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

Mrs. Crecencia Rangel, was born in the early 1900's in Mexico City. In 1921, she was married in Aguascalientes, Mexico. Mrs. Rangel spent some time in Kansas when she and her husband first came to the United States. In 1928, they arrived in Minnesota. They worked in the fields of rural Minnesota, as well as in St. Paul. Mrs. Rangel was very active in the development of St. Paul's Mexican American community.

Mrs. Rangel recalls some of her experiences while growing up in Mexico. She talks about her family and what she remembers from the Mexican Revolution. Mrs. Rangel describes working in Kansas and in the fields of Minnesota. As an important member of St. Paul's Mexican American community, she relates many of the customs and holidays observed by the West Side when she was most active. Mrs. Rangel closes with the sharing of an unusual event in her life.

This is a translation of a tape recorded interview in Spanish. The original tape recording is available in the Audio-Visual Library of the Minnesota Historical Society.
INTERVIEW WITH CRECENCIA RANGEL

JULY 2, 1975

INTERVIEWER: VICTOR BARELA

Barela: This is Victor Barela interviewing Mrs. Crecencia Rangel, at 897 Ohio Street, West St. Paul, Minnesota 55118. Today is July 2, 1975. This interview is being conducted as part of the Mexican American Project for the Minnesota Historical Society. With me is Ramedo Saucedo. I will start by asking you for your full name.

Rangel: Crecencia Rangel. On my father's side I am Ortiz, but my married name is Rangel.

Barela: What was your father's name?

Rangel: Anastacio Ortiz.

Barela: And your mother's?

Rangel: Masedonia Vilches. My grandfather was Leonicio Vilches and my grandmother was Eduvijen Maya.

Barela: Do you know when they were born?

Rangel: No, I don't know.

Barela: Where were you born?

Rangel: I was born in Mexico City. In front of Chapultepec Park, baptized in Tacubaya Church. My mother lived in Mexico City for 15 years. She was born, raised and married in Leon de las Aldamas, in the "Quicillo" barrio (neighborhood). My father was from the "Candelaria" barrio. They all worked for the government. They were all sargents and lieutenants, but I don't remember, my mother used to tell me about them. When you are young you don't know that someday you will have to recall some of your past life. What I also need is schooling, which I could not get because my father died in Mexico City when I was very young.

Saucedo: Where did you meet your husband?

Rangel: I met him in Aguascalientes. We were working in the railroad camps. He was also
Rangel: working there with his uncle. My husband was left an orphan at the age of eleven.

Saucedo: How did you get from Aguascalientes to Mexico City? Why did you go there?

Rangel: My mother got married in Leon. After she was married, one or two of my father's brothers and his mother left Leon. Later my father went to follow his mother, by then my father and mother were already married, they went to Mexico to be with his relatives. They already had my brother Eulogio and I think, also, a little girl. That is how and why my mother ended up in Mexico City. She started to work there. My grandparents were farmers. They worked their land, my grandmother, my father's brothers, the whole family. This is how they made their livelihood. They cultivated the land and then sold the crops at the marketplace. My grandmother had a little vegetable stand at the market. Later she died and my mother was left in charge of the whole family. This is how she got to know my father and they were married. Later when I visited my mother she showed me the church where they were married and the house where they lived. I used to go to Mexico to visit my mother quite often. She lived in Mexico City 15 or 16 years. After they got to Mexico City, the little girl died, and she had another one, and then I was born.

Saucedo: How old were you when you went to Aguascalientes?

Rangel: I was three or four years old, something like that, because I remember almost like a dream when we got to Leon upon our return from Mexico City. My father died in Mexico City. There were some of my father's brothers or something, I don't remember, anyway we went back to Leon. Later my mother remarried. She married a young man from Guanajuato. He took us to a section in Leon called "Napolis". He worked in that section. Later, I don't know if he lost his job or what, he went to work for the railroad. His job was to repair the rails and we travelled with him. We lived in one of the boxcars. Two families in the same car, one here and the other there. We raised our own chickens and pigs in the yards. The animals even knew when we had to move on, because we would just
Rangel: call to the chickens and they would come to the car, and then we would leave. During the time of Villa, the same thing would happen, we would be up front of the workers, with Villa's train behind so they could fix the rails because they would come and tear them up and then my step-father's crew would have to fix the rails again. But they (Villa's soldiers) never bothered us. The enemy would come and tell us to fix the rails. It was a lot of work, but they never bothered the workers because they worked for the railroad.

Saucedo: Did you ever get to see a lot of Villistas or Carrancistas?

Rangel: Carrancistas. We got to see a battle that took place in La Trinidad with another hacienda. The government fought against the Carrancistas, and they lost. Later they came back and the enemy burned everything. They burned farm tools, the office, the telegraph. So there was no reason for us to stay. We left on the government train. It was full of government soldiers. We left everything in the little house. We only took the "metate" and our clothes. We left in the train with the soldiers and went back to Aguascalientes from San Gil. The general who was in charge of the soldiers, I don't recall his name, saw that the enemy was coming. The Carrancistas were against the Federales, but the train kept going backwards in reverse, and God helped us so that we freed ourselves from them.

Barela: How old were you then?

Rangel: I was about 10 years old, I don't remember for sure. Then we went to Aguascalientes. By then I had already met Francisco. He had known me since I was seven, because we had worked for the railroad. Later we were separated because my mother and Ramedo's grandmother were very good friends. My husband went to Manzanillo and he was foreman of the railroad making a run from Manzanillo to Guadalajara. When he came back, I was older and he went to visit the neighborhood. That is how I met him again. From then on he used to visit us quite often and then we got married.
Barela: Was he born in Aguascalientes?

Rangel: No, he was born in Lagos de Moreno in the state of Jalisco. We were married in Aguascalientes in Flores de San Jose Church.

Barela: When was your husband born?

Rangel: I don't remember, I'd have to get his papers and look it up.

Saucedo: How many of your children were born in Mexico?

Rangel: Four of them. Juanita, Nicolas, Fidela, and Eugenia. Nicolas died in Mexico. There were ten children, three boys and seven girls.

Barela: How old were you when you were married?

Rangel: I was a mother by the age of 15 or 16, something like that, I don't remember. My baptismal certificate was left in Mexico. Later we sent for it, when I became a United States citizen.

Saucedo: How did you decide to come to the United States?

Rangel: We came to visit my aunt, my mother's sister Lorenza, who lived in Topeka, Kansas.

Saucedo: Did you come directly to Topeka, Kansas, and how did you get there?

Rangel: We had our way paid in the train because of his work.

Barela: Do you remember the year?

Rangel: I was married in January of 1921. Eugenia was six months old and every two years I had a child, so it must have been eight or nine years after I married.

Barela: Did you ever go back to Mexico after that?

Rangel: No, the reason we stayed here was because we came to visit and we had a pass, but we paid our way in pure gold. They had tables full of gold at the border from people that paid to get across. Instead of getting a passport, we paid to get across. When the man asked me if it was temporary, I said, "No", I wanted to come permanently", because when one goes someplace you never know what might happen. That is how we came across.

Saucedo: Did they give you a document with a picture or something when you crossed the border?
Yes, after everything was paid for. When we had the fire, our house burned, everything was destroyed, this was before we became citizens, so later we had to get that information from the immigration office. We did get it because our records are in the archives in El Paso, Texas, across from Juarez, Mexico.

How long did you stay in Topeka?

About two or three days after we arrived I decided that I didn't like it because I could not understand anything. The Black men that used to go around selling vegetables scared me when they yelled. I would ask my aunt who was yelling, and she would explain that it was only the salesman. I told my husband that we should go back because I did not like it here. I could not understand what people were saying and that he could still get his job back before his vacation expired. Also, our passes were still good.

One night my husband went out with his friends because he was angry when I told him I wanted to leave. He said, "Don't tell me what to do because I came to the United States to have a good time, you be quiet and don't tell me when to leave." When he came back I noticed that he was a little sad and very quiet. The next day I went over to my aunt's to help her wash and clean house. When I came back I found my husband crying. I asked him what was wrong and he told me that the night before they had met with some gypsies and they had stolen all his money. We could still have gone back because we had our passes and I am sure that people would have helped us feed the children and ourselves. I am sure we would have made it, but we did not want to risk it without any money, and not knowing the language. My husband cried and he was very sad, I told him not to worry because we still had our health and we could find some work. I talked to my aunt and I asked her to lend me a grinder and a sack of corn. I went around to my aunt's friends asking them if they liked tortillas made by hand. They all said yes, so I told them to come to my aunt's house. There I would have a place to make the tortillas. That is how we got started. Little by little we started to
accumulate enough money to go back. We almost had enough saved to return to Mexico, when I met a lady named Celia, a friend of my aunt's who was very interested in knowing where we came from. I told her I was very sad because my husband did not have a job. They worked in Pomona, Kansas. I asked her to ask her husband if it was possible to find a job for my husband. The next week she came back. My husband had worked in one of the meat packing plants in Topeka, but because he did not speak English, they fired him. I kept on making tortillas. Celia told me that they needed another worker and that there, they would give housing, wood and a stove. They gave the workers everything they would need in that section. So we left.

My brother was already here in Minnesota because his brother-in-law, who had been a Villista, had escaped during the battle of Zacatecas, the battle where the blood ran like water. We were there 15 days after the battle and the dead bodies were still piled up. We just waited until they buried them so we could lay the rails that needed fixing. When he escaped he came to Minnesota where he was married, and that is why my brother came to Topeka and then to Minnesota. When we were in Pomona, Kansas, my husband got very sun burned and he would peel from working so long outside, on the railroad. When my brother wrote us, he told us of how good it was and how there was a packing house that needed workers. So we came to Minnesota. I was pregnant with Maria. She was born one month and three days after we came here. I was afraid they would not let me ride the train because of my condition. So I kept hiding so they would not see me because I wanted to get out of there. So this is how we came to Minnesota. My husband started working at Cudahy's Packing Plant, where he worked for twenty-five years.

Barela: When did you leave Pomona?

Rangel: We were there a winter. Juanita was seven years old and she went to school there. I don't remember how long we were there.

Barela: Did you have any other children when you were in Pomona?

Rangel: No, only the ones that we had in Mexico. But I was pregnant again. I had three
children with me, one baby had died in Mexico. Eugenia was the baby and she was six months old. She was born in Mexico. We were there one winter and the following summer we went to Pomona, so we did not work very long making tortillas.

Did you keep selling tortillas in Pomona?

No, my husband had a job, so I would stay home with the children.

Did you come in the train?

Yes, with money that my husband had earned to come to Minnesota.

How much did you sell the tortillas for? Do you remember?

At 25 cents a dozen.

From Pomona you came directly to St. Paul?

Yes, and we have never left.

I made the first tacos for the society. I can't remember what it was called. The orchestra of Garzon played for it. The name was Azteca Society. And in the same year, I think, 1928, Maria was born. It was around Christmas time that we had the first tacos, I don't remember if it was 1928 or 1929. I don't remember what the occasion was. The first tacos were made of flour, because they did not like corn tortillas.

Was this like a party?

Yes, it was a benefit dance to buy toys for the Mexican children for Christmas. That is where I introduced the first tacos. Later, I can't remember the year, I introduced the first pinata. The newspaper took a picture while I was hanging the pinata at one of the institutes in Minneapolis or St. Paul. I worked with a lady named Black, introducing the Mexican dishes in Montevideo with Juanita and Eugenia. We had some important people from Washington, and in the hotels we also presented Mexican dishes. We got together to show the different foods of different nations. But I can't remember the date.

Did you have a lot of problems because you did not speak English?

No, we did not speak English. I was a member of the Institute with the whole family and all the house workers. When the "braceros" first came I would take
about twenty-five workers and my whole family and I would direct the chorus for the 16th of September, I'd go to the meetings to honor Hidalgo. We organize the whole program. Juanita and I would put on the whole program for the 16th, this was for the benefit of the church. My children, since they were small, were taught hymns. Once I worked for three or four months putting together some Mexican hymns for the children to sing at the church. And I still do it for the 12th of December, that's Our Lady of Guadalupe's Day. I dress them as little Mexican Indians of a long time ago. The little Indians when the Virgin appeared in Mexico. Bernardino was stabbed in the heart because he was found praying. The Indians did not believe in God; so, whoever prayed, they disliked. Bernardino got well because Juan Diego had seen the Virgin four times in which they talked. He was in a hurry looking for a doctor for his uncle Bernardino, who was wounded by Temoc. When he came back, his sister asked why he had taken so long and Juan Diego replied that a Virgin had talked to him and told him his uncle was well. Because the Virgin's spirit had appeared to him, Bernardino got well. The Virgin told Bernardino to publicize his miracle. Her name was Mary of Guadalupe. This is why he got a group of little Indians together they went and gave thanks, they were dressed like they used to before, with "huaraches", "cintitos", and "calzoncitos." After the had gone to give their thanks, they would sing their praises like "O Maria Madre Mia", and since then this is sung all over Mexico. This is why I form groups of up to 75 children. But now, little by little it seems as though people are losing their faith in God, so we don't get as many to participate. I have been doing this for about thirty years. I also do it because when I was a child I sat on my mother's stove and got badly burned. I did not go to a doctor or anything. My mother cured me. I don't have any scars. She prayed to the Virgin to cure me because I was her only daughter. She promised she would take me to the Basilica dressed as an Indian. I remember that promise and I have kept it faithfully. I thank God. He wanted me to live, otherwise I wouldn't have lived.
Barela: When you first arrived in Minnesota, were you active in different doings?

Rangel: In 1930 there was a lay off at the packing house and we went to work in the beet fields that year. We all went. We left in March and we almost froze because we did not know that it was so cold. They gave us a petroleum or kerosene stove and a grainery to live in. We fixed the grainery with newspaper and put some wood cabinets. We left to work in the beet fields in Bird Island. After work we went home and made dinner, it was around this time of the year, a comadre came over and after dinner she said she would help with the dishes and she put an aluminum pan with water on the stove, the flame went up and the paper and cabinets caught fire and everything went up in flames. When it got dark we stood under a tree with the children around us, some were even barefoot. Even Agustin's bottle went up in the flames. Some friends took us to their home for eight days. But when you have a family it is hard to live cooped up like that. We came back and cleared up under the trees and we used some of the scraps left over from a highway construction crew. We made a little house and that is where we slept. The farmer was mad and wouldn't give us another place to stay, he said we had burned his place down. Whatever has happened to us has not been our doing.

Barela: When you first came to St. Paul, where did you live?

Rangel: We lived on Eaton. A little house that was separated in the back. I can't remember the address.

Barela: Did you have a wood burning stove?

Rangel: Yes, we had a wood burning stove. We would put in coal and wood. There wasn't any gas then. When we first came there wasn't even bread. We had to make the bread ourselves.

Barela: Did you have to carry in water?

Rangel: No, that we did have. We also had baths. The Jewish people lived there before us, but they moved out when we came in, because they did not like us. We had some problems with them. After the fire, I had a child in Bird Island on
Rangel: October 19th. My daughter Genoveva was born under the trees. The farmer did not want to give us another house because he thought we burned the grainery on purpose. He was upset because the animals were right behind us and during the fire all the animals got out. So he would not give us another place to live in and we had to complete our work even though I was pregnant. As a result of that the child was born with a bone deformation because I worked on my knees with the short hoe, we were trying so hard to finish the work so that we could get back to St. Paul in time for my child to be born.

Barela: How long did you live here in St. Paul before going out to work in the beets?

Rangel: It must have been almost a year.

Barela: Did your husband start working with his activities right away?

Rangel: Right away. This was the reason why he started, because I gave birth to my daughter under the trees. After we had completed the work, the farmer brought us in his car to St. Paul. But half way here, it had only been ten days since I had given birth, before we got to Chaska, one of the chains of the trailer broke off and my brother was on top of the trailer, but since we could not speak through the glass window, all I could do was scream but he could not feel that the back chain had broken off. My brother jumped off the trailer. I let out a scream and finally he felt that the chain was broken and the car ended in the ditch, otherwise we would have all ended up in the ditch. When we got to Chaska some of the people helped my brother, whom I thought was dead, but God took care of him because nothing happened to him. I guess he had wrapped himself up in a blanket and it kept him from getting hurt. All the traffic had stopped to look. When we got to Chaska, the farmer was afraid to come to St. Paul because there were so many Mexicans and he was afraid of them. He felt he might be blamed for what had happened. Then my husband got off at the office in Chaska. He needed someone to interpret for him, finally he told a lady what had happened and the farmer was listening, so he was afraid to bring us to St. Paul. My husband was very upset about the whole thing because they took away the trailer
and the car did not work and it was raining and I had my 10 day old baby. It was a very frustrating experience because neither one of us spoke the language. Finally they asked for a truck from Chaska to bring us to St. Paul. When we got to St. Paul, my husband wrote a letter to Mexico telling them how we had been treated. He had a lot of friends that were important people in Mexico. My husband could have been one of them if he would have stayed in Mexico. Even now, my husband's friend, Millares, is still an important person.

Who did your husband address his letter to?

I don't know who he addressed it to in Mexico, but he told them what had happened to us. He also had other information from other Mexican workers, such as the farmers would not pay them for the acres that they worked. But the worst part of it was that none of us could speak English to defend ourselves, including myself. When we got back my husband was called back to his job. He was an inspector of skins in the packing house. Later, the girls and I went back to farm work. They were very good at it. I taught them. I took the little ones, even if they cried. We worked for the pea factory in Osseo, Minnesota. My husband had a lot of data concerning the Mexican workers. The farmers would not pay them for their work and sometimes some of them were injured by the tractors and horses. I don't know exactly all the details, but my husband did not like all these things. And this is how he got started in the other activities. He did not receive any salary. He just did it out of the goodness of his heart.

Were there a lot of farmers that did all those things?

Yes, I kept working on the fields. One time when I was working with my daughters, the farmer cheated us of seven acres. He did not pay us for them.

How much did you get paid per acre?

I don't remember if it was $17 or $16 per acre.

Did your husband want to go back to working the beets?

No, he went back to work for Cudahy, here in St. Paul. Later, when it closed down, my husband worked for five years at American Hoist. This is when he had
Rangel: a heart attack.

This is how we ended up staying here. My husband started this way corresponding with Mexico. I have those letters somewhere, addressed to him, where they praise him very highly. All those that we have are complaints from other Mexicans telling about some of the things that happened to them.

Barela: Did the officials pay any attention here in Minnesota?

Rangel: Yes, the first records that he presented at the Neighborhood House. There was an incident at the school where they talked about how they only gave us the beet work, that there wasn't any choice for the Mexicans. They did not care about the Mexicans because we were in the minority. "What do you know? You are like the animals that work in the soil. What civilization do you have? What business do you have in school?" And my daughter Juanita would defend us. This is how they treated us. That is why my husband started to send for books so they could see that it was not like that at all. Now there is no need for that because so many tourists go to Mexico.

Barela: Do you remember the first organizations that united the Mexicans that were here?

Rangel: I don't remember, but they are there in the books.

Barela: Is this what encouraged him to do something?

Rangel: No, he got an answer to all the complaints that he told them about. When the second or first "braceros", I can't remember, of the complaints that he wrote about, the Munoz were already here, they were very young. And Cruz Gallo lived by the river and they took a picture of her with a pig in her kitchen eating corn. And there was an article in the paper which said the Mexicans ate corn like the pigs. My husband was very upset with that. He tore out the articles and sent them to Mexico. Later they took a picture of the younger Munoz, all dirty with big shirts, all badly dressed and again it appeared in the newspaper, telling about the Mexicans. He again tore the article and sent it to Mexico.

Barela: Was this in the St. Paul Paper?

Rangel: Yes.
Barela: Do you remember the year?

Rangel: No, but it did come out in the paper. Every article my husband saw in the paper and he did not like, he sent to Mexico. There were a lot of complaints. Some of them were still very sickly and weak from their operations. Some of them were very thin like skeletons. Our home was always full. It was like a hospital and a restaurant and God helped us for everything.

Barela: And you were like a nurse?

Rangel: Yes, I was like a nurse because I took care of them. Although rumors have it otherwise, but it isn't so. It was because I took care of them. Some of them suffered from bronchitis and I would put plasters (Velladona) for their cough. The men always talked about me, saying that I knew how to cure them. But I did not care as long as they were grateful for what I did for them. And this is how my husband started to do things for the Mexicans. He organized a society, I don't recalled the exact name of it, but is all there in the books. And later he organized the auxiliary for the same society.

Barela: Did you take part in this?

Rangel: No, the first ones were myself, Rosa Campa, Lola Rodriguez, Elvira Coronado and Father Guillemette. We were the ones that organized the Society of Guadalupe with Father's help. There were the four of us and Father, we were the first. I belonged to it for many years, but I dropped out because there were too many differences of opinion, plus I don't write. I never went to school because I was an orphan and I had to work to help my mother. My brothers know how to read and write. I recognize the numbers but I never had the opportunity to learn because of the chores in the home, which were very hard, plus I was also very active in the festivities of the 16th of September and Christ's Passion plays and dances that we would put on for the benefit of the church. There were so many things that had to be done for the Guadalupe Society and Anahuac which was later formed. I was a member of both and I was one of the publicity managers for the dances and the programs and chorus.
Barela: Did you go out in the streets?

Rangel: Yes, we had a parade from the Neighborhood House to the Auditorium.

Barela: Where did you live then, after returning from the beet work?

Rangel: We lived on State Street. We rented from a Jewish man, but since we had so many children, he kicked us out in the winter time, he put us out in the street.

We found another house also on State Street. Later we moved to Kentucky Street and we also lived on Eva Street. We later bought a house on Eva Street. When we lived on East Fairfield we worked very hard.

Barela: So you used to help many people with food and medical attention. Did your husband also help many people?

Rangel: Yes, they would take up collections to help each other among the same members of the society. When anyone needed help, such as food or clothing, the members of the Women Auxiliary would get together and take the needy families food, clothing and also money.

Barela: Did you have dinners?

Rangel: Yes, we had benefit dinners for different purposes. Almost every month I would put on a dance and a dinner for the young people. We would sell tacos, enchiladas, or whatever we could find to sell for the auxiliary. We would also put on dances for the church and different things like that. Upstairs, when was the first part of the church, later they bought the whole building, the downstairs was a pool hall, so we kept expanding. This is where Our Lady of Guadalupe Church was. Upstairs was where we first started making the tacos every two weeks or once a month to raise funds for the church. My husband was one of the men who was honored by putting the first stone in the altar along with Ramedo Saucedo's father. There were many others, but I don't know where they are now.

Barela: Did your husband know how to read and write? Was he an educated man?

Rangel: Yes, he knew how to type and he liked to write letters. Whenever anyone needed a letter they would tell him and he would write it for them. Especially when they invited the Consul from Chicago, we would have dinners for them at the
Rangel: the Neighborhood House.

Barela: Why did the Consuls come to St. Paul?
Rangel: They would come to talk to the Mexican people, to encourage and advise them, to keep going in spite of the discrimination that we were faced with.

Barela: Did they help you out with some of your problems?
Rangel: Yes.

Barela: Is this how your husband started corresponding with the Consuls?
Rangel: Yes, those in Chicago and in Mexico. The letters are all there.

Barela: Did everyone from the "barrio" come to your husband for help?
Rangel: Yes, there was even a case when someone needed counseling with their marital problems, something about a separation. They all came, he would involved himself with everything.

Barela: Do you recall any of the other cases that he helped with?
Rangel: There was a man called Cortinas, who was killed by the Anglos. They hit him on the head with ropes or something like that and they cut all his hair off. He was related to Amador. There were many other cases. Chucho's father-in-law was also killed by the Anglos, at a bar, I think that is also in those papers there. Chucho's wife's name is Antonia Hernandez, her husband Chucho was lame, anyway, she is still living.

Saucedo: What was Cortinas last name?
Rangel: I don't recalled, but they brought him already dead and I went to his wake. I prayed the rosary for him at the wake. The other, Antonia's mother is Maria, she is still living I don't remember her husband's name. There are a lot of things I don't recall, but if you want to know more about it, there are records of all these things in Mexico. My husband kept the copies.

Barela: Who would come? Did the Mexican Government write to the police here?
Rangel: The immigration officers were good friends of my husband and they would come to our house. And my husband, whenever he knew of anyone who was a wetback, (illegally here) he would go talk to the immigration and get a permit for them.
immigration would let them stay here for three months to work and after that they would return to Mexico. They would stay at our house. During all the complaints some of the officials from Mexico came dressed as civilians, lawyers and other government officials, they worked in the beet fields to see for themselves how they were treated, to verify the reports that Pancho, my husband, had written them about. There were many complaints that in Texas some of the places would not sell food to the "braceros" and some of these were closed down. Pancho would spend hours writing letters and listening to people's problems. The officials that came from Mexico would complaint of how hard the beet work was, especially since they were not used to such work. The "braceros" deserted all the fields and the immigration officials would go to get them out of their house. That was the only 16th of September when it was so beautiful that it looked like Mexico. I chose a bald headed man to play Hidalgo and others for other parts. We got a group of them to carry the banner from the Neighborhood House to the Auditorium. Many of the men from the armed forces got together and formed a squadron. I had a group of girls dressed as China Poblanas on the back of a truck. We had a little girl dressed as queen. Maria, my comadre Luisa and I would take care of all these things. Since I came we started all these activities. I liked to involved all my children regardless of how much it would cost. Even now I don't care about the cost. When I go to Mexico I bring them a lot of things so they can keep up the traditions and celebrations.

Were there a lot of other Mexican people here in St. Paul?

Not too many, but there were some. The Vasquez, Guerra, Lopez, Julia Sanchez, Coronado and Monita's. I don't exactly remember all the people.

Did some of the people practice their Mexican traditions?

In the Azteca Club, Luisa Guerra, would dance the "Jarabe", it was the only thing they did. When the Anahuac Society was started, I was the first one to do other dances and I made the first Mexican costume for my daughter Juanita. Her picture appeared in the newspaper taken by the airport with her Mexican
costume which I made for her. It wasn't until later, when I went to Mexico, that I bought them their own costumes.

Did you celebrate Christmas and the Posadas?

I was the first one to start the Posadas at Our Lady of Guadalupe Church, but I don't remember what year it was. Vita, Lola, my oldest girls and me, were in charge of the Posadas. There is a film of some of the Posadas, I think Victoria has one.

You did the Posadas, even in the harsh winter weather?

Yes, even in harsh weather. I would go knocking on doors in the colony asking people for donations to buy candy for the children. We would get a lot of candy for the children. I don't remember if two, or one year, my husband presented a "Pastorela". The first "Pastorelas" were presented by Mr. Zamora. My husband would write up the script for it. Including chants, dialogues and narrations. We would present this at the Neighborhood House. It wasn't too long ago that they displayed the newspaper clippings and photographs at the Neighborhood House, of things that we did in the past.

Do you recall some of the schools your children attended?

Lafayette. That was where all my children went to school. Later they went to Mechanics. My youngest, Raquel, went to Humboldt, but all the others went to Mechanics. Kiko went to a Catholic School for two years, he did not like it so he quit and went to Lafayette. The school was very close. We lived for twenty-two years at East Fairfield. The place burned down because of the drunks that lived downstairs. We were left on the street, but we had the help of many people with clothing and dishes. The priest from the church, Father Ward, gave me $50, he has since died. It was such a tragedy.

Was your husband always a secretary?

Yes, in Mexico. He was secretary of the Railroad when it was a Cron, now it is syndicated. All the offices are syndicated now.

Have you ever been to Mexico City?
Barela: Yes.

Rangel: Have you been to Aguascalientes?

Barela: No, I have not been to Aguascalientes.

Rangel: That is where they have their big offices, in Aguascalientes.

Barela: Did you celebrate weddings too?

Rangel: Yes, the first wedding was the Lopez' wedding. The second wedding was Juanita's. It was the biggest wedding that we had, about forty couples accompanied her. We celebrated the wedding at the Neighborhood House with a dinner and a dance. Eugenia started an orchestra with Nicolas Castillo. Later my son was also part of the orchestra.

In January 20, 1961 my husband died. One day before Kiko's birthday. We had always celebrated his birthday since his first birthday, but that year we did not celebrate.

Barela: Kiko was with your husband when he died?

Rangel: Yes, my son Kiko and my daughter Raquel were the only ones that were home when their father died. I had just gone back to work after staying home with a bad cough. That morning before leaving for work, my husband asked, "are you really well enough to go back to work?" And I told him that I was well enough. He said, "I want you to come home by 3: o'clock, come right home, don't stop to cash your check. Tell your driver to bring you right to the door because it's awfully cold and you might get sick again; besides that is what you pay him for." He asked me how much I owed the driver, I said $1.50, and he gave it to me. He opened the screen door for me. I left and he stayed by the door. About a block away I somehow or something made me look back and he was still by the door watching me. When the foreman told me there was an emergency at home, I thought maybe one of the school children had been hurt. He died of a heart attack. My husband had never really liked it here. He especially wanted the children to be educated in Mexico, that is why he bought the houses in Mexico. After he died, I had no need for those houses so I gave one to my brother-in-law
Rangel: and the other to my sister.

Barela: Can you tell me which of your relatives are still living?

Rangel: My brother Jose Ortiz, his children are: Carmelita Ortiz and Javier Ortiz. My sister, Maria Ortiz Trujillo, her children are: Juan, Mario, Jesus, and Lola Trujillo.

Barela: Where do they live?

Rangel: In Juarez, Mexico. My sister has a bakery on Vicente Guerrero Street. The name of the bakery is "La Paz." My niece, Lola, has a store nearby the bakery, I don't remember the name of the street. My brother lives on Jose Gorrunda Street.

Barela: And all your sons and daughters, do they all live here?

Rangel: Yes, except for one daughter in California, Eugenia.

Barela: Who did she marry?

Rangel: She married Benjamin.

Barela: Is he from Minnesota?

Rangel: He was born and raised in California. The ones that live in Minnesota are: Kiko, Agustin, Raquel, and Fidel are married to Black man, Genoveva married Jose Gaona.

Barela: Do you still do a lot of Mexican cooking for your family?

Rangel: Every so often we prepare them for special occasions. It's harder for me to prepare the foods now.

Sucedo: But you still eat the "tortilla", "frijol", "sopa de arroz?"

Rangel: Yes, we still eat tortillas, sopa, frijoles. I have a "metate" and a corn grinder to prepare the tortillas. The other day I went to Mi Cultura to show them how to make the tortillas. They filmed the whole thing for television, but now they told me that they had lost the film. About three weeks ago I made a dinner for 300 children at Cherokee School. I made enchiladas, sope de fideo, sopa de arroz, tortillas and even cinnamon tea. People often call me to make "mole" or other Mexican food for them. I'm always happy to do it, if they give
Rangel: me enough time in which to do it.

Saucedo: Do you still celebrate the Posadas?

Rangel: No, we don't because there are not enough people that want to participate. The young people do not seem to be interested. And since I live so far away now I don't have a chance to get involved. Juanita used to teach the children for the church choir. But now our choir is made up of mostly older ladies. If we could get the young people interested, maybe we could start again.

Saucedo: That could easily be done by getting the young people from Roosevelt or Humboldt schools.

Rangel: Yes.

Barela: Do we have your permission to give this recording to the Minnesota Historical Society where it will be heard by anyone who wants to use the tape?

Rangel: Yes.

Barela: Thank you very much for the interview.
Once there was an Indian. An Indian from long ago because he wore a white feather in his head, a black cape and leggings.

Where did this happen?

Here in Minnesota. I can't remember the name of the farm or town. It's still there. Anyway, it was by a tree. I didn't see him at first, Eugenia and Maria saw him. Maria was sitting by a window and I was sitting near by, when I saw Maria. She stood up suddenly, threw down the book that she had been reading and ran. She said, "I saw him from far away and before I knew it, it was in from of me. I saw his shoes and leggings. I looked him up and down. He had a cape to the side and a feather in his head."

Outside the house?

Yes, the house wasn't far from there. We were by Victor Zamora. We were working the beet fields. Anyway, I went to Maria and asked her why she was running. She said, "Oh mama, a man." I said, "What man?" She explained to me what the man looked like. She came in bare footed because she left her shoes by the little tree. The next day she asked me where her shoes were, and then she remembered, she sent one of the boys to get her shoes because she was scared.

Another time we were going to have a program. They were outside playing, digging around with a hoe and they hit some metal. Then they started to hear chains and a lot of noise by the same tree. They threw down the hoe and started running. They came to me. I said, "Well, what's the matter with you girls? You were out there playing! They said, "Oh mama, there are chains and noises." I told them they were crazy. I scolded them and they didn't play
Rangel: with the hoe anymore.

There was a boy who's name was Gregorio, he was about 13 years old. One time I told him to come in because we had to get up early the next morning. He said, O.K., but don't shut the door because I am going to be outside for a while. A little later I heard a scream, a loud scream. It was a beautiful night outside, the moon was shining over the tree. I ran outside and there I found him laying on the ground, like a cross! I grabbed him and I thought, "He is dead," Then I thought, "No, it is that a dead person spoke to him."

I screamed to the girls, "Bring me the salt and an onion." All the girls would do was throw it out the window to me because they were scared. There I was with the half-dead boy. I gave him the salt so that he would come around. I screamed to the girls to tell Victor and Chemo to help me bring him into the house. I couldn't leave him out there. So we took him in the house and we started putting alcohol, onion and lemon on him. He finally started to talk. I said, "What happen to you?" He said, "A man was coming and he grabbed me. I didn't know what he was saying. Then I don't know what happen to me." I told him that he was a coward. Everybody else left and the boy started talking again. I wanted to go outside. I looked around the house, I was going to go outside because there was a jar outside, I decided I was going to bring it in. If the girls went outside again they might get scared. When I passed by my son he grabbed me by my dress. He could barely talk and he was pointing that there was the man outside the door. I went outside. I went to where the boy had fallen, I went by the outhouse too. I had some long matches and a candle, but I didn't see anything. The only thing I heard was dirt breaking up, like someone walking. I looked but It wasn't anything. My little boy wouldn't stay at home after that, so I had to take him with me to the beet fields. I had a lot of work, plus the children.
Rangel: would get so angry because the child wouldn't stay home.

Once we went out and Chemo said, "Is it 12 o'clock yet, because I don't have my watch?" I got up and looked at the sun. It wasn't 12 o'clock yet. But we left anyway. I said, "It's just that he is scared and I am going to cure him." So on the way home I cut a lot of weeds, brush and grass to make a broom. When we got home he was really tired, he said that when he looked at the shadows of the tree he felt sleepy. It was the dead man who wanted to talk to him. I told him to talk to the dead man, but he didn't have the nerve to do it. So I started praying, I said three creeds, I swept and swept and I screamed three times, I swept over him twice, one for the water and one for the river. The child was cured. After that he would go and stay out late at night playing with the rest of the farmers.

Later Eugenia was rocking in a hammock I made. She heard some steps coming behind her. When she heard the steps, she jumped and ran into the house. But no one, not even I, told the farmer that we were digging or that we found anything. I didn't think anything. I just worked in the fields with the children. I don't remember the name of the farmer or the town. It was close to Cosmos and Bird Island, here in Minnesota. Kiko was about three or four, maybe less, because he was starting to talk. It must have been about 1939.