



THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO INSTITUTE OF ORAL HISTORY

Interviewee: Raul Gonzalez

Interviewer: Meredith Abarca

Project: El Paso's Food Voice

Location: El Paso, Tx

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Summary: Roberto Cristoforo

Summary of Interview:

His name is Raul Gonzalez, he was born in Chihuahua, Chihuahua, and when he was 6 weeks old, they moved to Quito, Ecuador and he live in there for 6 years and then he came back and lived in Parral, Chihuahua, for around 1 years and then he moved to El Paso, Texas, and he stayed in El Paso for the rest of his life and he has 2 sons from different marriage. His father was from Chihuahua and he was in the lumber business and her mother was from Parral. They moved to El Paso because of their business, because her father will get the raw wood and make picture frames, and they made an international business. When he was living in El Paso he remembers when they a cook outs for his whole family and they came from Parral and Chihuahua. He studied elementary in Loretto and east wood for his last year, and he graduated from UTEP with a business degree. Her mother was a stay home mom and cooked every day and they will eat Mexican food mixed with some Ecuador food and they loved it, and at the end all of the leftover food they will make tacos. The Ecuadorian food consist mostly inn sea food such as oyster, octopus and he tried for the first-time deer, when they came to el paso the only thing changed was the flavor but the food kind of stayed the same. He experienced a lot of different cousins, such as Japanese, Chinese, Mexican and Ecuadorian and he learn part of their culture and his father was the one who introduced him to all of this different food. They currently own a restaurant that is a family business, and he was only 15years old when he first stated cooking, his forts dish he did it was a sushi roll, his father was friend of a Japanese chef and he thought his father and then he teacher Raul. He has not taken any classes related to food but he learns from other people and with practice. He mentions that food can make you relive moment in your live, and bring back good memories from when you traveled or from a trip. He says that food was a huge part of history because food

in the past could be trade for anything but now, we have money but back in the day we didn't. He says that the food is not related to sustainability because farms could use chemicals for their crops and many other pesticides that could potentially harm the food because is not natural. Because it went thru different process and this is due to the fact that food industries want more profits and at the end it only harms the food and its quality and that affects the sustainability that harms the Earth. When he was working in Houston in a wealth managing position, he founded stress full and he discovered that cooking was his Zen and he continued cooking until he opened his restaurant called Benny Franks. His restaurant will consist in an international cuisine, with plates that he knows how to make and some that Mateo, the chef he hired, he will make more new plates. He made a dinner called the "La Cosecha" this took place at the farm that provides his restaurant with local harvested vegetables and he made an 8-course dinner and they used corn as the base for the plates. He says that knowing the background of where your food comes from is a good thing to know because it makes it safer to eat. He has plates that varies depending on the season and the region so sometimes is hard to keep every single plate on the menu, just like the chile en nogada which is a seasonal plate, but many people complain when they are out of season, so he needed to put new plates to substitute for what is out of season. He says that food should be more appreciated when it comes from organic farms because it's not an easy task and really respect the people that frows those crops.

Length of interview 48 Minutes

Length of Transcript