And I don't know much about it because I was too young to even appreciate it, but Tio Elizandro sometimes would talk about such things in front of us so that we would learn what's going on in the world. He spoke English perfect, Spanish and French, 'cause he had to, to have a good knowledge of the world. He was a highly educated man, a 32 degree Mason and his life was protecting the Mexican people. And in Corpus Christi he got threatened, his life got threatened after, well I think I was with them there about three years and all of the sudden I don't know what happened. I don't remember anything clear about it, but all of the sudden Tio Elizandro was moved to Houston. He left almost without warning

and it took us a month before we could follow. You know, my aunt had to close the house, sell furniture and all that, and get ready to make the move: what do we take and so we went by car. So we moved to Houston, and he started there doing the same things, Consul Mexicano de México, Elizandro Peña, see? In Houston we...it was different there. In Corpus Christi we went to the Baptist Church. In Houston the Mexican people had--way about five miles out of the center of Houston--there was Brother Wolmendorff. He had whiskers; he was kind of old; he spoke Spanish atrocious. You could hardly understand him, but he was the minister of the Mexican people. And all the people who came to see him... It was a little church, about maybe 100 people in the congregation, and most of the time there would be only 25, 30 you know, a bunch of little kids and...

I never had a mother really but I had many mothers, you know: Tia Maria and grandmother anyway. In Houston, Tia Chole said, being the Mexican Consul, and he was a handsome man; he was very tall, very dark, beautiful features. I'll show you. I have pictures of him, a handsome man and everybody loved him. And we would be invited, he was invited, he and Tia Chole, among the best American families you know, because of, you know [he was] Mexican Consul and everybody wants to get along with somebody in position to do something.

M: Especially of higher status.

W: Yes, sure it wouldn't never been that way if he had been a very rich man and not just a farmer. You it's different, but it was the position of Mexico. So, in Houston we got in with the Latin American Club. My uncle wanted us to have contact and Tia Chole would say, well we could go to the American churches and that's what we would do. Oh, I knew many, many

religious songs because Tia Chole played the organ all the time. She had an organ that she could take with her in any picnic or anywhere you know. And Tio Elizandro had a very beautiful tenor voice. I had an alto voice. It wasn't very pretty but I could sing alto, and Tia Chole had a soprano. Ad Chacho Pena, my cousin--who was the older son, he was my own age, but he was the older son of my uncle--Elizandro pena Jr., had a very nice bass voice. So we would spend every evening, my aunt would teach us himnos religiosos Protestantes you know, and oh I know many of them. I still remember. I have tres canciones diferentes populares y unas cuantos muy viejos. En casa es que, at home we have religion all the time. Religious songs at night and on Wednesdays we went to church practically all the time and where was church? This little bitty church about five or eight miles from the center part of town with Brother Wolmendorff. We would go there with him.

M: He was German?

W: I don't know what he was. At that time I didn't know anything about races except that he was different and people that would come there, they were very poor. He handled them the best he could, and when we went there that's when I became a teacher overnight, without any education. My aunt walked in there and she saw you know, there was about nine or ten little girls between 6 and 12. They didn't have anybody to teach them. Their mothers were there. Brother Wolmendorff was doing what he could, alone. He didn't have anyone to help him because the people, they were not educated. So what does Tia Chole do? I go with her. We got in the car, and Enrique--uno de los muchachos jovenes que mi tía siempre, well, he would haul her anywhere she wanted to go you know. He was a member of the church--took us over there and my Aunt took a look at

everything and she handed me...I'll never forget this...she handed me the Sunday school class for that Sunday. I wish to goodness I could remember when it was, but I was very young. She handed me the class and she said, "Raquel, aquí estan estas niñas. Anda, enséñales la lección de este domingo." I looked at her. I didn't know what she was talking about, you know. I hadn't been with her too long, and at first I did not want to go to the Protestant Church because--just to show you how simple a child can be--I had been in the convent there for years, you know, except in the summer.

M: In Mexico.

W: Crecí con el padre dándonos consejos. Every Friday I went to confession and I confess all my sins, you know. I always talked to him and I chew gum and I did everything wrong you know, and the priest would ask me to go to the altar and pray, "Dios te salve María," so many Salve Marías," you know, religious Catholic Church work. And he ask me never to do things like that again and so on. So I was a very good Catholic. I believed everything he told me and I believed in every saint and I love saints. I thought that the story of the saints and the pictures of the saints...when the time came that my grandmother was going to bring us to live here. After all this I was nearly 16 you know. I had at least six years in the Catholic convent; I went to confession; and during confession I told the priest. I was going to have to live with my mother's family and my mother had been gone for many years because mother was separated from us for two years before she died because of her condition.

It was a long condition and that is very strange. I don't know if it is important that you should know how she developed this condition of

the lungs. Mother was a piano teacher. She loved to make candy, and sometimes she would have a little boy to go sell candy so that she would make very special dulces de maquey. She liked to do all kinds of things and one day she was alone at home, you know. Papa had brought a nice big house and several smaller houses for all around. I think they been married, well I was about probably 8, 9, that was about a year and a half, no 3 years before she died. Mama was in good health, everything. Well, she used to wear these long flannel skirts and they had braceros in every room. In Brownsville there was no such thing as gas. They had braceros con carbon, you know, of dirt. And I just faintly remember that she had a big, big stove of iron that you don't see them anymore. She'd make tortillitas de manteca, tortillas de harina, and there was always leña, la leña ye el carbón and son on, and she would sit us--we were very young--she'd sit us wrapped up in blankets, you know, and she told us stories when she was making breakfast or something. Mother was very jolly and very happy. She died 27 years old. She married [at] 16. It's just pitiful because she was so talented, you know. I still have some of her music book and many things. Anyway, what happened: it was one of those... In Brownsville you can have a beautiful day like today and then suddenly ahí viene el norte y ahí viene el norte and everybody starts talking about it, you know. And then suddenly the clouds get real low and it's cloudy and everything. There comes this horrible wind. I mean los nortes in Brownsville, they are terrible and the thermometer will go from 70 down to 30, you know, just like that. It doesn't last but two days. Well, mother was going around with her flannel skirts and she had these braceros, you know, and her skirt caught fire and she didn't know it. See I don't remember this; grandmother told me all this because I

was very young and grandmother explain to us, you know. I knew something had happened, and I'd remembered some things but I didn't know why. But after I grew up grandmother told me the whole story. My mother did not know that her skirts had caught fire until she felt, felt it getting into her body, see? And she got scared; she got panicky; there was no one there there. The girl that used to come to care of us wasn't there and it's a good thing she got out of the house to the backyard trying to get help. It had rained very much the night before and all around the house they had barriles because they used to like the rain water; and they had these barriles para tener agua de lluvia. Porque decían que era muy saludable, que era la mejor agua para lavarse el pelo, and you know ideas antiguas. Rainwater is different; it's very good. So mother got out and for a while she tried, the skirts were all on fire with the wind and everything. El norte estaba horrible, and suddenly she saw the los barriles of agua. So she ran and got in there!

M: She jumped in there.

W: She jumped into it! And she stopped, she stopped the fire you know, and she kept on yelling and finally I don't know what happened. It seems to me that grandmother said that by the time she was able to get out of there, she had been burned. Her legs and some part of her back had been burned but not enough...apparently it didn't seem to be enough that she could walk and everything. I mean it didn't hurt her that she could move, because she got to it in time. But she had been burned, and the water and the heat and all those things. But she had been burned, and the water and the heat and all those things.

She was pregnant. My last brother Rogelio was, I think he was six months already on his way. Well, mother went to the doctor, the way

grandmother tells it. My brother, my youngest brother, was born. See, mother died a year--a year afterwards, yeah about that--after my brother. She left my brother as a little bitty boy you know; and Rogelio was born, and right about that time Mother seemed to have a cold, a perennial cold, and she'd cough a lot you know, and she didn't pay much attention to it. After Rogelio was born she did go to the doctor and the doctor examined her and he said, "My dear lady, you have tuberculosis on both lungs." He said, "You have galloping tuberculosis," that's what they called it, "and there's no cure for it." See, that's when I was about 10 or something like that. You know, those days tuberculosis was something everybody dreaded. Yeah, because there was no cure for it, you know. So grandma found out about it; she came home discuss it with my dad and everything. Tio Elizandro, the one that I was talking to you about, decided that the best thing would be for him and grandmother to take care of Mother because the doctor said, "You'll be gone in less than two years." Because it was developing very fast and I guess he did what he could. He said, "I recommend that they get you a home out in the country and that you live alone." But she had a cough, a perpetual cough you know.

I remember faintly just this one scene. She went to see Tia Maria and the moment she knew she had that disease, immediately she talked to my dad and said, "I want you to take the kids; leave them with Maria," because Tia Maria didn't have any children. "Have her take care of them until we know what we can do, you know. In the meantime Tio Elizandro said, "Come and be with us. We get you a home way out in Laredo, Texas." My mother is buried in Laredo, Texas. My uncle was there as Mexican Consul. That was long before I came to live with them. He must have been in other places, but this was in Laredo. He got a little house

in the country and got somebody to be there with mother because the doctor said they could prolong her life. He didn't say she'd get well but if she was out in the open and not be in the city. Well, that was what they could do in those days. Anyway, Mother managed to make a trip to Camargo, Tamaulipas, and I do remember the cough got so bad, and she would spit blood. She always would carry a spittoon, you know, that she had disinfected, and she carried [it] with her so that she wouldn't, you know, spit where people would be around or something. She went to see Tia Maria and Rogelio my little brother must have been about 9 months or a year old. She went to see Tia Maria and she said, "I want you to raise this baby." Now she had sisters and brothers but she wanted Rogelio... Tia Maria had no children. She'd been married many years and she loved my mother. So do you know? She accepted my brother Rogelio as a little baby. And I remember later, years later when Rogelio was 19, 20, one of the old fashion Mexican people of long ago, she was kind of superstitious? She used to say, "God never gave me a family because I was to be the mother of the orphans in the family." She meant my little brother. They even change his name to their name, you know. Her husband name was entirely different, and my brother grew up with her. He didn't grew up at all with daddy or with us except that every summer I would go visit her. He and I were very close and we still are, you know. I saw him when I was in Dallas; he came to see me last year. But getting back to this. All of this it sounds so contradictory yet all of it happened and so fast. It seems to me that I was all the time... Now that I'm old I marvel at how could I adjust to this continuous change. It seems that's all I ever had, you know. If we were not at school with teachers, we were with some relative, with different people or with some servants,

with Papa and Papa had just somebody to work for him.

M: During this constant moving...

W: Constantly it seems to me that when I was young, it was a constant going on. In the summers I would go al rancho de Papa, de mi Papa. Regina y yo, las dos, and we had lots of fun. We'd run barefoot; we had a big ol' horse and we called it El Monjino, and he had great big ol' back, you know, and we would go and ride him without saddle or anything. There was lots of sour oranges, kumquats and things that you don't see in this part of the country, and would take the horse so we could stand on him and get anything we wanted from the trees. It was nice, it was fun and everything, but it was kind of very alone, you know. I mean nobody seemed...they were all good and kind to us but they were..it's not like your mother. It's just not Mama and Daddy, you know; and Daddy had to work.

So when we arrived in Houston on account of all these problems in Corpus Christi. The Mexican government changed my uncle to Houston. In Houston Brother Wolmendorff was in charge of the church that we attended all those years--which was maybe two years; it seems awful long. Tia Chole was a very fair woman almost with blonde hair. She did not speak English. She would not speak English but she would read, everything, novels in English. She would read them en Espanol, and she asked me at nights, you know. My uncle would be out late; come in about one o'clock in the morning with a chicken and all kinds of good things to eat; and my aunt would say, "Raquel, quieres que te lea Edgar Allen Poe en español," and I said, "Si, cómo no?" And I get in the bed with her you know, put on my pajamas, and get into bed with her and she'd pick that book in English, and she'd read it to you in Spanish.

R. Windsor

M: In Spanish?

W: Perfect! But she wouldn't go to the American churches except to sing. We were invited to sing and we'd practice at home all the time, and so we would go to the churches. The family of the Mexican Consul would go and entertain them with religious music, or we would sing on the radio. We'd go to the radio station and they would announce that Elizandro Peña's family were singing. Well, that was propaganda para México because he was the representative of Mexico and as many friends that he could have among American people, it was good for Mexico see? And it was business but he was sincere; he liked the American people, he really did, but my aunt would not cooperate. She would be invited to banquets and you know what she would do? She'll dress me up. Lord! She'd go and spend \$12 on a pair of shoes and dress me up with a beautiful dress and everything and she said, "You go; tú anda con tu tío y representa la familia. A mí no me gustan esas cosas." She wouldn't go and she send me and I had to go among a bunch of people that I knew nothing about. I was the only young girl there, and they were all Anglo-Americans but they were good people. They always would treat us so nice. It must have been his position, and you know, my aunt did not kid herself. She knew that it wouldn't be that way, but it was his position. So we had very interesting experiences, and that about in a nutshell.

In Houston I started teaching without any instructions and I started to tell you I didn't want to go to the church because the last time I talked to a Roman Catholic priest in Matamoros, Tamaulipas, I told him I was going to go back to my mother's family [and] they were Protestants and everything. And he said to me, and I believed him. "No visite usted iglesias Protestantes. Si usted va a las iglesias Protestantes le quitan

su fe." That's the way he put it. "They will take away your faith."

"So you visit the Catholic church, you know. You're a Catholic; you were born a Catholic; you were baptized a Catholic." Well, that was partially true you know, depending upon which side I was with. If I was with my mother's family they were Methodists and Presbyterian. If I was with my father's family, they were Roman Catholics but they got along beautifully so I had no problems. I came to Corpus Christi, and Grandmother would never say go to church, you know. Tia Chole would say, "Raquel, quieres ir a la iglesia?" "Uh-uh. No, no. Yo no soy Protestante." I was very honest, you know. I had an awful lot of Catholic teaching, years of it, eight years. And "No, yo no quiero ir, tia. Yo soy Catolica," and she wouldn't say anything. She'd go on. That went on for about two months and I wouldn't go, you know. I'd go to the Catholic church by myself and I walk about two blocks to church and come back. Grandmother wouldn't say anything. Finally, after, uh, it might have been three months or more, Grandmother said, "Raquel, a tí te gusta tanto leer y lees mucho. La iglesia Protestante es una escuela, hija; es una escuela dominical. Por qué no vas, tal vez, anda ve qué hay, qué hacen. Si no te gusta pos, no vas. Pero sí, a mí sí, yo creo que a tí te va a gustar. Dice, tienen conciones, tienen historias tan bonitas, religiosas. Anda y ve!" "No. Yo no puedo ir. Yo soy Catolica y yo no voy a la iglesia." "Al poco tiempo, otra vez," you know. "Anda, raquel, anda, ve, es bueno que aprendas, a tus ideas tuyas. Es bueno que decidas. No te creas de lo que te digan, lo que te digo yo. Mira, yo te estoy diciendo que si no te gusta, no vayas. Pero anda ve. Go find out about it!" Era muy razonable, mi abuela. Al fin, fui con me tía. So I go to church and what does she do? It was Brother Wolmendorff. I'd been several months

there, and what does she do? She handed me the Sunday school class, a paper about Sunday school. "There's those kids over there. They have no one to teach them anything. You go over there and teach them!" She didn't say how or anything. So there I was, sitting there alone with twelve little kids. Well, about the only thing I could think about, because I had see it done when I was, you know, before, was to read out loud the little sheet of paper and then ask them questions about it. So I started being a teacher without no training, no... Practically everything from then on it's been like that. I would find myself in conditions, environment, situations that I had no experience about and somebody had to do something. And we had a little more understanding and background than anybody else. So over there in Corpus Christi it wasn't so bad, but in Houston with Brother Wolmendorff, my aunt said, "Esta pobre gente, la gente ranchera, la gente humilde."

M: La gente mexicana.

W: Puro mexicano, ahí no los queria nadie. Mira en todos los pueblitos chicos, en Corpus Christi y si íbamos a Robstown, and the little towns, that you go like everywhere else. En todas, en todas las boticas había en letras grandes, "No mexicanos aquí." "No servimos a mexicanos." "No Mexicans here." That was everywhere in Corpus Christi, all round the small towns. There was lots of black people there, but the black people had more standing you know. They spoke English and everything. And at first I didn't understand it and it didn't bother me 'cause I was too ignorant you know, and too young, but then I began to find out why that was true. See, an awful lot of the Mexican people in the outskirts of the big cities of Corpus or Houston.

One time, to give you an illustration, we went out for a ride on a

Sunday afternoon. Tio Elizandro, en el verano, acababamos de llegar de Mexico. And I had never had these beautiful plates of ice cream, you know, with two different kinds of ice cream and bananas and all that because in Mexico la gente, el hombre que vende la nieve era de otra manera, verdad. I had never lived in Mexico City, or Guadalajara, or Monterrey so it's different. So I wanted to try some of this delicious things they talked about and my aunt and my sister and myself and Chacho and Tio Elizandro, we were all riding the Sunday afternoon to Robstown. That's close to Corpus, that's the first time it happened. And we were passing a drugstore that didn't say, "No Mexicanos aquí." So my aunt says, "Stop here, Chacho." She used to call him Chacho, Elizandro. "And go and get us some ice cream." So we stopped and of course I got off the car because I wanted to walk in with him, you know. I and Chacho got off and he walked in with his... I'll never forget it. He looked so nice with his white suit and very correct. He walked in and to get an order of what we needed you know, ice cream for all the family. And the man looked at him like he was something unspeakable. "We don't serve Mexicans here." "Oh," my uncle said, "Excuse me." That's all and walked out. I didn't understand any of it; I never heard anything like it in my life.

So we went out to the car and Tia Chole, "Qué pasó, Chacho?" "They don't serve Mexicans here, Chole." Oh! My God, she got...she was furious. She got real angry. Oh, she thought that was the biggest insult that anybody would have to put up with and even to think that in the United States and this and that. Tio Elizandro heard her rave like women would do, you know, and finally very cool, very like he...I never, never heard my uncle lose his temper. I never heard him say one thing

unkind about anyone. He said, "Chole, this is the United States,. This is a democracy. He is entitled to feed and open his store and do what he wants to do to whomsoever he wants to. This is the United States. It's his store. If he don't want Mexicans there well, we just don't go there. We'll try somewhere else." And that was it. So Tia Chole never said anything. See? Tio Elizandro was a genuine leader of the work he was doing. He knew what he was doing and you don't make progress by making enemies and by fighting. He didn't argue I'm a highly educated man. The man owned the store; this is the United States; he respected his rights. And I had the first lesson on democracy, which at the time I didn't even know what it was, you know. It took years when I began to relive these things and I thought, "Gee whiz how the world has changed."

M: Do you feel that feeling towards Mexicans, is that still very prevalent today?

W: I don't think so. It was still very prominent in 1943 when we arrived in El Paso. [But I was telling you about] 1921, 1922 right around that time, you know. That was all over Corpus, all over Houston and all the big cities, the smaller towns, and I found out why years later. I found out myself but it used to worry me a great deal when I was old enough to understand what was going on and I wanted to do what little I could to make things better for ourselves for the Mexicans. I found out. I know I'm not particularly outstanding in any way; I'm just a girl. But you know when I was 18, 19, I could go anywhere alone--to the best places, the most expensive places, and I was waited on and people were kind to me. And I couldn't even speak the language, and I point to know what I wanted and so on. I got along with all kinds of people. But let me go ahead and get two or three Mexican girls exactly like me, but maybe a

little bit different in color; they dress different. I go with them in a group and I would have to face this business about "we don't like Mexicans and we don't want Mexicans here."

One time, this was in Houston and we had been there some time. It was after this incident of the ice cream. I don't remember exactly what happened. There were some guests that my aunt had or that my uncle had and we were suppose to go to a dance. So one of the young men, he was much older than I was but he was not married; it was uncle's secretary or something. Uh, I was suppose to go with him, you know. It was all a family arrangement. I was older but I didn't know these racial things yet and my uncle and my aunt, we all went out that night to entertain this particular friend. I don't know he was going; he had been sent to be my uncle's secretary. I don't remember the story, but it was all very nice. And we went, I think it was called Sylvian beach in Houston. It was a special place where you pay so much and you went in to dance. Close to the...it was a beautiful environment. I don't remember everything but I think they called it Sylvian Beach and it was out of Houston. Maybe it was close to Galveston because of the word beach, you know. Anyway, we went and I remember I was dress up real nice 'cause my aunt always loved to, you know, get me to show off and it didn't mean much to me. I never was very, very--how would I say coqueta or urquillosa you know. I had grown up so different. So we went to this dance. My uncle paid for the entrance for all of us and there was an awful...there must have been at least ten couples dancing, Anglo-Americans you know, all shapes and sizes and everything. And we walked in and we began to dance on the floor with.

[END OF TAPE #1]

That was because the owner came to my uncle; and he was very polite and very nice. He didn't know who my uncle was but my uncle didn't come in and say, "I am the Mexican Consul." He would never do that. He just walked in, like he did, buying the ice cream. He just was one of the people. He walked to my uncle and he said, "I'm very sorry. If you tell me when you want this special night to come and bring your friends, I would have a night dedicated to you and your friends to and dance at my place, but tonight I'm very sorry I'm going to have to ask you to leave because these are very old customers. We've known them for years."

M: These Anglo-Americans?

W: All Anglos. There was no... In those days Mexicans and Americans didn't mix. No. Boy, never! That was impossible. But these men was very nice. He said, "I would have a special day for you. You can bring your friends, but these people are my old customers, and they won't dance as long as you're there." Well, probably we were speaking Spanish. I didn't speak English. They hated, they couldn't stand it if you spoke Spanish. Boy, you're just, you know, off you go. So, my uncle didn't...I don't remember. He was very polite, very nice. We got out of there immediately. Tia Chole, oh, oh, she hated United States and "I don't know why you chose this work, and I don't know why we couldn't be living in Mexico." Chacho Pena, Elizandro Pena Jr., went to the University of Austin to get his education, you know. And he graduated the first Mexican; he was the first Mexican who was president of his class at Austin.

M: At Austin.

W: Chacho was not very tall. He was very, very dark. He was extremely talented and he played the guitar. He played the piano. He made

straight hundreds in everything. He was incredible! He became an architect and he swore from the time that he had trouble in school, he swore that he would never live in the United States and he never did. He went to the University. He graduated first in his class. Became president of his class at that time. He's about my age. He's a little younger than I am. After he graduated, he went into Mexico. He told my uncle, "I'm not going to stay here. I'm going to build my life." He was an architect by profession and an artist, a very great artist by choice. But he said he would starve to death if he tried to be just an artist. So he continued to being an architect. He married later on. He lives in Monterrey, Nuevo Leon. He's about my age now, and he is very successful. He has one son. He has never, never lived in the United States. He has some experiences that he just wasn't going to stay with it, you know. So I learned many things. People are people. And in those days the racial prejudice, and I don't understand it because the Texans were here. You know many, many Texans lived here long before the foreign and and all this. They were the foreigners; and everywhere I would go people would speak of me as a foreigner because I would be the only one that spoke Spanish and English. They were all European. You know, Germans, and Irish, and Scotch, and everything else, and they considered themselves Americans. They were Americans. We were foreigners. Well, they should read their... I remember when I could read a little more, I just think they ought to read history and find out the truth. You know, we were here for centuries, I mean.

M: The Tejanos, they were here first, so actually they...

W: So your question is very, very adequate and there is much more tolerance. There are still some people that way. There is still some people.

There's my neighbor here. I go to see her. She is not in good health, and I try to be a friend to her. Mrs. Carpenter has lived in that house 30 years. She doesn't have one Spanish-speaking friend. Her husband died seven years ago. Mine died 12 years ago and I became acquainted with her since she's been alone. And I'm the only one that goes there. You know, because she's not well and so on. But there she's lived 30 years. She says she loves Mexican food more than I do. I couldn't stand all this Mexican food for breakfast. I eat very simple, and she goes to eat Mexican food and all that, but they don't have Spanish-speaking friends. I am the only Mexican that goes into her home. And then look at the friends right here. The Medranos don't have one English-speaking person friend, and they work for Americans.

M: It's true.

W: The Garcias, the Riveras, everyone of them don't speak English and they don't like English. There's something wrong with me because I have always loved the American people. And I love the English language. And I love the Italian language, but I've never had the opportunity of learning it, you know. But I don't know. I think people are a little bit more generous today or the younger people like you are better educated. You people have not gone through any of these things. I mean this is the difference. Like when I married Windsor. Everywhere I went I was the only Spanish-speaking person, and boy, I learned English fast. I made a lot of mistakes. It took me five years to be able to speak good English, well, where I can understand. It's been quite an education. I love the United States. I love our way of life here. I think it is marvelous, and I think that there has been a lot of progress. We don't hear so much criticism of the races and all that. It was very bad in

1929, in 1930.

When Marietta my daughter, was 12 years old, one time. She's always been a leader like her daddy, you know. She's always getting little groups of girls together and they're going to do this and they're going to do that. And they dance, and they sing, and they have plays, and things. And Marietta is the one that does the whole thing, you know. And I remember when she was about 12. One day she said, "Momma, please don't talk Spanish. If you talk Spanish, the girls won't associate with me." I was really surprised. You know, I hadn't thought anything by it. I didn't know, and Marietta said, "The first thing they ask me, Momma, when they meet you is, 'What is she?'" And after they got to know me better, they would frankly ask me, you know, why did I speak as I did. Well, I had a very marked accent. I had not been in American schools, you know. And I was determined to get rid of the accent and to try to speak English like anybody else. And I work at it and work at it and what I think I've done okay.

But there was prejudice clear up and to here in El Paso, even on the first week in here in 1943. And we had not lived in any Spanish-speaking neighborhood because Mr. Windsor's work and everything was the type of life, you know... He loved the Mexican people. We've always had some Spanish-speaking people that came to see us that didn't speak English. And Mr. Windsor would write their business letters and would do anything he could to help them in the English aspect of life, you know. But, uh, there's been a change, a mild change. And I think it's mostly people about your age. And maybe those that went to Korea and Vietnam. Uh, they're treated different now. And what's happened, I have seen, right here in this block. We have someone married to a Japanese, Japanese

person. And then now, they have, uh, all sorts of foreigners married into so-called Anglos. And many blacks have married also white people. And all of that is about 30 years. That's been taking place a little at a time. And now there are some old timers that are having a very hard time accepting that.

M: Even now if you see an Anglo married to a black...

W: Well, I don't think that they're welcome. Boy, I imagine that they go through hell when they marry. I mean, a white girl or a black man married a white girl or vice-versa. They used to be ostracized. Now, I understand that if you go to California, in Los Angeles for instance, or San Francisco, that the Negro people are very well-to-do. They have Cadillacs and Lincolns and big positions, you know. They're married with all kinds of people, you know. They don't stick just to their own race. And they're gaining, they're gaining a whole lot. And this morning paper did you notice or have you had a chance to see it? I got so stirred up. I called my daughter. Let me bring it to you. This is interesting; you would like to know about it; it answers your question in a way. We hear all sorts of horrors sometimes. Uh, I wish I could stay up at 11 o'clock and hear the last news on the T.V. because this Peter Jennings brings out an awful lot things that are happening in South America. I like to be informed of all these things. I can stay forever listening to what's going on. My husband and I practiced that. Both of us read, read together, and we're informed of everything because we tried to help in little way, where we could, our own people. I can see great changes, but it's going to be up to your generation to make the greatest progress. Yet, right now, according to what's going on in Honduras, San Salvador, you know, that's been going on there. And Nicaragua, right now. Now

there's been a lot of talk about these airplanes you now, that have been sold to Nicaragua. And they all say that the Communists and the Cubans are backing it up. And I hear every Sunday David Brinkley. I don't miss it unless I have to miss it for some reason. It's only an hour and a half from 10 o'clock to 11:30. But he usually has two or three senators and important people, you know, from different parts of the world or from the United Nations telling you what's really happening. And the United States for the first time, as far as the history of the United States, is very much interested in seeing that Mexico and Nicaragua and right now more than anything else would be Costa Rica...como se llama? uh, Los Sandinistas.

M: Nicaragua?

W: San Salvador, Nicaragua, and so on. The story goes, the Communists, the Communists already have... I have a record of it somewhere... They have over 27,000 Cubans in San Salvador. And they're equipped by the Communist group. Now the Communists swear they're not interested in San Salvador. They are through with it. They're just setting their equipment and all that. But the idea in the United States is that they are trying to get in, come right into Mexico, and then they're right here, you know. And then, uh, Donahue--that 9 o'clock show last week--had a a very, very interesting one hour talk. They had this visitor, a man. [He said] we love to spend money and have a good time. And we don't seem to have the aggressiveness and the self-protectiveness. We were very good among our families. We protect each other. But we are not interested in world domination or anything like that and that can hurt us. The Germans, wherever they go, they want control. So we got to learn some of those traits somehow.

M: I meant to ask you when you were talking about your uncle and about your father. Did they ever mention anything about the Mexican Revolution?

W: No. See, my dad when he died he was 77 or something, about as old as I am. And that was in 1964. See, they weren't born... Well, see, I'm pretty old and Daddy lived to be 77. that's a pretty good age. But if they had been 90 or something, they might have seen... One of the very important wars was the ...what was it 1848 or was it 1948. this is 1900 and 84. Must of been 1848. That's right after the Civil War, you know. Lincoln was a very good friend of the... He liked Mexico. And they even have a statue of him out in a place here in Juarez.

M: I think so.

W: I think they have it there. And Roosevelt. Delano Roosevelt. We married, uh, you see.. He was president, got elected in 1932, 'cause we stayed awake night after night to hear his, uh, chats. What did he call them? Fire...

M: Fireside chats.

W: Fireside chats. That man was a brain. And he really loved the continent. I mean, he wanted unity. I have always wondered why do these people send all the money to Europe. Even the Jewish people do that. Now they go to Jerusalem and so on. It should be all the Americans. All the Americans. We should concentrate from Canada clear up to Peru. You know, because Mexico is American. Es nacion Mexicana de America. But we never think about it. We just put Mexico City, Mexico.

M: Isn't it called the Estados Unidos Mexicanos? It's...

W: Son Mexicanos Americanos. You know, because this is in America. We are from America. Now these people here that come from the East, they are the foreigners. They come from England, from Ireland, 'cause they're at

war up there right now, from Scotland, from France. I just had a friend here that came over yesterday to visit me, and she has moved to Louisiana. She married a young man. They're living there, and she was telling me. She said, "Gosh, there's more French people." She had never seen so many French people as they do in this town in Louisiana. I can't remember the name of the town. Anyway, she said, "And the people there, the French are just like the Mexicans. The young people don't want to speak French. They want to speak English. They are Americans." And they're not interested in learning French you know, many of them, the old people does. Over here we have many, many of the young people speak English. But the old people don't because they came here, see. I didn't have anyone in my family. I'm not that old. I'm fortunate and I'm old enough. And my dad he's been dead a long time.

M: But they never spoke like of Pancho Villa or...

W: Oh, well, I was 6, 7 years of age when Pancho Villa. Oh yes, my father they put him in jail because my mother (laughs) my mother wrote a terrific poem about Pancho Villa. And it was muy patriota. And Papa, when he was young, you know, he was very much interested in activities that were going on. He was never particularly, uh... He wouldn't go right on and try to take positions, but he knew what was going on and he would vote and he would take part in what he could. He'd help and so on. He was more interested in Masonry, which is in different leanings. You know, it's more brotherhood among people and so on. I don't remember much. Now I must have been very young. I think it was just before mother died, or maybe mother was already dead. All I remember is that they dressed me very nice at school. Now I was going to school in Camargo probably, because it might of been the first year after mother

died. And El Presidente Obregon was going to pass by, and in school in that little town of Camargo, they always picked... And as a little girl I was probably more aggressive and more talkative. I always liked people, you know. And so they selected me to welcome him. And I remember that I got all dressed up and they put a thing over here. Obregon, you know! And I had to go and make a speech. I was scared to death and I wasn't very good at it. But I was just a girl and I was doing what they told me to. But I did talk. And I do remember he was a handsome man. And he only had one arm.

M: Obregon?

W: I believe so. I believe so. I must be sure. Don't take me too seriously 'cause that's been so many years ago. But I did have a welcome in that little town. Obviously, he was getting people to vote. And then I remember the Carancistas. Now I was younger than that. But I remember that what they called mamuliques. That was the money that was current at that time. And it looked like theater tickets, you know. If I remember correctly, they were orange things and you got them in rows of them. And each one of them was worth something. I don't know how much, you know. But there was a time there, now that was during, uh, Obregon and who was the other ones? Cesar... Heavens, I wish I could remember. Marietta told me years ago that I should write down some of these things because I would forget it. And I didn't think I would, and there is an awful lot things that I don't remember.

M: Orosco?

W: He didn't get...Orosco. That's one. Did he get elected? Orosco? Diaz?

M: No.

W: Diaz Calles. Now, that was much later. That as way after Obregon.

R. Windsor

M: Porfirio Diaz?

W: Porfirio Diaz was the first. Now, that as around...right about Lincoln, I believe. Or Porfirio Diaz...

M: Wasn't that about 1910 during the revolt? Villa and Zapata.

W: Well, now Villa, Zapata, uh...Juarez, you know they called him Juarez because he lived in Juarez. That was, the city was called after him.

M: Oh, Benito Juarez?

W: Benito Juarez. The city of Juarez was called after. He was a priest. He was an orphan, Spanish background. A family raised him. He had no father, mother, anything. It was Spanish family, I believe that raised him. You've probably read the history. I think I have some something about that. I learned that in the Mexican schools. And uh, he is the one that dio el Grito de Independencia el 15 de septiembre. And he told them if when he rang the bell and would give el Grito de Independencia. Then they were to raise...you know and so on. It's incredible. they fought with axes and shovels and... They didn't have anything but the determination to be a free people and they did not want... Como se llama el hombre, Napoleon? To send over to Mexico to get rid of him. Carlotta and the emperor Emiliano? No, no, no.

M: Maximiliano?

W: Maximiliano y Carolota. She went completely insane. When my daddy took me to Mexico, the only time I was in Mexico City was in 1951, and I went with my dad to help him get some things. [Talks to her cats] Now what was I going to say? Oh, you asked me about the... Yes, uh, los mamuliques, that was the money that as going on cuando Pancho Villa... Now Pancho Villa was not at all the kind of man they said he was. His wife has entirely a different story about him, you know. Much of the

trouble in Mexico, that they used to blame Americans, it used to be people that had no connection whatsoever, with the American government or anything. But they were Americans who were trying to exploit something over there, and so that began to build this resentment and this lack of trust and so on. And then there was some rules, some laws that Mexico approved of, that hurt Mexico a great deal, but I guess they had no choice. They were a very small country. What was in some of those laws? They were not to have ships to protect themselves. They were not to have...you know. They didn't want them to be a strong military, because they said a small nation could be dangerous and... Well, it working different now.

M: Okay, I have one last question. I have one last question and that's: If you were sixteen years old again, how would you relive you life?

W: If I was sixteen years old again?

M: How would you relive your life?

W: I probably would do the same thing because even if I would think about it that I've learned a few things. If I were sixteen I wouldn't know these things. I still don't know exactly what to do. I mean there are so many, many real questions in life that are very vital, very important. Now I do believe in the brotherhood of man, basically. And I'm not speaking about color or position in life, social position. I am speaking of spiritual relationship. I believe that we're all spiritually born equal, at different levels of understanding. It doesn't mean that all of us have the same experience, you know. Some are a little more advanced than others. There's some people that know much more than I do.

M: It all depends on your own circumstances.

W: It depends on everything. The race, the period, the time. But I don't

think, I can't think of anything that I would do because even now, all I wish... It's impossible. I do think that some of the dreams that we have had--my family, and that we have worked for and everything--it can be true and it has become true among a few. But remember this is a terribly large world. But we are moving toward a better understanding among human beings. I think that all of the possibilities of brotherhood are here among the people, people like you and us, you know. The race doesn't matter, that we're living at this time. But at the same time we have to consider that the people that lived before us, long before, like my father's father or so on, didn't have anything to go on at that time. So how are you going to say what would you do. I really I don't [know] enough about. I know what I hear on television, what I read, and I do think a lot of things. I think that we can make the world much better all around us. A certain group. You would be able to influence your family, you friends, and if you're lucky and that's what you want, you may go even beyond that. I never had any ambition to educate anybody or to change the world or anything. But I don't like people to suffer and I don't think it's necessary.

M: Do you feel that your upbringing with your different uncles and your different aunts contributed to...?

W: I learned a great deal. And I learned that there's something good in everyone. There's something good, you know. Tia Maria was not... She never went to college. She probably had what we call a tenth grade education, not even a high school education. That woman had some basic character traits that you don't even read in books. She had loyalty to the people she loved. She had love, real love. She was willing to share and to do and to serve. People today they think that's stupid. You know

the servants do that, you know. You don't serve people anymore. I mean, they think silly. It's not. But my aunt had many marvelous traits that you don't learn in college. It was character. She had what we call character. And she lived sometimes in neighborhoods because they didn't have much money and so on. I never heard her complain. Her husband was a musician. He played the guitar. Bajo cesto and he was a correo. He went out on a horse to get the mail, way out several miles from the little town of Camargo. And they lived comfortably, you know. They were not rich or anything. I never heard her complain. She didn't have much time for reading. I was the one who did all the reading---I love to read--when I went there in the summers. But she had a character that I tell you was worth a great deal. She was a very valuable person to the family.

M: Do you attribute that character to her Mexican heritage in a way?

W: Possibly. I don't think that we inherit so much from our parents as we think we do. I think that individually we earn certain character traits probably in different lives. I don't know whether it is true the laws of reincarnation or the rules of reincarnation--that we have lived before, and that we will come back and all that. I don't know. I've read about it. I never have proven it. I have those kind of questions asked to me and I said, "I don't know," because I don't remember to have ever lived before.

M: The reason why I asked that is because it seems nowadays that Mexican-Americans in like second generation, third generation, they seem to be losing touch with their Mexican heritage and their Mexican roots.

W: Well, uh, it could be because they may have backgrounds among their own families. It's not the environment alone because Lord, I have had

over...

[PAUSE]

They were different than the Mexican people that used to work for my dad in Mexico. They had different, uh...they had loyalty. These people are very businesslike and they were very smart. This is a different world. How are we going to live in this world and we may have a character, the old-time character you know--loyalty and love and duty and responsibility--there's no place for it in the world today; only among the people you love, if they let you. 'Cause sometimes they don't want it, you know. They saw I want to do what I want to do. I want to be myself.

M: So then you feel that the Mexicans have changed in that respect? They are not as loyal as they used to be.

W: A lot of it might be environmental, you know. A lot of it may be that I just happen to have lived like my daughter oftentimes tells me. She is the one that caused me to think, 'cause she's asked me that question you're talking about. She says, "Mother, you don't live in the world as it is today. You're still living the way your family was." And she says, "Momma, it was your family, the particular family you grew up with that had those traditions and those ideas. And you're like they are, and you haven't changed." Because I'm not out in the world, you see. I do my work at home. And unfortunately, or perhaps fortunately, I am an astrologer which is a science that deals with truths based on the laws of nature. So instead of making me a little bit more like my dad, who was a very good businessman, or like some of my aunts who are very good in their own life and way, I have kept on more like the way I grew up. I'm still teaching the laws of God because we taught that without calling

that in the church. Like when I told you that I was very young and they handed me the Sunday school class.

M: Right.

W: Now you go teach them. There I was reading something I had no background on, but the class was efficient and it had enough questions and answers to get me started. The next thing I do, I picked up a New Testament immediately. And I began to read it because I wanted to be able to teach the class. I mean, I felt responsible. And so I thought I better understand the New Testament. The New Testament is the only record we have of Jesus the Christ according to four of his disciples. Now that I am an old woman, I have found out. I read a very interesting book saying that Christ had more than four disciples. He had much more that he actually Jesus the Christ, when he disappeared at the age of 12, you know. They said that he used to talk to the people in the little town of Jeruselum and that everybody marveled because he would ask questions and do things that no 12 year old had ever done. Then he disappears for almost 30 years or something like that. And there's no record. All of a sudden there he is, he's 33 or 30. I can't remember exactly. And there he comes to John the Baptist, his friend--they call him the Baptist--to be baptized and then he started. He only had a three year vision. Now the records of those I have studied, those years that nothing is known about Christ, is that he was in Tibet. That he was in India. That he went and studied with the greatest religious leaders of that time in India, in the Orient and so on. Then he came back to Jerusalum, just a little bitty place, you know. He came back to Jerusalem when he was 30 to teach the people there; and he went and picked up the people that he wanted to train. He walked by, you know, and picked up two fishermen and

and said, "You come with me. You're fishing here and picking out fish. I'm going to make you fishermen of men." You know, catch men. And walked on and he picked two other men. And pretty soon he had all his disciples. Now that's one story.

Another book I have on the life of Christ said that when he came back he actually had the order, the ancient mystic order of the red rose, which is known as amorque. Teaches that Jesus Christ actually had 250 students and his mother was one of them. He had a school of high mysticism that he had learned in India. And so some of the records of the things he taught were written nearly 500 years after the birth of Christ, you know. Matthew and Luke, those are his disciples and they wrote the New Testament, each one according to what they could remember, and they all make sense. And some just bring out a little more. But it didn't happen. He didn't have a church. Christ never had a church. He never had, his followers when he trained them and so on, and after he ascended, as they said, after the crucifixion, all his disciples scattered. They were now to different places. And then the reading what they did and so on is very interesting. Many of them were stoned to death, because people at that time they laughed, particularly Italians. Ah, the religious history of Italy is horrible. You know, the Spanish, the Italians. They were strong men. Rules, you know. They had the power. And so it's very, very interesting. I do believe that you younger people today have a great advantage because of education. Because of what's happening. Because of what I was showing you here. Think of what they're saying there in Los Angeles. They have over a million orators of the Spanish speaking heritage. Because there are opportunities there. Then in Dallas they have over 250,000 just there.

This morning paper. It's just marvelous. I got so excited and so happy and thought these are the ones who are going to change our, not mine, but those of my background. They are the ones that are going to pen doors.

M: People like [Henry] Cisneros, [the mayor of San Antonio].

W: People like you because you are being educated by them. You're having a better opportunity than I had because at the time I was growing up girls were supposed to be seen and never heard. You didn't talk back to your... Your father talked to you with his eyes. He'd just look at you and you did what he wanted. He just pointed out because nowadays girls had no voice of any sort. And you married and you knew that marriage was supposed to be tu destino, verdad. And those days, uh, your mother is too young. She may never have had that. But at my time grandmother used to say, "La mujer es el alma del hogar. El alma del hogar. Ella es responsable, responsable de la educación de los hijos, responsable de mantener el hogar, la unidad, el carión, el servicio. El hombre pertenece a la calle." Men goes out and make a living. He gets out and makes friends and women don't do that. But that was 55, 60 years ago. Today, no. La mujer, muchas veces, es superior al hombre porque tiene mas interes en las educacion, en libertad. It's all a matter of character. It's what we are basically. Es el caracter. Character makes you what you are. The character of the person. And I really believe from the astrological viewpoint that the character is definitely the thing to go by. Not the race, not the social position, because some people with very little education have been able to do wonders. Why? I have a book called, Think and Grow Rich by Napoleon Hill. He gives you the name of 500 people that became millionaires. They didn't have a high school education but they had ideas. They had ideas and their ideas

work. I mean they produce. So there you are. That book is terrific you must. If I ever find a copy of it. My copy is too old and too torn up. If I find a copy of it--it's hard to get. You have to order it--it would be valuable to you. You're very young, and he really tells you the laws of success, in a way that I have never seen anyone, and I've done an awful lot of reading and studying and everything. It's a wonderful book and I've given it away left and right. I just don't happen to have a copy of it or I would certainly get it for you. But I'm going to see about it. I may have to order it from The Popular. It's Think and Grow Rich by Napoleon Hill. And he tells you that it is ideas. Now, you notice the difference that many people who finish college, they're very good; they go by the book and they make 100 in their classes and everything. When they get out, to work in the bank or whatever it is, they just work. But the man with ideas, whether he went to college or whether he didn't, he is the one. Like who invented the Coca-Cola? Somebody had an idea. Who invented the electric light? Somebody had an idea. If you know the background, it's incredible how we came to have the light, the electric lights and everything. So we come back to the question. What is it? Character. People who believe in reincarnation will tell you that they can say how long you've lived before and you're going to come back here. Well, I have never been able to do that. So I'm not going to tell you, 'cause I don't know how. It may be true. Some people will tell you all those things.

M: That's true.

W: But I can't do any of it so I'm not going to tell you lies. But, one thing I can tell you that astrologically, a horoscope really is only an x-ray of the soul. See, we have a Spanish language, French language,

German, Swedish, Russian. We also have the language of the stars, and it is a language, and it can be taught exactly like you teach French or German. 'And the language of the starts, we call it God. We don't know. It is the supreme being, something much greater than we are, something that has created the earth, that we're living in, the trees, everything that we have. The rising of the sun, the setting of the sun. Everything is perfect. I mean the time as you can set it. You can set your clock by the sun. It won't be late. What makes that? Why doesn't the sun sometimes rise in the west? We would go nuts. There is a law. A natural law is the most perfect of all. It's just tremendous. And it's good to have some knowledge of it. It won't hurt you.

And that is what astrology is. It is the study and applications of God's laws. It's a language. You start learning A, B, C, D or in Italian or in French or whatever they call it. And in astrology you learn the sun, the moon, Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune, and then you learn that the sun governs what? The sun is a symbol of a circle and a dot. The dot in the center is the the spirit entity, the ego, the spirit energy. And the circle that surrounds you is the power around you. Whatever it may be, god, nature. Then you divide that circle in a half, that little dot up and down, then you have the moon, the symbol of the moon. And the moon represents the subconscious mind. And in the subconscious mind lies all experiences that you have ever known. And sometimes you say, "Where did I get that? I had a hunch and it worked." But you knew it all the time. It's there. Everybody has a superconscious mind, and that's supposed to be the soul mind. You have the spirit, the sun. The soul is the moon. Then we have Mercury. A combination of a circle, the half circle, and the cross. The cross is

a physical man. You get outside anytime and stand facing the sun with your arms outstretched, and there is a cross back of you. You see the shadow of a cross. That's the symbol of men, and that's why all of the churches have a cross. It's a man symbol. It means man, human being. And it goes on. You get Mercury easily, the transmitter. The half circle is the soul, is the superconscious and subconscious, the circle is the spirit, the cross is the body. There you have body, soul, and spirit together. And mercury is the messenger of the Gods. Mercury is the in-between. The soul and the spirit. God is the source, a part of ourselves. Una chispa de divinidad. Just a sparkle of divinity. And we can make it bigger by knowing about it. And from there on, you go on to Venus, Mars, Jupiter. And it's incredible. All of the faculties of man are there. That's the language of the stars. That will teach you what you are in relationship to the spiritual, the mental, the intellectual, the emotional part of you. It goes beyond psychology. Because the word psycho means soul and logic, reasoning. Reasoning about the soul is psychology. But astrology is reasoning in harmony with all of the laws of astros, astros of the universe. It's a no end to it. It is a beautiful, beautiful class. I taught astrology for years, and I make it very simple to where even a child can learn it. And now do... Have I served you? You think I've answered all your questions?

M: [Yes.] I'd like to thank you Mrs. Windsor.

END OF INTERVIEW