



## THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO INSTITUTE OF ORAL HISTORY

Interviewee: Antonio Eliaz López  
Interviewer: Meredith E. Abarca  
Project: El Paso's Food Voices  
Location: 2212 N. Campbell St. El Paso, TX 79902  
Date of Interview: October 8, 2018  
Terms of Use: Unrestricted  
Transcript No.: 1680  
Transcriber / Summary: **(PUBLIC KITCHEN)**

Antonio Eliaz López became a cook once he developed a relationship with fire. As López reflects on his path of becoming a cook, he speaks of his relationship with food, fire, water, air and the earth in terms of a spiritual journey. Native of Dallas, TX., López first came to El Paso in 1986 and held his first job in the food industry in the area working at UTEP's food service as a catering manager. In the early 1900s, he moved to the Austin area where eventually became the cook of an organization called "Alma de Mujer," a center for social changed owned by indigenous network of women. The center was located near Lake Travis and had plenty of space for the cultivation of herbs, vegetables and fruits trees. One lesson that López learned working at this center from his female cooking mentors that now influence his views on cooking was the value of returning to what he calls "our ancestral gardens." His oral story focuses on recalling his mentors and his spiritual-cooking development, and how these-two-shape what he believes captures "what a cook does": create spaces for a reconnection to "our" ancestral culinary origins. While he makes a living as a professional cook, he often offers *platicas*/workshops as part of the Border-Food Project share with others, or remind others, about the health, balance culinary diet embedded within the *siete guerreros* (the seven warriors): corn (tlaolli), beans (etl), squash (tzilacayohtli), amaranth (huauhtli), cacti (nopalli), chile (chilli), chia (chian).

Length of interview 01:00:35

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