TRANSCRIPT OF AN ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

WITH

JUANITA MORAN

This interview was conducted as part of a series on the Mexican American in Minnesota. Juanita Rangel de Moran was born in 1921 in Aguascalientes, Mexico. When her family came to visit relatives in Topeka, Kansas, Juanita was almost five years old. Her family decided to remain in the U. S. They stayed in Kansas for awhile, and then migrated to St. Paul in 1928. Juanita married Salvador Moran in St. Paul in 1943. They have seven children. She has been an active member in St. Paul's Mexican American Community.

Mrs. Moran recalls her childhood relating a few experiences in Mexico, Kansas and Minnesota. She gives an interesting view of life in St. Paul's Mexican American Community, through explaining how the holidays and special events were celebrated. She also talks about the church and her family. In closing, Juanita Moran stresses the importance of retaining the language and customs of the Mexican people.

This is a transcript of a tape recording 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 JUANITA MORAN  
July 31, 1975  
INTERVIEWER: VICTOR BARELA

BARELA: This interview is with Juanita Moran, and she will also give us some details on her husband Salvador Moran. They live at 897 Ohio Street in West St. Paul, Minnesota and the date of this interview is July 31, 1975. The interviewer is Victor Barela. This is a project of the Mexican American History Project of the Minnesota State Historical Society.

BARELA: What is your full name?
MORAN: Juanita Rangel de Moran.

BARELA: Where were your born?
MORAN: I was born in Aguascalientes, Mexico.

BARELA: When were you born?
MORAN: I was born on October 12, 1921.

BARELA: What are your parents names?
MORAN: My father's name was Francisco Rangel and my mother's is Cresencia Ortiz de Rangel.

BARELA: Where were your parents born?
MORAN: My father was born in Jalisco, Mexico, and my mother in Mexico City.

BARELA: How did your father earn a living?
MORAN: In Aguascalientes he was the Secretary of the Organization of Railroads. My mother was just a housewife.

BARELA: Do you remember your father?
MORAN: I think of him quite often. I also remember when we used to live in Aguascalientes, though I can't remember everything real vividly. One thing which is really imprinted in my mind is my grandmother taking me to the market-place and buying me a mango, which was my favorite fruit.

BARELA: What was your grandmother's name?
MORAN: Her name was Tomasita Lopez de Rangel.

BARELA: Was your childhood a happy one?
MORAN: I believe that my life in Aguascalientes was very happy. Then when we came up north to the United States, I began to lead a new life. We went to Topeka, Kansas to visit some of my mother's relatives and my father really liked it there.
MORAN: He decided that he wanted remain in the United States. Shortly after, my father's visa ran out and we did not have any more money. Life began to get rough for us because of the language problem, lack of money and a place to live. My father was unable to find a job, so my life was somewhat saddened.

BARELA: Do you have happy memories of Mexico?
MORAN: Oh, yes.
BARELA: What did your father do in the United States?
MORAN: My father finally found a job with the railroad, but we had to move to Pomona, a small town close to Topeka. After several months, we returned to Topeka. By then, my mother's brother was living in St. Paul, Minnesota. He wrote to my father and told him that there were a lot of jobs at the packing companies, so we should move to St. Paul. That is how we happened to come to St. Paul.

BARELA: Do you remember where you'd go with your mother?
MORAN: I remember that our home was a very poor one. My parents, my three sisters and I lived there. There was no running water or shower inside the house. They were outside. We lived close to a river and whenever it rained a lot, the river would flood and we'd have to move to higher grounds. Many times some homes were washed away with the floods.

BARELA: What city did this occur at?
MORAN: Pomona, Kansas.
BARELA: How old were you then?
MORAN: I must have been about six years old.
BARELA: How old were you when you left Mexico?
MORAN: I was going to be five.
BARELA: Did you learn to speak English in Pomona?
MORAN: No, we spoke only Spanish. When we returned to Topeka, my parents sent me to a Catholic school and that is where I first started to learn English. I remember that the kids used to make fun of me because I didn't know any English. How could I speak it when the only language I had ever learned was Spanish?

BARELA: Were there other Mexican children at that school?
MORAN: Yes.
BARELA: Did they have the same language problems as you?
MORAN: I don't remember. I just recall that I did, because I was constantly reprimanded for it. We remained there for just a few months and then we came to St. Paul.
BARELA: So then all this time your father was working with the railroad?
MORAN: Yes.
BARELA: When did you arrive in St. Paul?
MORAN: We came in September, 1928.
BARELA: Did your father start working with the packing company immediately?
MORAN: Yes.
BARELA: With what company did he work?
MORAN: He worked with the Cudahy Packing Company.
BARELA: Was he able to start working immediately?
MORAN: Yes, the same month that we arrived.
BARELA: When you arrived, did you know that there were a lot of Mexicans working in the beet fields?
MORAN: Yes, we knew, but we didn't go work in the beet fields right away. My father had a very good job at Cudahy and his work was greatly appreciated. But then in 1931, during the depression, he was laid off. We had to go work in the beet fields in Bird Island, Minnesota.
BARELA: You were just ten years old at the time, weren't you?
MORAN: Yes. My other sisters worked there too. A farmer, whose name I can't recall let us stay in his grainery. My parents fixed it up as well as they could since water would come in whenever it rained. My mother's brother, Mr. Elojio Ortiz, and his family, also lived with us. On a very hot July day in 1931, we had an unfortunate accident. We had invited some friends over to eat, everyone had cooked a special Mexican dish. Since it was so hot, we ate outside. When everyone had finished eating, the women went inside the grainery to heat some water to wash the dishes. They went outside to talk and completely forgot that the water was heating on the kerosene stove. The water soon evaporated and before we knew it, the grainery was on fire. We lost the few belongings that we had, except for what we wore. The farmer got very upset because his grainery had been burned down and he told us he could not build another home for us. Then we went and rented a tent close by. This tent happened to be under a tree. The townspeople had heard of our disaster, and the fact that we had nothing to eat or to wear, so they helped us out as best they could. We lived under that tree until the contract terminated. My sister Genoveva was born there.
BARELA: Was she your first sister?
MORAN: No, she was my third sister.
BARELA: So then you were born in Mexico?

MORAN: Yes, I was born in Mexico as well as Fidela who was born in 1925 and Eugenia born in 1926. Maria was the first one born here in the United States. She was born in St. Paul in September, 1928.

BARELA: Did you go to school in Bird Island?

MORAN: No, I went to school here in St. Paul. The first school I went to here was Lafayette school.

BARELA: How old were you at the time?

MORAN: I was about seven or eight years old.

BARELA: So then you had gone to school before you went to Bird Island?

MORAN: Oh yes, but we had to quit school to go to work. Consequently, when we returned to school, I had to repeat the same grade.

BARELA: Did you encounter the same problems here as in Kansas?

MORAN: As far as school is concerned, a little bit, and also because of the language problem. We didn't speak any English and people would ask us if we weren't learning English, why were we here? They would say that we should return to Mexico.

BARELA: Were there other Mexicans at Lafayette school then?

MORAN: Yes, there were about three or four families that I recall going to Lafayette school. After I finished at Lafayette school I went to Roosevelt. I was the second Mexican at that school. There was only one other Mexican before me and his name was Gregory Gonzalez. He was the first Mexican to attend Roosevelt.

BARELA: Did you graduate from Roosevelt?

MORAN: Yes, I graduated from Roosevelt and then I went to Humboldt for about three weeks. Since Humboldt did not have a Spanish program and I wanted to study Spanish grammar and learn to read and write it, I appealed to the courts for special permission to attend Mechanic Arts school. I graduated from high school there.

BARELA: When you came to St. Paul, were there many Mexican families residing there already?

MORAN: There weren't too many. I remember the Coronados'; Vasquez'; Lopez'; Lucios' and the Guerras' and Silvas'. There was another Vasquez family which lived in South St. Paul.

BARELA: Did you ever hear of the name of the first Mexican family to settle in St. Paul?

MORAN: I don't remember who they were.
BARELA: Now I want to ask you some questions about your husband. What is his full name?
MORAN: Salvador Moran.
BARELA: Where was he born?
MORAN: He was born in Morelia, Michoacan, Mexico.
BARELA: When was he born?
MORAN: 1913.
BARELA: What were his parents names?
MORAN: Juan Moran and Antonia Guillen de Moran.
BARELA: Were his parents born in Morelia too?
MORAN: Yes.
BARELA: Did you say that his father died when your husband was very young?
MORAN: Yes, and then his mother remarried. His stepfather also died so he was again fatherless.
BARELA: Did your husband's parents come to the United States?
MORAN: His mother came to Jamestown to work in the beet fields.
BARELA: Did they come to the border by train?
MORAN: They came by train from Morelia to Nuevo Laredo, Tamaulipas. They remained there for one year. Then they were contracted to come work in the fields up north.
BARELA: When did they arrive in Minnesota?
MORAN: In 1928 or 1929.
BARELA: Does your husband remember his childhood in Mexico?
MORAN: He tells me that they used to live with his grandmother and she used to take him to school. He attended elementary school in Mexico and then his family decided to come up north. After both his parents died, he decided to take some night classes so that he could learn English, to read, write, and to learn math.
BARELA: How old was he when he arrived in St. Paul?
MORAN: He was fifteen years old and it wasn't until he was sixteen or seventeen that they decided to remain in St. Paul.
BARELA: Where did you meet your husband?
MORAN: We met at the old church of Our Lady Of Guadalupe. He used to work at the church and I was a member of the church choir. Then we became sweethearts.
BARELA: Do you remember if the people that made up the Mexican Community were the type that would get together and organize functions?
MORAN: I can't recall the times when I was very young, but I can remember some of the things beginning in 1932 or 1933. My father was a member of the Anahuac Society and he was very active. It was because of him that we participated in celebrations like the 5th of May and the 16th of September. We were also involved in church activities like the Posadas. I remember helping my father odd in putting programs together to celebrate patriotic feasts.

BARELA: Do you remember if you celebrated these festivities simply to follow tradition?

MORAN: My father would say that he did this so that people would remember the customs followed in Mexico and also so that the young people could learn and preserve important aspects of our Mexican culture.

BARELA: Would all the families participate in these festivities?

MORAN: Many families would participate, but then there were those who believed that these traditions should be done away with since we were living in the United States.

BARELA: Would the programs turn out right?

MORAN: Oh yes. At first I remember I didn't want to participate because I was very shy and thought that people would laugh at me. But my father always had first say and what he said had to be done, so I participated. I am very glad that he did this because I learned a lot.

BARELA: What would you do at the celebrations?

MORAN: One thing I would do was recite. My father was the one who taught me all that should be known about giving recitations. Since I was a member of the choir, I would also sing. Lastly, my mother would teach us some dances, so I would dance.

BARELA: Did your mother know the dances?

MORAN: My mother knew the dances pretty well so she would teach them to us and would also make us our dresses.

BARELA: Did you have musicians or would you use records?

MORAN: There was a group of musicians who would play at these patriotic festivals. Some of the musicians were Mr. Mendez, who played the base fiddle, Mr. Julian (I don't recall his last name), who played the violin, Mr. Molina, who played the guitar and I cannot remember the names of the rest. With that music we would sing and dance.

BARELA: Would food be prepared for this occasion?

MORAN: Yes, several ladies prepared foods like tacos, tamales and enchiladas.
BARELA: Were there any women who were well known for a special type of platter that they prepared?

MORAN: Well, everyone did his share of participating.

BARELA: Would all the boys participate in the singing and the dancing?

MORAN: Well, you know how boys are, but a few would participate. I especially remember that the boys from the Cardenas' and Moreno families would participate. Many of the families have moved from here so I can't recall any more names.

BARELA: Was there a lot of poverty?

MORAN: Yes, none of us had any wealth. All of us worked.

BARELA: Did any tension exist between the Mexican barrio (community) and the Anglo community?

MORAN: No, not really. In our barrio the Mexican was the largest ethnic group, but Germans, Swedes, Jews, Blacks, etc. also lived there. We all got along fine; there were never any feuds amongst us. The tension did exist with the other Mexican barrio. Our barrio was on the West Side and the other was on the East Side. We never did like to associate with them, nor they with us. There was always trouble when one group went to the other group's dances.

BARELA: So then, it was more of a feud between one barrio and the other?

MORAN: Yes.

BARELA: Did you always follow Mexican traditions?

MORAN: Yes, ever since I was small. I owe it all to my parents. I always wanted to go to school to learn Mexican dance and music but my father never had the money to send me. I was the oldest of a family of eight, so my father could not afford it. I learned as much as I could though.

BARELA: Did you continue to do this on through high school?

MORAN: Yes, I was a member of the choir so I learned a bit about reading music.

BARELA: Did you, at this time, teach younger people your skills?

MORAN: Only my sisters. We always sang with the church choir. All the hymns that we knew were taught to us by our parents, and we in turn taught them to all the people who wanted to join the choir.

BARELA: Would other high school kids get involved in joining the choir?

MORAN: Yes.

BARELA: So then, you not only danced, but you also sang?

MORAN: Yes.

BARELA: Was there a lot of unity and participation amongst the church members?
MORAN: The majority of us were.

BARELA: Were there any functions or gatherings?

MORAN: Oh yes, there were many at church. The church was the center for getting people together. We would have weddings and dances at the church. Most of the Mexican people participated either in the activities of the church or of the Neighborhood House or both.

BARELA: Were there then two different festivals? That of the church and the one of the Neighborhood House?

MORAN: Yes. One would take place at the church on a certain date and later one on a different date at the Neighborhood House.

BARELA: What was the difference between the two festivities?

MORAN: In the church, functions were held so that money could be raised to help the church. I suppose that the difference with those of the Neighborhood House was that these functions were a tradition of the Anahuac Society.

BARELA: Did the Anahuac Society exist for a long time?

MORAN: It terminated right after my father's death.

BARELA: Do you remember any of the parents who would help with the festivals?

MORAN: There were so many, it's hard to recall their names.

BARELA: Do you remember the names of the priests who helped out with these patriotic festivals?

MORAN: The first priest we had for the Mexican Community was a French priest called Father Guillemette. We did not yet celebrate feasts when he was here, but he helped get the Mexicans to church so that they could receive the sacraments. After he left, Father Henry Dicks came to our church. He began to have functions to raise money to fix the church.

BARELA: Did the priests speak Spanish?

MORAN: Father Dicks did. After he died Father Ward came, and after his death Father Walski, a Pollack, was with us for about three years. Presently, Father Monsuer is with us.

BARELA: Did all these priests speak Spanish?

MORAN: Yes. The only one who was not very fluent was Father Ward. He also had a hearing problem, so consequently we had a hard time talking to him.

BARELA: Were all the priests in favor of upholding the Mexican customs?

MORAN: Yes, very much in favor. The ones who did quite a bit were Father Ward and Father Dicks. The priest which we have right now has only been with us for a short time so I really don't know how things will turn out.

BARELA: Do you remember the old church? I have heard that it used to be like a hall, close to a bar.
MORAN: I remember that we used to go to a store on Wabasha Street. Mass was said there and we would get together there to teach the children their catechism and all about religion. That was the first site where a group of children made their first Holy Communion. I was one of those in the group. Then a place was found on Fairfield. It was a bar and a hall. The owner of the bar told the priest that he would sell the side where the hall was. We fixed the place so that it looked like a church, with pews and an altar. There were many times when we could hear the noise from the bar while the priest was saying mass. The priest was constantly talking to the owner of the bar and asking him to sell the rest of the building to him so that a new church could be constructed. Finally he consented and the whole building was torn down so that a new church could be built. Everyone in the community came to help out as much as they could. Finally the church was finished. My husband helped quite a bit.

BARELA: You said that your husband used to work at the church. What was his job?

MORAN: He did just about everything. He took care of the coors, of the cooking, made appointments for people to see the priests, was like a chauffeur, etc. He was like a housekeeper. Since there was no money, he did this for the priests.

BARELA: How is it that he began to work with the priest?

MORAN: Well, since he and his brother were orphans and didn't have a place to stay, someone told him to go speak to the priest. He asked the priest if they could stay there and he in turn would take care of all the necessities in the church.

BARELA: Did his mother die here in St. Paul?

MORAN: Yes, she did.

BARELA: When did she die?

MORAN: In 1933, I believe.

BARELA: What were the problems that the Mexican community encountered in those times?

MORAN: Probably the main one was prejudice.

BARELA: Then you don't recall having a sad life?

MORAN: No, even though there were quite a few problems, I was quite saddened when the house burned down, but that was about it. It helped to know that we had our parents and that they would provide whatever they could for us.
BARELA: How did you meet other boys and girls when you were growing up?

MORAN: We would meet at parties, church and at school. As far as boyfriends were concerned, my father wouldn't let any of his girls go out to meet their sweethearts. He was very strict when it came to that affair. I would see Salvador at church or else he would come to my house and we would talk. But during our three years as sweethearts, not once did we go anywhere together. Maybe since I was the first child my father felt that he had to be extremely strict with me. As time lapsed, he began to change his attitude, until finally, my youngest sister was able to have her boyfriend come see her at home and then take her out.

BARELA: Did someone come speak to your father to ask for your hand in matrimony?

MORAN: Well, at first Salvador came alone since he had no parents to go with him, but my father told him that it couldn't be done that way, that he had to bring someone with him. My father suggested that he bring the priest and talk to him then. When Salvador told the priest about the situation the priest was amazed and he said to Salvador, "What do I want to go to ask for your sweetheart's hand for? I'm not getting married". Salvador finally convinced the priest to come with him because otherwise my father would not even speak to him. So Father Ward went to my house to ask for my hand. My father decided that the wedding would take place one year later, but Salvador and I told my father that we wanted to get married in six months. So within those six months we arranged everything for the wedding.

BARELA: When did you get married?

MORAN: On January 23, 1943.

BARELA: Did you have a big wedding?

MORAN: Oh yes, my father invited all his compadres and all the Mexican people of the community. My madrinas (godmothers) were Mrs. Coronado, Mrs. Cervantes, Mrs. Hernandez, and Miss Deborah who is now deceased. My bridesmaids were about twelve of my girlfriends. So it was a very big and happy wedding.

BARELA: Did you have a dance?

MORAN: Yes.

BARELA: Yes, in those times all the weddings followed Mexican traditions. The fiance would buy his fiancee' the donas (wedding dress and the trimmings); he would also take care of the food expense. We would also have madrinas, bridesmaids, chamberlaines (ushers) ring bearers and flower girls and a whole bunch of other things.
BARELA: In your family did you celebrate special feasts, for instance feast days?

MORAN: For birthdays my mother, who has always been an excellent cook, would prepare a special dish for us and we would invite our relatives and compadres (sponsors). It never turned out to be a big affair because we did not have much money.

BARELA: Were patriotic feasts, like the 5th of May and the 16th of September, different in any way?

MORAN: They were more or less the same. We would talk about the Mexican heroes, have speeches, dances, sing songs and finally a dance for everybody.

BARELA: I have heard that not only Mexican people came to these celebrations. Is this true?

MORAN: Yes, Anglos would also attend.

BARELA: Did you celebrate Christmas in a special way?

MORAN: Yes, at church we would sing special religious songs while at the Neighborhood House we would have a Pastorela. Then we would have a pinata for the children. When we were ready to leave, the people from the Neighborhood House would give us bags of fruits, candy and peanuts.

BARELA: You've mentioned the Neighborhood House quite a bit. Where was it located?

MORAN: It was on East Indiana Street on the lower West Side.

BARELA: It seems to have been quite a center for getting people together.

MORAN: It was, but it was not just for the Mexican people. All the other members of the community, like the Germans, Pollacks, Jews, etc. had access to it. The building was for the entire community to use as was convenient.

BARELA: Did the government fund this building?

MORAN: No, it was the Community Chest. Miss Constance Curry, who is now deceased used to be in charge of the Neighborhood House. She was a wonderful, nice person.

BARELA: I would like to ask you something which I have not yet asked anyone. Did you celebrate Holy Week here?

MORAN: Only at church. We would walk the Stations of the Cross and for several years we would do the acts from the Passion of Christ. Some of the women would also prepare foods that are traditional for Easter.

BARELA: Were there any organizations such as the Pentacostals?

MORAN: No, there weren't any.

BARELA: The feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe was also a big occasion wasn't it?

MORAN: Oh yes, it was a big feast.

BARELA: How would you celebrate it here?
HORAN: We would start out by singing the Mananitas to Our Lady at the church and then have a Mass. At night we would have a long Mass and something like a parade where everyone goes dressed like Indians, Charros, Chinas, or whatever. They would walk up to Our Lady singing and praying and offer whatever donations they could. Nowadays it is still similar but in the past few years, something new was added. One month before the feast of Our Lady, her picture was taken to a certain home where the people prayed, sang and offered their gifts. The following morning it was taken to another home where the same thing was done. This continued for a whole month until the picture had to be returned to the church for the big Mass on her feast day which is the 12th of December.

BARELA: When does the Novena start?

MORAN: Nine days before the 12th of December.

BARELA: Do you know who started this tradition?

MORAN: My mother did.

BARELA: Were the majority of your brothers and sisters born in St. Paul?

MORAN: Yes, five of them were. Three of us had been born in Mexico.

BARELA: Which ones were born in St. Paul?

MORAN: First Maria, then Genoveva, Augustine, Francisco, and Raquel. Alicia was another one, but she died.

BARELA: Do you remember festive occasions other than church or patriotic feasts?

MORAN: Baptisms were one of those occasions. Usually we would have a dinner and if the sponsor had enough money, we would have a dance. Recently, I was looking through some of my father's old papers and I came upon some baptismal invitations in which my parents had been sponsors. Would you believe that some of those people are now parents or grandparents?

BARELA: So then your father would do quite a bit to involve all the people of the community?

MORAN: Oh yes, he was very enthusiastic about all that. I recall that whenever anyone in the community had any problems, such as lack of food or that the husband had been deported, they would come to my father so he could arrange something. My father was very good at putting thoughts together and then writing them down, so he would help everyone in need.

BARELA: So then you remember, every since you were young, that your father was very active in community affairs?
MORAN: Yes, I used to see all that. It's a shame that I didn't learn all that he knew. I remember the problems that people used to bring to him to solve. I only wish that some day someone would write a book about how he helped solve the problems.

BARELA: Your father came to become a consul didn't he?

MORAN: Yes, he became a consul representative. It was a voluntary affair without any pay.

BARELA: You said that your father participated in all the festive occasions so that others would learn about our traditions.

MORAN: Yes.

BARELA: Were there any sports in those times in which the people of the community participated?

MORAN: Yes.

BARELA: Would people participate?

MORAN: Oh yes, many of the people from our community were very good in sports.

BARELA: I can see from your home that you still follow a lot of the old Mexican customs and traditions. What do you do to continue this?

MORAN: Well, I have always taught my children to appreciate Mexican songs and dances. Ever since they were very young I would sing to them and teach them Mexican songs. I also did the same for the dances. The piano you see here, I have had since I got married. I used to, and still do, play it for them. I would also read to them and tell them about my life in Mexico and the customs and traditions that are followed over there. I tell them that both their parents were born in Mexico and that we, like our parents, follow the traditions of Mexico. I also bought them records so that they would gain a better understanding of our music.

BARELA: Do your children follow Mexican traditions? Does it interest them?

MORAN: Yes, they like it. Many of them like to dance and talk about Mexico. Presently, I have a daughter who is in Mexico City studying under the direction of a person who has the group of Amalia Hernandez and her Ballet Folklorico. She has been there since June and will be there until the end of August. My husband and I made the effort and sacrifice to send her there so that she can return and teach those dances to the children here.

BARELA: What is her name?

MORAN: Rebecca.

BARELA: Do you continue to cook Mexican foods?
MORAN: Yes, I cook what my mother taught me and also foods which I have seen my aunts cook, whenever I have gone to visit them in Mexico.

BARELA: You also do a lot for the community don't you?

MORAN: Well, I was working at Mi Cultura School where we take youngsters from the ages of six months to five years old. This is a Bilingual school and I would teach the children Mexican dances and English and Spanish songs. I would also tell them about Mexico.

BARELA: Did you also work with the Mexican American Cultural Resource Center?

MORAN: A bit. The one who works there now is my sister Maria Moran, who is very active in things that are related to the Mexican culture. I help Maria somewhat.

BARELA: Where does Maria work?

MORAN: She works for the Mexican American Cultural Resource Center.

BARELA: Where is the Center located?

MORAN: At Roosevelt School.

BARELA: Does she teach dancing?

MORAN: Yes, she does. I teach the children how to dance when they are small and after a certain age, they go to my sister for instruction.

BARELA: Is there someone else in your family who is just as talented?

MORAN: Francisco (Kiko) has his own orchestra. He has always liked music so my father sent him to school to learn about it. He directs and writes his own music for his Latin orchestra.

BARELA: Does he still know the Mexican songs?

MORAN: Oh yes, he knows all of them, whether they be new or old.

BARELA: Is there anyone else in your family who does something similar?

MORAN: Yes, Genoveva is the one who sings. She sings with Kiko's orchestra and also at church. She is the director of our church choir and she teaches us all the songs. She sings at all the weddings, funerals, etc. She also teaches songs to the children in catechism classes.

BARELA: Does she teach them in Spanish?

MORAN: Yes, but she also teaches songs in English.

BARELA: So then you all have a strong philosophy of retaining the Mexican culture?

MORAN: Oh, yes.

BARELA: For you that is great pride isn't it?

MORAN: Oh, yes.

BARELA: You told me that you still have relatives in Mexico didn't you?
MORAN: My father has one brother who still lives in Aguascalientes. My
mother has a sister in Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua, and a brother in
Aguascalientes. We also have a lot of cousins and other relatives.

BARELA: Are all your brothers and sisters still alive?

MORAN: Yes, and all of us live here in St. Paul, except for my sister Eugenia who
lives in Los Angeles, California.

BARELA: What are the names of all your brothers and sisters?

MORAN: Francisco (Kiko) is the oldest of the boys. He works at the Minnesota
Historical Society. Then Augustine works at the Veteran’s Hospital as
a dietician. My sisters are Fidela White, Eugenia Garcia (she’s the
one in California); Maria Moran; Genoveva Gaona and Raquel Kelly. We
had another sister, but she died in 1933.

BARELA: What was her name?

MORAN: Her name was Alicia.

BARELA: You have a large family too don’t you?

MORAN: Yes, I have seven children. Their names are: Salvador Jr.; Victor; Maria;
Yolanda; Daniel; Rebecca and Antonio.

BARELA: You’re a mother-in-law too aren’t you?

MORAN: Yes, I have nine grandchildren.

BARELA: Which of your children are married?

MORAN: Salvador Jr., Victor, Maria and Yolanda.

BARELA: You’re young to be a grandmother, it’s unbelievable! You’ve got a lot
of life and enthusiasm in you. What is it that has made you so
enthusiastic?

MORAN: I owe it all to my husband because he helped me out a lot. We’re very
much the same in respect to dancing. He used to dance with Brigida Vasquez
de Llanes when he was young. They used to dance at all the community
programs. He helped me raise the children and motivated me to continue
what I was doing. If he had disapproved of what I was doing, then I
probably would never have accomplished anything.

BARELA: So then your strength has been the strength of a couple?

MORAN: Yes, and also the drive of my parents because they always said, "Continue
what you’re doing. Teach the young ones".

BARELA: So then you say that your husband participated in programs ever since
he was very young?
MORAN: Yes, since he was about eighteen years old.

BARELA: Where did he learn to dance?

MORAN: With us, but he had also taken dancing classes with a man by the name of Mr. Arona I believe. He learned to dance things such as the Rumba, waltzes, the Tango, the Cha Cha Cha and others. Another woman taught him the Jarabe Tapatío. My sister Maria also taught him some of the other dances.

BARELA: Do you have great expectations that the old Mexican traditions will be retained?

MORAN: I really hope so. Hopefully my daughters will think this way, and possibly influence other persons.

BARELA: What advice would you give to the younger generation about life?

MORAN: I would say to them to always look towards the future. Also, to retain the language and customs of the Mexican people so that neither will die off.

BARELA: Do you find that your language and customs have enriched your life?

MORAN: I say that it has, because it is something personal which cannot be removed and so it can be transmitted from generation to generation. I really want it to continue.

BARELA: Mrs. Moran, I would like to thank you for this opportunity which will really enrich us all. Thank you.