This interview was conducted as part of a series on the Mexican American in Minnesota.

Mr. Rivera, was born in Mexico City, Mexico in 1906. He fought in the Mexican Revolution for six years. At the age of eighteen he came to the United States. He crossed the river into Texas.

Mrs. Rivera, was born in Texas in 1910. She worked in the fields before coming to St. Paul in 1925. Marcelino and Irene Rivera were married in New Ulm, Minnesota in 1932.

Mrs. Rivera, spoke for Mr. Rivera who was ill. She told about his life in Mexico and in the United States. She related experiences from their life together on St. Paul's West Side, especially discussing the customs and celebrations of the Mexican American who resided there. Some history of the Guadalupana Society is also given.

This is a transcript of a tape-recorded interview edited to aid in clarity and ease of comprehension for the reader. The original tape recording is available in the Audio-Visual Library of the Minnesota Historical Society.
INTERVIEW WITH MARCELINO AND IRENE RIVERA

August 19, 1975

INTERVIEWER: RICHARD JUAREZ

Juarez: This is an interview for the Historical Society, made in conjunction with the Mexican American History Project, on August 19, 1975. I am interviewing Mr. and Mrs. Marcelino Rivera. Due to the fact that Marcelino Rivera is ill at this time, Mrs. Rivera, Irene, will be speaking for him. We are at 1099 Gorman Avenue, which is the residence of Mr. and Mrs. Rivera. First of all Mrs. Rivera, could you tell us something about the life of Marcelino, where was he born? Who were his parents? How did he happen to come to Minnesota?

Rivera: Marcelino Lopez Rivera, was born in Mexico City, on June 2, 1906. His father's name was Crecenciano Rivera, his mother's name was Candelaria Lopez de Rivera. They were both born in Mexico City. Marcelino started working when he was twelve or thirteen years old in whatever he could. He didn't go to school, because they couldn't afford to feed the children, unless he helped to support them. His mother always worked at home only. Marcelino remembers that they were very strict with him. He had to ask permission whenever he wanted to go someplace, or else he would be punished. He only remembers that his mother had a garden of herbs, these were all that she would use for any sickness, they never saw a doctor.

Juarez: We understand that Marcelino was in Mexico during the Revolution. Could you tell us something about his life in Mexico during the Revolution?

Rivera: Marcelino says that when his mother died, he was fourteen years old. He joined the Revolution with the Government, not with the other ones. They were fighting against Figueroa in the Revolution for six years. When he was eighteen, he got out of the army. That's when he decided to come to the United States. He came as a Bachelor to the United States. He came to work in Texas; he would take the roots off the trees and work in the cotton fields. At that time, they didn't need any passport. He
Rivera: just crossed the river. They call them "wet-backs." He came in 1927. From Texas he worked his way through to Louisiana. In Louisiana he worked on the railroad. Then he went to Michigan, where he started working in construction. He came to Minnesota in 1931, where he started working in the beet fields in Lafayette, Minnesota. In the winter he would come to St. Paul, and in the spring he would go back to Lafayette to work in the beet fields. In St. Paul he couldn't get a job, so he would cut trees and sell the wood, at that time they were using wood stoves for heat. He did that until 1932, when he started working at Cudahay Packing House. When he came to St. Paul, we met in a dance that they had at the Neighborhood House. From then on we were going together until 1932, when we got married in New Ulm, Minnesota.

Juarez: Did Marcelino have any schooling in the United States?

Rivera: No, he only went to classes at the Institute.

Juarez: International Institute?

Rivera: International Institute. He learned to speak English. That's the only thing he suffered with, the language, he was always trying to learn English. Then he obtained his citizenship papers. Because I was born in the United States, he didn't have any trouble in getting his papers. We got married in 1932, and that's the last time that we worked in the beet fields. He started working at Cudahay and stayed there until the plant closed in 1954.

When we first came to St. Paul, we were living in a basement on Indiana, paying only seven dollars a month. Then we moved to State Street, we were there for thirteen years and all the children were born there.

Juarez: Was State Street on the West Side?

Rivera: On the "West Side Flats". That's what they used to call them, where the commercial area is now.

Juarez: And that's in St. Paul?

Rivera: That's in St. Paul.

Juarez: Irene, now that you told us something about Marcelino, could you tell us something
Juarez: about your life? Where were you born? Who your parents were? How you came to Minnesota?

Rivera: I was born in Marathon, Texas, April 6, 1910. My father's name was Deciderio Alcantar, and my mother's was Elifonsa Santiago de Alcantar. They were on their way to Garden City, Kansas and stopped at Marathon, Texas until my mother was strong enough to continue the journey after giving birth to me. My sister was born in Garden City, Kansas. I don't remember much about our life when we came. I only remember that when we came I worked in the beet fields. I was seven years old. All of my brothers worked in the beet fields with my dad and mother. From there we went to Colorado, where we stayed about fifteen years. My dad worked in the beet fields and corn fields then. In the winter, they worked in the mines. They had coal mines in Denver, Colorado. My father died in 1925. My mother came to St. Paul, because she had an older sister here. We came through the Sugar Company, the Sugar Company was paying for the transportation of the people if they would work in the beet fields. That's how we came to St. Paul. Then we worked in Hector, Minnesota for two years in the beet fields. Next we came to St. Paul and my brothers and I started working in the Cudahay Packing House in 1931. We have lived here since 1931. We have never moved out of St. Paul. They used to have "Jamaicas" and dances in the Neighborhood House where we used to go. My brother used to take me to the dances. There's nothing more that I can say. We were there by ourselves after my mother died in 1935. But by then I was married.

Juarez: How many sisters and brothers did you have?

Rivera: I had three sisters and two brothers.

Juarez: Are they all living today?

Rivera: Only the oldest one is dead. Gregoria Rivera, and Antonia Lozano are living. Those are my two sisters. My two brothers passed away.

Juarez: Did Marcelino have any other family?

Rivera: He had two brothers and one sister. But he lost contact with them in 1920, when he left for the service. It was the last time he saw them. He was only there fourteen
Rivera: years. We have been going back to Mexico. He has tried to locate his oldest brother. He thinks he lives in Mexico City, but he has never found him. He remembers that he has two brothers and one sister and that's all.

Juarez: Irene, now that you told us about yourself, could you tell us about or how you met Marcelino? When did you get married? How has your life been here in St. Paul?

Rivera: We were married in 1932 in New Ulm, Minnesota, August 25, 1932, at the Sacred Heart Catholic Church. We stayed there in September and October to cut beets. That was the last time we worked in the beet field. We came to St. Paul for the winter, but we stayed here because he started working at the Cudahay Packing House. I had worked there also, but I had to quit when I got married, because he didn't like a working wife. At that time, he thought the wife had to stay home and take care of the children. We lived at 138 State Street. That was on the corner of Fairfield. In 1934, my oldest, Manuel, was born. We still lived on State Street.

Juarez: What do you remember about living on the West Side? What things happened there? Were there a lot of Mexican people when you first moved to the West Side?

Rivera: Yes, all the old-times are gone now, but there were quite a few Mexican families that associated with each other and were very friendly. They were about the same age as we were. Now, of course, some of them are scattered around, and some are dead. When we were there they had the "Sociedad Anahuac", we joined that society. They had beautiful festivities: for the 16th of September, the 5th of May. For Christmas they used to have an Indian dance called "Danzantes". Mr. Francisco Rangel and his wife used to teach the younger people how to put on plays. They had beautiful plays for the twelfth of December, when they used to have the Novena in our church. Marcelino belonged to the Sacred Heart Society too. All of our families got together and they were very united. We were all very poor. But people were always donating to the church, and for the dances they had. They had the dance for the Apparition of the Virgin on the twelfth of December. Mrs. Francisca Elizondo was the one that had the book and showed the kids how to do it. She presented that beautiful play, where
Rivera: Mr. Leonso Morales, now deceased, played "Juan Diego" and Juanita Rangel played the part of "La Virgen". Mrs. Elizondo, like I said, presented it. She showed them how to learn their parts. The older people were very united. That's how the Mexican people are in Mexico. Then of course, we had more children. Whenever we had a baptism, all of our friends were invited. We had a dinner and sometimes a little dance. Whenever there was a baptism or first communion, all the families got together to celebrate. Everybody was friendly. You don't see people like that anymore. My daughter, Helen, was born in 1935. That's the year my mother died. Marie was born in 1939, then Gloria, then Martin. I had a little boy that was killed in a school bus accident.

Juarez: What was his name?

Rivera: Martin Rivera. On a Sunday, November 9th, the first snow had fallen and they wanted to try the sled. They were coming back when he let go of Manuel's hand. Manuel always took care of him, being the oldest. He got trapped by a school bus that turned too short. My son was dead before they came to tell me. They were going to come home by two o'clock, because they had a play in the church. Of course, everybody came to see us. That was the first tragedy in our married life. We lived there for another year. It was about thirteen years that we lived in that house. Then we bought a house on Ada Street. All the children were born by then; Marie, Shirley, Gloria. They were all born in those flats. We moved to 479 Ada in 1938, where the highrise is now. We lived there for another thirteen years, until the government took the house to build the highrise. The children all went to school and graduated. The four girls graduated from Mechanic Arts. Manuel went to Humboldt. He didn't graduate, because he joined the army. He went into the service before he was sixteen. He got his education through the government. After he came home from the service, he went to Globe Business College, where he took accounting. Then he went to Vocational School and became an electrician. He is now married and they bought a house on Wyoming Street. I am very proud of him. Helen finished school and became a beautician.
Rivera: She was working as a beautician for a long time, until she got married. Marie graduated from Meahanic Arts, she was very good at sewing. She wanted to earn money, so when she got out of school instead of continuing with her sewing, she went to work at Armours. Then she got married. Now she is going to school. Gloria graduated and took typing, she is a secretary. Shirley always was interested in the hospital. She wanted to be a nurse, but a year after she graduated from high school, she got married. Now they are going to school and they are advancing themselves.

Juarez: Mrs. Rivera, now that you have told us about your family, could you tell us some other things that you remember about your life on the West Side?

Rivera: The older Mexican people were friendly. We always got together in different things. Like Mr. Gabriel Avaloz, now deceased; Senor Alfonso de Leon; la familia Coronado; Mrs. Guadalupe Cruz, were all living on Eaton Street. They had beautiful little houses and beautiful flower gardens. I lived upstairs and I always used to think that someday when I'd move, I would have a garden of my own, because I loved flowers. Mrs. Coronado had a winding rose that she brought from Texas, it was in her house, it was really pretty. Everybody supported the church, Our Lady of Guadalupe Church. At that time Father Gilmet was the pastor. Mr. Luis and Angelita Lopez and all of their families were there. There were so many old friends that I miss now. When I moved from there, the old West Side, all of them scattered around to different parts of St. Paul, so that we don't see much of each other, except at funerals. They were all so generous, even though most of them were on relief. Most of the people weren't working. They didn't have the money to support anything, but they sure had money to share with whoever needed it and especially for the church. They made pledges when we built the new church. All generations were poor. But we did build the church that stands there now. Like I said, when there is love among the people, you can accomplish more than when you are divided. Now, this generation is proud. They don't get together, because everybody thinks they have more than the rest. I remember when Father Ward took over, he started to make the "fiestas", the 5th of May and the 16th
Rivera: Of September, and everything, the money that was made from the "Fiestas" always went to support the church, and help the families that needed help. All the old timers were poor, but they helped each other more than they do now.

Juarez: While living in St. Paul, was there any discrimination? Did you feel any discrimination with the other people outside of the West Side?

Rivera: The West Side was formed by all kinds of nationalities, mostly Mexican and Jewish and Colored people. We never thought that anything was different in color or the way they talked, or anything. Everybody was friendly. We got together in the Neighborhood House. They had programs to learn how to knit for the women. They had a free clinic where all the Mexican mothers, Colored, and Jewish, also Syrian people, used to meet all together. I can't say that we were discriminated against. We just minded our own business and got along with everybody and everybody got along with us, because we didn't bother them and they didn't bother us. I can't say that we were ever discriminated against.

Juarez: Irene, could you tell us about Marcelino? I understand that he owned a business on the West Side.

Rivera: Marcelino was working at Cudahay's in the daytime. He was always working as a part-time helper tending bar in the Carioca Bar that was on Fairfield in the flats. He worked there for about eight years. Then when we moved to Ada Street, that was 1954 or 1956, they closed Cudahay Packing House. With the money that they gave him to retire, he opened a place for himself. He had the practice and knowledge on how to be a bartender, so he thought he could build a place for himself. It was in South St. Paul on Armour Street somewhere. He worked there for nine years in his own place. I tried to help him in the beginning, but since I was working at Swifts, in the daytime, I didn't have much time to help him. I helped him through the first two years. After that, he hired someone else to help him with the business, but mostly he was all by himself. After nine years, they sold that place, so he moved farther down on Concord Street, by the Ford Plant. He worked there for another eight years, until he
Rivera: became sick. Working like that, we never had much companionship. I was always with the children. When they were growing up, he was working nights, so that he didn't have much time for the family. That's when he started working so much that in 1960 or 1961, he had his first heart attack. Of course, the doctor made him retire from the place. He had to close his business. But all the money that he had saved went to the doctors, until he was disabled and couldn't find any more work. For a time, he was working in construction, in the daytime, and the bar at night. He was really tired out, by the time he got the heart attack, he didn't have the strength to fight it. That's been his reward. After that he had another stroke, a severe one. But God has been good to him, he hasn't been paralyzed. He can hardly walk or talk anymore.

Juarez: Irene, how has your health been?

Rivera: Well, about 1964, I had a heart attack, too. That stopped me from working. I was working at the Viking Drill, making drills at the time.

Juarez: Where is Viking Drill located?

Rivera: On Seventh Street, close to Arcade, I don't know exactly where.

Juarez: In downtown St. Paul?

Rivera: Downtown St. Paul, yes. And of course, I had to quit working then. After his last stroke, all I have been doing is taking care of him. Now it's more serious than before. Before at least he could work, or go outside by himself, now he can't even stay by himself, because if he gets a stroke or falls down, nobody would be there to take care of him. He would stay there until somebody would pick him up. Neither of us are in good health, but thank God, I can still do my own housework and take care of him.

Juarez: Irene, did you or Marcelino ever went to Texas to your home or back to Mexico on a visit during vacation time?

Rivera: I never went back to Texas where I was born, but we did make seven trips to Mexico. Almost one every year since the first trip in 1947, when we all went. The children were small. Then we made three more trips with the children. After that, we just
Rivera: went by ourselves. We went to Mexico City, where he was born. He showed us where he was born. It's all changed now, where he was raised. We have gone to the Basilica of Mexico.

Juarez: Did you visit any relatives in Mexico?

Rivera: Well, like I said, he could never find his brother or sisters. The second time we went he really went out looking for his relatives. He even put an ad in the paper, in their newspaper. But he could never find his brother, so we never had any relatives to visit. We always went and had to stay in a hotel. We never had any relatives. My family are all dead.

Juarez: How about your cousins?

Rivera: If we have any, we haven't found them. I know that somewhere on my side of the family, my mother's sister was living in Monterrey, Nuevo Leon, at the time and I am sure that we have cousins there. But like I said, we have never found them.

Juarez: Irene, you mentioned that you didn't have any relatives in Mexico, but I remember you once told me about a cousin that you had in Mexico. Do you remember when you went to visit them?

Rivera: Well, yes. I'd forgotten about them, because my sister's here now. But my sister, Mrs. Lozano, was in Mexico the first time that we went in 1947. That's the trip that we took especially to find her. We had been writing to each other. So we went to Aguascalientes. She was living in San Antonio, Tepesela, just outside of Aguascalientes. They were really poor. My sister had gone there in 1935 or 1936 when they were deporting the Mexican people that were not American citizens. They had deported her husband. She went with him. Most of her children were born there. The oldest ones were born in Colorado. The first time that we went to see her, they were really poor. They didn't have anything to eat, only what they raised in their garden. He had a big garden of chile, that he used to pack and sell in the markets. That's the only time that they had a little money. So when we came back, we always sent her money to live on. Then after three years, her oldest daughter, now Juanita...
Rivera: Moreno, came with us. She lived with us for three years to help support her family. She was working at Armour's, she is still working there. She paid the expenses of bringing her mother and sisters to St. Paul. Three years later, we went and helped Jessie Romo, and Margaret, his wife. She is my niece, my sister Antonia's second daughter. Marcelino was still working and had his business place. We went on vacation and he wanted to help them, so we brought Margaret and Jessie Romo. He got a job right away at Swift's. He worked there until a few years ago, when he left to go back to Mexico. They adjusted really well here. So all the family is now in St. Paul, because they helped each other. Juanita was the first one to come and help her mother. Then after that her brother came. He also helped the other ones to come, so they are all enjoying life in St. Paul now. After they all came here, then we didn't have any relatives over in Mexico. We have them here.

Juarez: What year was this, that you first went down?

Rivera: In 1947, it was the first year that we went and she was in San Antonio, Tepesela. Juanita came in 1948 to work and help the family back in Mexico. I think it was in 1950 or 1951 that we brought Jessie Romo. Her sister Margaret lived with us for a little while on 479 Ada. Then they found a little house and rented it. He worked hard. Then they stayed here.

Juarez: Do you remember when Marcelino got his first car? Did you used to make the trip to Mexico?

Rivera: He always had a car! When I met him, he had a little Ford with just one seat. A little coupe. I have pictures there of him. He always had a car. I knew how to drive a Model-T. My father had taught me how to drive. Then when he got a car with shifts, he showed me how to drive and I changed to that. We have always had a car. It wasn't a new car, but it was a somewhat better car, it was a Chevy, that was in 1947, when we got the car and then we went to Mexico. We always drove to Mexico except for the last three trips, we flew.
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Juarez: It was a 1947 what?

Rivera: A Chevy, about a 1945 Chevy. It was in real good condition. We made two trips to Mexico on that car.

Juarez: Irene, I understand that you were one of the charter members of the Guadalupana Society. Could you tell us about the society and how it started. Who were some of the members? What was your role as a member throughout the years of the Guadalupana Society?

Rivera: I think the Society started in 1931 or 1932. My mother was the first member. Mrs. Rodriguez, (Lola), was the one that organized the society. The older members were the ones that start it. There was: Elifonsa de Santiago, Mrs. Lupe Cruz, Mrs. Soto, Paulina Cortez, Mrs. Teresita Ramirez, Julia Sanchez, Arturo Coronado's mother. Some of these people are now deceased. I joined the society in about 1946. I was the President of the society from 1947-1948. We used to have Father Ward, he was the treasurer and secretary. We only had a president and a vice-president. We used to make "Jamaicas" to raise money for the church. We had a bake sale every Sunday, not just the first Sunday of the month, but every Sunday! Father Ward bought a "tortilla" machine to make "tortillas de maiz" (corn tortillas). I remember that Doña Añacía Ortiz and Doña María Bonilla would get together and make "enchiladas" every Friday. People would stop by on their way home from work and buy "enchiladas" or "tortillas". All the money went to support the church. Father took all the money for the support of the church and buy whatever we needed to keep on going. After a while, the younger people joined, like Rosa Campa and myself. Mrs. Mini Gaston was a very good member. She has been a member for a long time!

Juarez: What year was this?

Rivera: In 1947 and 1948, I was President than. They must have started the society in 1931, 1932 or 1933, these older ladies that I mentioned. Mrs. Dolores Rodriguez was the president for the longest time. She was always working, regardless of who dropped out
Rivera: or who helped her. She was always active in it. Like I said, we had to move to different places. All of them were scattered around so they didn't come back to join. But Mrs. Rodriguez always kept making tortillas. Father Ward organized the 16th of September festival. For everything he made, or organized, the older people would help him. Pomposo Guerra, Alfonso de Leon, Agustín Rodriguez, Pedro Rodriguez, Wally Santos and Marcelino, they all helped to make these big festivals. Everything that was collected from there, was for the church. Father Ward supported the church and helped with the festivals. But when we moved, they never set up the machine for the "tortillas", because Mrs. Rodriguez was sick by then. She would make the "tortillas" in her home. We didn't set up the machine. They kept it there for a long time and never used it. Doña Atanacia Ortiz and Señora Bonilla would also get together and make "tamales" to sell. It was quite a thing that the older members kept helping, without any benefit for themselves.

Mrs. Rodriguez and Felicitas Herrera, with her husband, Trinidad, they started to have the procession of the Virgen, the pilgrimage. They would take the Virgen to different homes during the month of December, they used to start nine days before the twelfth of December.

Juarez: Is this the Posadas?

Rivera: No, it is a pilgrimage. They used to have the posadas, too, but that's different. That's at the church. They used to have them from house to house, like it really should be, at that time, they made everything Mexican style. As time goes on, they have changed it. Now, they do the posadas in the church. They just open the door and sing there. Before, they used to be in the houses. The pilgrimage of the Virgen, Mrs. Rodriguez started it with Doña Chencha de Leon, Doña Chencha Rangel, and her husband Francisco Rangel, Doña Dolores Rodriguez' husband Agustín, those people, and afterwards, Mrs. Herrera. But first, it was the Rangel's and Rodriguez that started taking the
Rivera: Virgen from house to house, with donations that each family would give. Everything was for the church. Nobody benefited by it. Nobody used the name of the church to gain money for themselves. This was done absolutely for the church. Father took the money and everybody was glad to help him. Then Mrs. Dolores Rodriguez got sick. All of a sudden she was gone. The Society broke up for a while. It was just dead! Nobody took any interest in it.

Juarez: What year would this be?

Rivera: I think it was in 1964 or 1965.

Juarez: Then for how many years did the Society cease to be?

Rivera: Oh, about three years, until Father Wolski came. He proposed that we start it again with the regular committee. That's the first time we started as a Society with president, vice-president, treasurer and secretary. We started with thirteen members that year. It was four or five years ago now.

Juarez: Do you mean 1969 or 1970?

Rivera: Yes, 1969 or 1970. It was about five or six years ago.

Juarez: And it started up again?

Rivera: Yes, with membership.

Juarez: At that time, do you remember who the officers were, once it started again?

Rivera: I was president. Felicitas was the vice-president, Carmen Santos was the secretary and the treasurer was Evelyn Rocha. We had it for a year and a half. Like I said, we started with thirteen members. By the time a year and a half went by, I gained one-hundred members. We had one-hundred members, by the time I left. Now the Society counts with about 150 names in the book. That doesn't mean that they are all active members. I think we have only fifty active members. Some of them pay their dues, which helps, and some of them don't pay their dues. It grew in proportion. The first year and a half I was there, we made over five-thousand dollars for Father. Besides that we had set up an account for the Society to put money in the bank. We only took
Rivera: one third, the rest went to Father for the support of the church. With that third of the money that we keep, we have a bake sale every first Sunday of the month. With what we have left, we have it for ourselves. We put it in the bank to keep on going with the Society, to pay for whatever we do. After awhile it got to be that we had $1000 in the bank. We decided that we were going to set up a scholarship fund for the children of the parish. Preference would be given to the Society members' children and grandchildren. They would have two memberships for college and one for Brady High School, or wherever they wanted to go. We gave them $150.00 each, for the scholarships. Then they just put that in. They did pretty good. By the time I left, they had over $2000 in the savings account, which went to help keep on supporting the Society and to keep on going for the scholarships that we set up. Then we have this bake sale, whatever we make, a third goes for us and the rest for Father. Father Wolski, that first year had $5000.00. He used it to beautify the church and do a lot of things for the church. When I got out, Rebecca Montez became president, Jenny Arias, vice-president, Juanita Sanchez, treasurer, and Alice Vasquez, secretary. Then we ran it for another year. They also made pretty good. Our Society has picked up ever since. It was very fruitful when we first started. The older ladies did a lot of work, which the younger generation doesn't believe in. They just put on dances and whatever.

Juarez: Besides the activities for raising funds, was it also a religious organization? Do you have masses said?

Rivera: Yes. The first Friday of every month there is a mass, always for all the members of the Society, dead or alive. We pay for that mass. Whenever anybody gets sick, we send them flowers. If any of the members die, the Society takes care of the funeral expenses, as far as the church, the mass, and if someone sings. Then it was started that a breakfast is given to the members of the family, if she is a member, those are the benefits given if you belong to the Society. Once a year, they make a dance to
Rivera: support the Society. They have a few things for all the active members. They have a dance and a Christmas party, that's usually done in December, to thank the members that were active and working all through the year. We donate to handicapped people. We either give them a birthday party or a Christmas party. We help them in whatever we can. We also belong to the Archdiocese Council, so we help all the members of all the societies. When I was president, every third month they had a meeting and we went to it. Now, the girls think that it isn't important, so they don't go to the meetings. We still belong to the Archdiocese Council.

Juarez: Are you an active member now?

Rivera: I forgot to say that when I first joined the Society in 1948, Helen, Marie and Gloria were only small girls, but they always helped me. They were always active, I joined them in the Society when they were eleven years old.

Juarez: You were talking about how when your girls were members of the Society, they used to help you.

Rivera: Since they were small they used to take things to the bake sale, when I used to make doughnuts. Now they remember, and tell me, that when I'd send them with a pan of cookies or a cookie sheet of date bars, they used to eat half of them by the time they got to the church. Mrs. Ortiz would always reprimand them. Mrs. Ortiz, never told me what they were doing. She would reprimand them when they got there with one-half of it. She never told me until now. One time the girls were telling me in the church. Senora Ortiz said, "Yes, I remember reprimanding them, I never told you, did I? I bet the girls thought that I did." But she never did. They all liked the girls because they were always helping me, the three girls. They were members since they were eleven years old. Then when it picked up again, they were active members. They always helped me. Now I have five grand-daughters, that are members of the Guadalupe Society. That makes four generations, because my mother was the first one, then me,
Rivera: then my daughters, and now I have five grand-daughters that are members of the Society. They are active members of the Society now. My daughters are always helping. The year after Rebecca Montez was president, Marie became president for a year too. Now it's Ronnie. Ronnie Segovia is president; Margaret, my niece, the one we helped to bring here, she is the vice-president at the present time. Rebecca Rojas, is the secretary and the treasurer is Juanita Sanchez.

Juarez: During my work this summer, I have been trying to locate records that the Society has kept through the years. I haven't been successful in obtaining any type of records. Could you tell me if they kept records from the beginning of the Society? Like minutes of the meetings, newsclippings, photographs, this type of thing? If they did, do you know where I can locate the person who might have these things?

Rivera: Well, I was asked that before. We did have a ledger, a book Mrs. Rodriguez, like I said, was the last president of the original Society. She had this ledger and a lot of clippings and pictures we took at that time. Whenever we had a procession, she always took pictures. We had a procession and Novena for the twelfth of December, every year. We usually took pictures there. She had all of them. She said most of what she had was lost in the flood. Her house was in water in the flood of 1965. When they moved, she had very few pictures. What was left, she gave to the priest. I know that when Father Ward was living, he had all these pictures of the Society. He had a lot of pictures and records that Mrs. Rodriguez had saved from the flood. When Mrs. Rodriguez died, Tootsie Munoz was the secretary. She gave us what she had. She said that Annie Moralez had the rest. When we checked with Annie, she said that her mother had them in the basement and she couldn't find them. Annie was the secretary for a while. She was the one that had a lot of them, which she gave me. The only thing that she gave me was a very old book, in which the members were paid up, nothing of great importance. All of this, and a few clippings, we gave to the
Rivera: historian. We voted for her and she was to write a book on the history of the Society. All of the clippings that I had she took. First we gave them to Nicha Coates, she was going to do it. Then she changed her mind and she didn't want to do it, so she returned them back. Then we gave them to Shirley Gaston. As far as I know, Shirley Gaston has them now. Father Ward had all the pictures and clippings. I have been told that Father Wolski either threw them away or kept them because he was the one that started the Society and he had all this. He helped a lot to make the Society go. He got us the banner and the ribbons for the first year. After that we have always paid for them. But as far as I know, Father Ward left all this. There were three priests after Father Ward, and before Father Wolski came. He claims that they must have thrown them away. In the change of the priests, they got lost somehow.

Juarez: Now I'd like to ask you about the customs and traditions the Mexican people had. Do you think they have been maintained the way they were when you first came here? Or have they changed quite a bit? What are your impressions of these customs and traditions of Mexican people?

Rivera: Well, they certainly have changed. As a girl, my parents would never think that we could have dates, or that we should go anywhere by ourselves, never! Whenever we did go to a dance, that's about the only thing that they took us to, both of our parents went with us. We all had a good time, that's how we met. We had boyfriends. During the dance, we talked with them, but as far as having dates, never! Now that is all changed. When I had my girls, the two oldest girls, Helen and Marie, they never had any dates that we approved of. My husband was very strict with them and never let them go alone. They might have gone out by themselves when they were at work, but they never had permission until they were engaged. Lake Helen, when she became engaged to Roman, then she could have dates. Marcelino approved of them. He was very strict as far as that goes. Our girls were very good about obeying him. They always obeyed their parents. Manuel, when he was a boy, if he wanted to go swimming, or go any-
Rivera: place, he had to ask permission from his dad. If he wanted to let him go to the show, he would, up until the time he went to the service. They obeyed their parents. That's what good training did. They had that fear that they had to obey their parents. To be a good Christian, you had to obey your parents. They still went by the ten commandments. Now it's so much different. My last two girls were the youngest ones. I was always in between, trying to get them. They always asked their dad, but by the time Gloria was going out, she would butter him up. She had more dates with different boys than the older girls. The older girls couldn't have dates, until they got engaged to them or they were going to get married. Then they could go out with them, but otherwise, before, they never did. Shirley and Gloria broke him down. As time went on, I used to have a lot of arguments with him and tell him we were different and living in a different world, that they had to know the boys before they got married. The two younger ones had a few dates with his permission. That was the start of the changing. They all got married in the church. He walked them down the aisle, because they all obeyed him until the last. It's different now. I see with their girls, they don't have anything to say. They always have dates. Helen's girls are much different. They were born and raised here. They follow the traditions. They go according to the American way. They do have dates and go to the prom. They go all over. Before, Roseline, my oldest grand-daughter, who just got married, ran her life just like any American girl. I don't mean that they don't obey their mother. They respect her, but they of course, don't ask any time they want to go out. There is where the change is. Our customs really have changed. You don't see strict parents anymore. There is a very few old families in which the children are good to them, now in their old age, and they visit them. Most of the parents of the old people, the girls and the children, don't look after their old people like we did in our childhood. When we were kids, we always had to look after our parents. Now days, it's very changed, very different. Sometimes they don't even visit their parents.
Rivera: I am very lucky, because like I said, I followed my mother's traditions and my girls followed mine. I was a little bit more strict than I would be now. Now, I probably would have changed, living in this age, I would probably have let the girls do what they wanted. But I see so many girls now on their own. When I used to take them to work, I used to drive a car and take them to the onion and potatoe fields. We picked potatoes and onions in Hollendale. Then the children went with me. If they have a part-time job, it's a lot of responsibility. They complain that the mother makes them work so much. That's the difference now. There's no tradition now, like the tradition that the older people kept. We live in the modern times. The only thing my family still does is go to the pilgrimage. When we have this pilgrimage, my girls still have the Virgen at their house and they say the rosary. That's the only old tradition that's being kept in this generation, that I can see. The children now days don't obey or have respect for their parents. You see so much of this disrespect now. The older people complain that they are left alone, completely. Their children don't visit them or take them out anyplace. Like I said, I am very lucky because my girls are still a little bit old-fashioned, because they do see that we get what we need and they always visit us. But you see there are very few families like that, that visit their parents. They just completely forget about their parents. Sometimes they even put them in a highrise and think that they are well taken care of there, and they are forgotten.

Juarez: Did you observe more Mexican holidays in the older days than you do now? If you did, what are some of the old Mexican holidays that you observed, that you don't observe today?

Rivera: Oh, for instance, the sixteenth of September was always a big fiesta of the Mexican people. I remember when we were girls, we used to go thirty or forty miles in a wagon with horses to the fiestas. My parents used to take us. To the fifth of May
Rivera: and the sixteenth of September. Now, when my girls were small, that was what we always would do, the fifth of May and sixteenth of September. For baptisms, we were always invited, we always went. We had picnics. We had gatherings of the Mexican people. You don't see that now. We used to have posadas for Christmas and we used to have processions for the Novena in December. All our children were there. Now days, you don't get the children to go to mass, much less a Novena Procession, like we used to have. All our girls were in the procession. Even Manuel was an altar boy at the church. None of my grandchildren have been altar boys, so far. That's what I remember. The gatherings for the family, were more then, even in my age, than they are now. Now, the girls think that they can't be with the parents. They go by themselves to do "their own thing", they call it. There aren't any family gatherings anymore.

Juarez: If I remember right, did Manuel belong to a boy's group as a young man, known as the Crusaders?

Rivera: Yes.

Juarez: Do you know anything about that organization?

Rivera: Well, I don't remember too well. But I have a picture of him the way he was a drummer boy. They took him out. Then they had boy scouts. Marcelino, Mr. De Leon, Mr. Leonso Moralez, and Wally Santos, were all members of the Boy Scouts. They used to take Manuel and the boys to different gatherings and different father-son dinners. They used to go to a lot of places. That I don't see anymore.

Juarez: Was that the same group known as the Crusaders or was that the Boy Scouts?

Rivera: They were little, about seven or eight years old. These crusaders used to have a
Rivera: little red cape and a white cap. They used to take them to the council meetings in the Knights of Columbus and all that for little plays that they had. Do you mean Crusaders, like the Brown Berets?

Juarez: No, this was a church group, I think. I am not sure. Was it called the Crusaders?

Rivera: Yes, it was the Crusaders and it was a church thing. They only went during the processions that they had and some gatherings, like I said, Father and Son dinners. We only had Manuel. We don't know how many more boys went. But I know that all these boys now, Joseph Moralez, Manuel Lopez, and Wally Santos, all those boys that were the same age as Manuel, were in those Crusaders.

Juarez: Irene, we have covered quite a bit of your life and Marcelino's life. Now, I would like to ask you and Marcelino, if you had to give advice to the young people of today, what is it that you would tell them? I'd like to add here that Irene is going to give Marcelino's advice in Spanish so it can be clearly understood, then she will try to translate it into English.) She feels the same as Marcelino.

Rivera: Les diría que la vieja generación está orgullosa de su nacionalidad, de ser Mexicanos. Es honra para la gente vieja que no se forzaban en los Americanos de ser apreciados. Como ahora se forzan que los acepten y quieren ser "American Mexican" y se llaman "La Raza". Para mí, esa palabra es baja. Yo quiero ser mexicano y ser llamado mexicano. Así cuando you vine a los Estados Unidos, sufrí en no saber hablar inglés, pero fue el International Institute que enseñaba el inglés a quién interesada y aprendí porque a mí, me interesaba aprender el idioma. ¿Qué me hacía mucha falta! Luego ya mi familia crecían y aunque visitaba a México cada año me hice ciudadano americano, sacando los segundos papeles porque mi esposa fue nacida en Texas. Yo siempre fui de corazón mexicano, cambié solo por beneficio de mi familia. Porque sabía que ya no iba a regresar a México a vivir. Y aquí mis hijos nacieron, todos en San Pablo,
Rivera: Minnesota, y yo tenía que buscar el modo de vivir en los Estados Unidos y lo que fuera más útil para mi familia y enseñarles a que fueran mexicanos de sangre y de corazón. Pero que ellos no se llamen, "ni Raza, ni Chicanos", y hasta ahora todos ellos se honran en decir que son mexicanos de nacionalidad. Creados en los Estados Unidos, y por eso se llaman "American Mexican", pero no les gusta tampoco a ellos que les llamen "Mi Raza" ni "Chicanos". Son puros mexicanos. Ser trabajador y no molestar a nadie y es suficiente para el mexicano de corazón ser respetado. Únicamente no forzarlos a que los acepten porque son, ellos quieren llamar, quieren los beneficios de los Estados Unidos, y quieren que forzados a que los quieran. Sólo ser respetados. Es el único consejo que yo doy un mexicano de corazón.

Juarez: Now, Irene, will give the advice in English.

Rivera: Well, it's quite difficult to translate it, but my opinion is that in our generation and customs, we are proud to be Mexican born. We are proud to be called "Mexican American". But Mexicans, because we are born in the United States, have to be Mexican American. We don't like to force ourselves to be appreciated by others, only to be respected as Mexican American. We don't like the word, "La Raza", nor do we like the word, "Chicano", nothing like that. To us and our children, we were brought up calling ourselves Mexican, well, Mexican American, because they were born here, but are of Mexican nationality, and they are not ashamed to say that they are Mexican. We are not. We taught our children to be proud of their heritage and not to force themselves to be liked and not to force their ideas onto Americans: to say that we have the same right to be called, our right is to be respected, as we respect them. We have nothing to claim that we haven't got by being just Mexican American. That would be my advice. If I was to tell the younger generation to stop calling themselves "La Raza", "Chicanos", and be proud to be Mexican and to say that we are being integrated, just to be themselves. Be Mexican and be proud of their heritage,
Rivera: not be forcing themselves into saying, "We have got to be called this. We have got to be called that, because we are Chicanos". We are not. We are Mexican American by our nationality and very proud to be that. Be proud to be a Mexican and not force yourselves, only claim respect for yourselves.

Juarez: Thank you very much Irene, this has been a very fruitful interview with you. There is one more thing that I have to ask of you. Could we have your permission to put this tape on file with the Historical Society?

Rivera: Yes, you have my permission.

Juarez: Thank you very much.

Rivera: You are welcome.