



THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO INSTITUTE OF ORAL HISTORY

Interviewee: Lori Lowman Hutson
Interviewer: Meredith E. Abarca
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In this interview, Lori Lowman Hutson shares how her palate and that of her children have been exposed and have embraced a smorgasbord of culinary traditions. Beginning with her own childhood, she is only the second generation born in El Paso. The first generation of her family arrived to El Paso in 1907 from the Pittsburg, Pennsylvania area; they brought with them culinary traditions from Maryland, Virginia and the Deep South. An example Lori offers is how her maternal grandmother from Maryland made the Thanksgiving stuffing with white bread and clams, while her paternal grandmother, from the South, made it with a corn bread stuffing. Her father, a meat and potatoes man, introduced her (and later her children) to the art of grilled meats and barbecue. For years, Lori's father had a housekeeper, Maria, who introduced the family to Mexican food such as tacos, enchiladas, and tortillas. Maria's culinary legacy lives on in the Lowman-Hutson's family as her children continue to make tacos using Maria's recipe. Married twice, Lori has expanded her culinary smorgasbord through both her mothers-in-law. She affirms that it was through her second marriage with Eric Hutson that she entered an "awakening" of her taste buds. Eric's father worked for the State Department and as a result they travelled and lived in different parts in Europe (Germany, France) and Mexico. His maternal grandmother lived in Finland and for a while in Russia. Scandinavian meals become part of Lori's food influences such as pickled herring, other sea food and lots of dill. Lori's family meals, as she was raising her children while working full time, ranged from lots of Hamburger Helper, to five course meals at her in-laws, to southern gilled barbecue, to Mexican food. Beside recalling many family culinary

influences, Lori also mentions a number of El Paso and Juarez restaurants where as a child, young adult and adult she ate and continues to eat: Elmer's, Gillespies, Iron Tender, The Bonanza, Montana Mining, Cattleman's, Leos, Lucy's at the King's X, and La Florida and Julio's in Juarez. She also reflects on how nowadays people, at least her family, are more interested on healthy eating and that restaurants seem to offer more choices to accommodate this desire. Since a number of her children keep and make family recipes pass down through the generations, for Lori food is about family, memories and the future.

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