

BEGIN TAPE ONE, SIDE ONE

MATSCH: The date is February 13, 1993. This is Diane Matsch, I am interviewing Irene [Gomez] Hormell. Irene, I learned from your previous interview that you had lived out on a farm. Is that correct?

HORMELL: Yes, that's correct. We lived out on a ranch on Eighth Street.

MATSCH: And how far? . . . That was west of Tempe?

HORMELL: That was west of Tempe, and at one time it was a family ranch, the Gomez Ranch, first the Walter Wilson Jones Ranch. And that was a ranch that was from Priest Road to 58th Street. And as the years went by, my great-grandmother lost her husband, and she started selling parcels of land. And so we stayed with the family ranch which was (sigh) approximately -- right there where the America West Building is, so it's in that area. Our ranch, my mother and my dad built, was on the side of the BIG ranch house, and that's where we lived. But my grandmother and my dad's brother and sister lived at the big house, at the big ranch.

MATSCH: What was your family name?

HORMELL: It was Gomez. My name is Irene Gomez -- actually, Victoria Irene Gomez.  
(both chuckle)

MATSCH: What year did you leave the ranch to move back into town?

HORMELL: We moved. . . . My mom and dad divorced. That was in 19. . . .

I think it must have been about 1947. That's when we moved into the *Barrio* Mickey Mouse with my grandmother, my maternal grandmother, whose name was Marina Ceballos Soto.

MATSCH: Alright. And why did your family decide to move back into town?

HORMELL: Well, there was a divorce and so we--my mom wanted to go back and stay with my grandmother. She would take care of us and my mother got a job and had a restaurant. And so she was running the restaurant and my grandmother would take care of us kids. It was right there at ASU, across the street from where now it's the dormitories, but at that time it was on Eighth Street, 358 East Eighth Street.

MATSCH: I'll come back to that later. Alright, there was your mother and you -- were there any siblings?

HORMELL: Oh no, there's plenty of us! (laughs) My mom had Helen Floyd -- that was my oldest sister -- and then there's Isabel. And then there's--I'm the third child, Victoria Irene. And then my mother had a son that died at birth, so his name was Raymond Floyd. My mother loved my dad so much she named almost all the kids Floyd! Helen Floyd, Raymond Floyd.

MATSCH: Oh, that was not a married name, that was a. . . .

HORMELL: That was a middle name, she used my dad's name.

MATSCH: Like Helen Floyd Gomez, then. Okay. Alright is that it?

HORMELL: No, then my brother Floyd Gomez, Jr. -- John Floyd Gomez -- he's named after my dad. And then my sister Charlene -- she was the baby.

MATSCH: Okay, and all of those were, of course, born by that time.

HORMELL: Right, we were all born. . . . Actually, I wasn't born at the ranch -- only my young sister and brother, but they were born downtown anyway. But they all lived there.

MATSCH: And whose decision was it then to move back into the town, into the *barrio*?

HORMELL: Well, the divorce caused the decision. My mom was having a hard time living at the ranch, handling it all by herself, so she decided to move into town, and my grandmother set her up in a restaurant, and my grandmother took care of us. So it was my maternal grandmother that really helped my mom survive the divorce -- monetarily and supportive to our little family. By that time, my brother went to live with my dad, Floyd, and so it was just us girls that were with my mom and grandma.

MATSCH: Did you see very much of your father after you moved back into town?

HORMELL: He would come and visit us at the *barrio*, and we would visit him and he would come and visit us, bring us Floyd. Because Floyd came by bus or by--my dad, he would bring him over. And then he'd spend the weekend. It was a big joy to us to have our brother with us, but at the time it was feasible for him to live with my dad, because my mom and dad both felt, I guess, that he would have a better image of a father, being with my dad. He suffered a lot with that, because the decision was to be with my dad, but my dad had a girlfriend and she was very mean to my brother, but we didn't know that until we (chuckles) got older and he opened up.

MATSCH: The attitude toward divorce is so different now than it was years ago. Was this a problem in your family?

HORMELL: It was very hard [to] adjust. As a matter of fact, I think we all have gotten a little black mark behind us -- you know, a little bad feeling about it. In some areas we get very emotional with it. It was very hard to understand. We had a beautiful life at the ranch. My mom took care of the ranch, because my dad was in cattle dealing, you know. He was a cattle raiser. His job WAS in Casa Grande, that's where he was working. And

so my mom stayed behind and she made cheese and raised turkeys and she raised chickens and eggs and she always was. . . . Our family has always been salespeople, you know, from her side of the family, from the Soto side, and from the Gomez side. So we would really raise turkeys and stuff and during Christmas and Thanksgiving people from town would come to us and buy. She made homemade cheese and cottage cheese. I mean, she was just a woman of all trades with her work there at the farm. We had a cow and she's the one that milked it. She was just a typical rancher woman. (laughs) But when my dad decided to divorce and go with this other lady, we then had to come into town. That was the most feasible and better way for us. It was a different. . . . I feel like I lived two beautiful lives, because on the ranch it was neighbor helping neighbor. Although we were very far away from the people there, all these ranchers helped each other. Our well went dry. The neighbors down on Priest Road, there was a big ranch there, and they would give us water and we'd transfer it back and forth. Further down even further on 58th Street where the freeway is at, there was a Ruiz family, and those people helped us a lot, too. Now their sons were old enough and they worked in the fields, and when there was lettuce or tomato, whatever they were cropping, they would call and say, "Victoria, we have lettuce, come on over." Or they would bring it to us. And it was always that kind of thing. We would give them eggs, they would give us vegetables, and it was always a bartering kind of thing. We always did things for each other, but never, "What are they gonna think about me?" You know, they weren't doing it so they would be liked, they just did it as a friendly gesture. It was a beautiful feeling, a beautiful kind of sense of belonging to each other in the ranch.

MATSCH: When you came into town, from things I've read, there was a certain amount of separation between the Hispanics and the Anglos. Was that like that on the ranch?

HORMELL: No. I didn't experience that in the ranch because most of the people that we knew were ranchers and a lot of them were Mexican ranchers. Or they worked in the hay and -- you know, all the seasonal things. But no, there I didn't experience that at all.

When I started first and second grade I was still living at the ranch, and I used to have to walk home. And at that time I didn't realize, but because we were Mexicans and we lived out in those areas, the buses didn't go over there because they felt like if we wanted to come to school, we would walk it.

MATSCH: Where did you go to school?

HORMELL: At Tempe Grammar.

MATSCH: (unclear, both talking at once)

HORMELL: No, I didn't go to that all-Mexican school. My parents were very, very -- fought. My Uncle Romo, he fought for us to be integrated into the Tempe Grammar. And so a lot of the families that fought and went behind it, sent their kids to Tempe Grammar, they didn't send them to Eighth Street School.

[Editor's note: Adolfo Romo sued Tempe School District No. 3 in 1925 and won a judgement allowing him to send his children to the predominantly Anglo Tempe Grammar School, also known as the Tenth Street School.]

MATSCH: And so when you lived on the ranch you walked to school?

HORMELL: We WALKED to school.

MATSCH: And if there were Anglo kids out there, they got to ride?

HORMELL: They didn't have buses in the areas where we lived, because we were Mexican. The Anglo kids lived further in -- we lived further out. I don't know how they came into school. They must have had cars or something, but we didn't. My mother had a car, but she had to go to work.

MATSCH: How far a walk do you think it was?

HORMELL: Well, I think one time I timed it, and it was like. . . . I timed it when I was older, but just guessing where the place was, we thought maybe it was about three or four miles. But now that I think back, I think it was even further, because it's past Priest, and Tempe Grammar was on Tenth Street in Tempe, downtown. And we were WAY back on 58th Street. So I don't know how far that is, but it seemed like it would be further than three miles.

MATSCH: Yeah. Okay. How did you and your siblings feel about moving into town,

when you were told this was going to happen?

HORMELL: Okay, the transition was kind of made. . . . I guess my mom seen it coming, you know, for a while. So when they started the restaurant, I remember they started the restaurant and I was already in third grade, and we already had the restaurant there in Tempe near ASU. By that time I think she realized that there was no hope for the marriage, so she started the restaurant and we moved in with my grandma. But it wasn't. . . . I don't think we all accepted it, but it was like in those days (laughs) you didn't say, "Well, I don't want to move!" you know. (laughter) We moved! (laughter) In those days, kids didn't have the decisions to make -- it was the parents that made them to the best of their ability, and that's what happened, that's what we did. Now moving into the *barrio* was an experience for me. Now, I'm speaking about myself. I love people, and people kind of put me on a high. . . . And so I was yearning to have friends. In the ranch, we had our neighbors, but our neighbors were real far away, so when we moved to town it was like, "Oh boy, a gold mine!" all these little kids around the neighborhood. And my grandmother, Marina, she was a very well-liked and a very well-known person in the community, in the Hispanic community. And so my grandma was a Christian, a Catholic Christian, but a practicing one. She didn't believe in just going to church and that was her job and that was it. She believed in practicing it. And so she helped many, many people with money and also even having them come to the house and stay while their husbands went on the drunk and wanted to beat them up. She would kind of like, you know, protect them. She was always the little protector there in the neighborhood. So when we moved in, actually we were accepted right away, because of my grandma. As a matter of

fact, I can go to a funeral now, or see people, and they don't really remember even my mom as much as they remember my [grand]mother, and my mom was younger than my grandmother. But my grandmother, like I said, had a very high esteem by everyone. If I say I'm Marina Soto's granddaughter, they just open doors for me. And I've always felt that way, because of her. She did open doors, even me coming back from Florida. Moving into the neighborhood was hard for my older sisters, my two older sisters, because when you live in a rural area, you're different, you're backwards, compared to the fast living -- although it wasn't that fast in that time! But it was still like we were . . . kind of dorky, I guess. (laughter) You know, no one believes, because we were like. . . . The only friends we had were each other. And we used to have a lot of fun times with each other, you know. Then when we came in, I know my sister Isabel was saying that she really had a hard time establishing herself here, because she had us and she was like the little leader for us. She would tell us about the little people, and she just had us. . . . And then when we moved here, we had other people to play with. And then, because she was older, I didn't want to play with her -- I played with my own age group and that type of thing, and there wasn't any people her age group, and my sister too. And then because my mom had the restaurant, because they were older, they had to go and help my mom work in the restaurant. So they had an exposure of running a restaurant real early. And when business was real slow, then my mom decided to go and work at the flour mill. She was sewing sacks -- you know, gunny sacks -- which was a real hard work. I remember her (crying) working real hard for us. And my sisters Helen and Isabel, they ran the restaurant while my mom worked at the mill. And so that kept the



business going until my mom decided to sell it to another family. First my uncle tried it, my Uncle Chono, her brother, but they really didn't like the restaurant business, because that's a very dedicated business to the public -- you are always working. So then she sold the business.

MATSCH: What was the name of it?

HORMELL: Vicky's Place. My mom learned the restaurant business because since age 13 she worked in a boarding house. She went to school only up to third grade, there at Tempe Eighth Street School, the Mexican school, and then she worked with "Dad." Dad was a German man that had a restaurant, the first restaurant there across the street from the ASU. And he's the one that really trained her to some day think about having her own business. We always say that thanks to him, my mom learned a skill that she could utilize and make something out of herself. She really worked hard, like a man, to keep us going. She didn't remarry until late--later on. She was always working. (with emotion) I never had a chance to talk to her or anything, because she worked like a man.

MATSCH: Let's back up a little and talk about the *barrio*. You called it the Mickey Mouse *Barrio*?

HORMELL: Yeah, the Mickey Mouse *Barrio* was named after. . . . My uncle named it, my Uncle Chino Soto. His name was also Floyd Soto.

MATSCH: Of course! (laughter)

HORMELL: The name just keeps on popping up -- but that's on the other side of the family. But anyway, his name was Floyd Soto, better known as Chino Soto. When you went into the *barrio*, it was like a hill that you went down to, and then there was the

houses down below the hill. And so what happened was, they used to tease him, you know, it looked like a *ratoneria*, which means like a rat's hole. And he said, "It's okay, Mickey Mouse lives here." And that's how it started. Mickey Mouse was then kind of real popular, like it is now. So then the *plebe*, the little gang of his, then they all started calling it Mickey Mouse, and it stayed. But it was because they were teasing him that he lived in a rat hole. My uncle was a beautiful person. He got killed in the war [World War II], and he's the one that helped us build our home at the ranch -- him and his friends. But I remember he was a very happy person, always with a guitar. No matter where he went, he carried his guitar, so he would sing and tell you jokes. And my youngest sister is great in joke-telling, and I say, you know, I guess she took after my Uncle Chino, because she can sit there and make everybody. . . . She can--one right after the other! I can't, but she can. And so anyway, in the *barrio*, there was a lot of unity, a lot of love, and nobody felt like they were any better than the other, either. We all just blended in real good with them. Nobody ever asked questions. And like you said, you know, in those days, being from a divorced family, we hardly wanted to talk about my parents being divorced. As a matter of fact, a lot of my friends, until now in later years, knew that I had a father, because it was just not talked about. I went to a Catholic school that was another beautiful part of my life. The nuns there I give a lot of credit to for MY career that I have now, because they treated us equal. Some of them got treated a little rougher than me. (chuckles) I feel that they really treated us good. They had a big job to do. We were treated the same, we got taught a lot that even at the Tempe Grammar they weren't teaching. That was arts and culture and they went a little deeper with paintings

and stuff. I remember we'd sit there and learn all about authors, and really deep training, that. . . . We learned Latin. We learned a lot of things that helped us later on in years. And public speaking was one of them. The nun always made me -- well, I was volunteered, I guess. She didn't MAKE me, but because I liked that, she always made sure that she used that skill on me, and I'm not scared of speaking in front of the public, and it's because of her.

MATSCH: Where was that? Was that your elementary?

HORMELL: Okay, the elementary school was underneath the Church, Our Lady of Mount Carmel Catholic Church, but it's Newman Club now. It's called the Newman Club Center.

MATSCH: Okay, but the school at that time was Our Lady of Mount Carmel?

HORMELL: Our Lady of Mount Carmel. It was underneath . . . the school [church].

MATSCH: Okay, we're going to get to this later, and I'll ask you more questions. Before I get too far from the *barrio*: one question, was there competition between the people that lived in the various *barrios*?

HORMELL: No, it was very strange, because most of them are family-oriented. There really was no competition, but see, I see it in my grandmother's eyes, because my grandmother was a vendor. My grandmother, like a Yankee peddler, she'd go to Los Angeles and buy garments at the garment factory and buy clothes, and she would take orders and then she'd go to California, buy the clothes, come back, and then sell it to them. I guess she dressed every Mexican (laughter) in the town. But she had her little ledger, and I remember they would pay her as they could. That's one of the things also

that she did, utilized her money to help all these people. I know a lot of them could hardly ever pay her -- some probably ended up NOT paying her. She didn't care. It just seems like she had a hard. . . . She had a beautiful life with her parents in Mexico, and then my grandfather kidnapped her and brought her over here. And then she suffered a lot with him, until he left -- she was like free again.

MATSCH: He literally kidnapped her?

HORMELL: He literally kidnapped her. He seen her, he liked her, and he took her. He just stole her. And so in those days, that was when the renegades -- you know, there were renegades. And they came into the mines, working in mines, and my grandmother came from money. Her father had -- the whole little town belonged to him. He had the canteen, the grocery store, everything. That's where the sales in her came, I think, and comes to us too. And then my grandfather just took [her] away from comfort to something that she suffered, and he was very mean to her. And I think there was a barrier there, because he felt she was better than him, so he always treated her bad. And so my grandmother had a very bad time with him.

MATSCH: What town in Mexico was she from?

HORMELL: Chihuahua, Mexico. And he was from Zacatecas, from another area. But he came and they just liked what they wanted and he took 'em. And so. . . . Anyway, when she came to -- she had made a promise that when her kids got big, they would all work together and build this big home and every year, for the rest of her life she would have, on Christmas night, she would have a *delorio* -- that's what we called it -- where she would stay and pray all night long until the 25th -- you know, the night before

Christmas, until the 25th. And that was one of the things she did, she kept her promise all the years I can remember until she died, when she was able to. And we did it for her until she died, because that was her promise. Although we were not in the home that we lost in the *barrio*, we still kept on that tradition for her. But going back to the *barrio*, she had a lot of property there, and she built homes and rented to people that couldn't get into other areas because they didn't have the money. And she would work out with them. Like there was a lady, she couldn't afford to pay the rent, so she would come and wash for us and iron for us and that type of thing. They would work out their rental.

MATSCH: Was her property all in the Mickey Mouse *Barrio*?

HORMELL: Uh-huh. Well, I would say the biggest landowner was my grandmother, but she never acted any better than any of the others. All of them respected her and loved her. Like a kid that I went to school with, Georgie, he said the other day, "You know, Irene, I was so scared of your grandmother!" because she would scold them if they were doing something wrong. But he said, "I loved that little lady so much, and I respected her, but I was scared of her." And I said, "Well, that's how, I guess, all the kids were." We ALL respected their parents. But the parents looked out for us and we looked after each other. It was a big unity there. I have to say that I can't balance. . . . I had a beautiful life at the ranch, and then I had a beautiful life at the *barrio*, because the people there were all united, and we all sort of helped each other. We had a lady named Carmen, we called her Gordy-Gordy. She was heavy at one time, and then she got real skinny, but anyway we still called her Gordy-Gordy. She loved to read, and she was like our town librarian. She had all kinds of magazines, and we would go and trade off with

her. She was very knowledgeable. She loved the. . . . Oh, what was it? I can't remember now, the name of that yellow magazine that everybody reads about.

MATSCH: *National Geographic*?

HORMELL: *National Geographic*. She had those. And she was very knowledgeable about everywhere. So anyway, she would talk to us and tell us about different places, and I said, "Have you gone to all those places?" and she says, "Yeah, I go there every day -- I read." She says, "When you don't have the money, you read and you learn about these places, about the whole world." So she actually is the one that really kind of motivated me into reading. I always feel like she was the one that gave me that gift -- and to a lot of other kids in the neighborhood. She used to iron for us too. I remember when we were growing up, I would go over there, and she made the most beautiful, big tortillas that we used to buy from her -- paper thin, they were so neat. But she was a beautiful character. We had a lot of beautiful characters in the *barrio*. There was. . . . The first one was Chester Miller [Winchester Miller, Jr.]. He lived by himself in a little shack. But he came from the family of Winchester Miller and that family. And at that time in the beginning of the 1800s, in the era, that was the big house that all the Hispanics went to. That was like the big party hall or whatever. It was a huge home. The Longs, Margie and Stan Long, lived there at the very last.

MATSCH: He was married to a woman, Sotelo?

HORMELL: Yes. So Chester Miller was from that family. He was the. . . .

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BEGIN TAPE ONE, SIDE TWO

HORMELL: Chester lived, like I said, in a little shack, and the big house was then owned from the Longs. And then down from him was Solares and they lived in -- our homes were either made out of adobe, or they were made out of frame -- frame homes. The adobe were more prominent, though. They would plaster them, some of them were plastered.

MATSCH: The adobe?

HORMELL: The adobe homes were Some of them were plastered.

MATSCH: Let me ask you, the streets were not paved?

HORMELL: The streets were not paved. I HATED the rain, because then we would have to run into mud. But you know, as a kid, I remember also having fun in the mud. We used to skate in the mud. (laughter)

MATSCH: And of course things like sidewalks and streetlights. . . .

HORMELL: There was nothing, no streetlights, no sidewalks. It was a Mexican *barrio* and they didn't give a damn (laughs) about us.

MATSCH: Now, who is "they"?

HORMELL: "They" is the City Council and whoever was reigning in Tempe at that time. They were VERY, very prejudiced. You were not allowed to do any. . . . We didn't have any garbage pickup or anything like that that the rest of the people had.

MATSCH: That was another question I had somewhere around here. Okay, no streets paved. Did you have mail delivery?

HORMELL: We had no mail delivery, we had to go to the post office and pick up our

mail.

MATSCH: What did you do with your garbage?

HORMELL: The garbage was burnt or. . . .

MATSCH: By individuals?

HORMELL: By individuals, uh-huh. And they would separate the food and stuff, like lettuce and all that -- the leftovers of the vegetables, and we would feed them to our chickens, because we had chickens. And that's how we did it in our household. But no, there was no. . . . A lot of the people had chickens there, so I guess maybe that's where the food like that went.

MATSCH: And water? Did you have city water?

HORMELL: We had city water, but in the beginning they didn't.

MATSCH: What did they do for water?

HORMELL: They had to have wells.

MATSCH: What is "the beginning"?

HORMELL: The beginning would be when my grandmother first got there, like in 19. . . . Let me see, my mother was born in Metcalf in \_\_\_\_\_. My uncle, too. So they had to be there maybe in 1915 or something like that -- just little kids.

MATSCH: They had wells then?

HORMELL: Uh-huh, some of them.

MATSCH: Okay, and what about utilities, the electricity?

HORMELL: Electricity finally came, but I remember when I used to go visit my grandma, she had a wooden ice box and the ice man always came. And then she had the



lanterns. So until we moved in there, my mom and we kids moved in there, we had electricity.

MATSCH: At that time.

HORMELL: Yeah. My mom put the electricity. . . . My grandmother had more, because, like, you know, her sons were the ones that helped her and built all those things. And it was a humongous house, and when the kids got married, then my grandma fixed it like apartments and she would rent them to different people.

MATSCH: In 1947? How old were you then?

HORMELL: In 1947 I was eleven years old.

MATSCH: Okay. You're the same age as I am. Okay, were the houses pretty small in the *barrio*?

HORMELL: The houses were. . . . Yeah, it depended.

MATSCH: Like, for instance, your grandmother's house?

HORMELL: My grandmother's house was huge, it was humongous.

MATSCH: How big is "huge"? How many bedrooms?

HORMELL: It was . . . let's see, two, four, six -- like eight.

MATSCH: Wow!

HORMELL: And then we had two kitchens, because like I told you, she used to rent the house. But then when my mom remarried, then her husband and her both fixed it up as a big home, and then they made the rooms bigger and all that. So then it was entirely different, because the whole thing was changed different. But when we moved there, it had a lot of rooms because my grandmother, like I said, rented those--that whole house.

MATSCH: Did she continue to do that?

HORMELL: No, when we moved in, then we just took over. (laughs) Because we were plenty of us. You know, there was plenty of us girls.

MATSCH: And what about the other houses?

HORMELL: She rented. . . . She had one house that was. . . . They were two-bedroom and one-bedroom homes that she had. Behind the big house there was actually two houses that she rented. And then later on in years she built her third one. It was a little cottage for her, because then we all lived in the big house and she lived in the small house that my uncle built her for her and Charlene, my young sister.

MATSCH: When did your mom remarry?

HORMELL: My mom remarried in 1952.

MATSCH: And what about the other people that lived in the *barrio*? Were they all about the same size, the houses?

HORMELL: No, no, some were real small, some one-bedroom. Chester lived in a little shack -- I used to call it "the little shack." It was a little frame house. And then the next person that lived as you're coming into the *barrio*, was Solares. And Solares lived in a one-bedroom house with his wife. And they had a little back room like. It was a porch, but then they made it into a room. They had a boy named Gregorio lived with them, that came from Mexico, and he was my brother's friend -- that's why I remember he lived there. And then further down there was just a big part of the land of the Miller property. And then there was a ranch--I mean a house. It had to have like two or three bedrooms. It was pretty big, and that belonged to Don Antonio and his wife, Mariana. And then

another big parcel of land was Hermalinda Corta and her daughter Arsenia. And she had. . . . I don't know her husband, because he was dead already when we moved into the neighborhood. And also she used to have another little house that she rented to the Randolphins, that had come from Tucson. And it was Diego, Rosa, and Carmen. Then they got married and got another name, but they lived there. I remember when we moved there, they lived there. Across the street from them was Leyvas, Don Juan Leyvas and his son Salvador Leyvas, and Elvira was Salvador's wife, and their kids lived there. And then they had a little house where Don Juan Leyvas lived, it was just a small little adobe house. And the other one, the big one, was a frame house. But you know, I thought it was a big house, but that really wasn't. Terry, the daughter that lived there, she told me there was only a BIG bedroom/living room, and then the kitchen. And then in the back they had like a storage room, but when they moved in there, they made it into bedrooms.

MATSCH: These houses are all on that map, that Mickey Mouse *Barrio* map at the museum, that's on display?

HORMELL: Yeah. Yeah, I made that.

MATSCH: Okay, so you know.

HORMELL: Yeah.

MATSCH: How close together were the houses?

HORMELL: Well, not as close as this, because these are. . . . You know, we had land in between us. As a matter of fact (laughs), my grandmother and Mr. Leyvas were always arguing about property, because he put his fence on my grandmother's property.

(laughter) \_\_\_\_\_. So I remember. But they had. . . . There was quite a. . . .

They were far apart, they weren't like right next door like we are in our neighborhoods now. But there was a lot of unity, and everybody took care of each other's kids.

MATSCH: Okay, what other relatives lived. . . . You lived with your grandmother and your mother. Did you have other relatives in the *barrio*? Your uncle for a while?

HORMELL: No. Well, all the boys, my grandmother's sons, lived there. And then when they got married they got out of the *barrio* and they never came back -- as far as I know. I don't know if my Uncle Chono came back when they first got married and lived there, because at that time then my grandma had those, like, apartments, the houses, the big house. But later on, they moved to their homes, they bought their own homes. When my grandmother came and bought that big piece of land, they lived in a tent first. And then from the tent they went and moved into the storage room that we had that was made out of aluminum siding, you know, like they put the roofs? Well, it was like a "tin shed," we called it. But that's where they lived, because one time I said, "Boy, Grandma, this looks like a little house, a play house." And she said, "No, honey, that was a real house. From the tent. . . ." She's the one that told me the story, "From the tent we moved into the tin house, and we waited until we could build this home." Because she was always so grateful to God that she finally had this home that she prayed for so long, and this land. And she utilized that land because she planted fruit trees and all that. So she was always giving fruits to everybody. I remember she had all kinds of fruit and flowers. She had a beautiful garden.

MATSCH: That's another question: Did she tend the garden herself?

HORMELL: Yes. She just loved flowers, and she had a whole bunch, to take them to

church.

MATSCH: Were the back yards fenced? Or was it. . . .

HORMELL: Ours was -- they were fenced -- and I think we were the (laughs) only ones, really, that fenced the yards. The others didn't spend their money on that.

I don't remember. (pause) No, I guess they did, to divide their land, because, no, I take that back. Like Hermalinda, I remember was separated with a fence with Mr. Antonio.

And then DeLaCruz was at the very end, almost to the end of the little butte, and they had a fence too. These people had a lot of land because, see, what happened was, they would make their big house and then they would make the little houses for their kids. That was the old style of Mexico: when they built a home, then they would buy enough land so that their kids could build their own. As a kid married, they built their own home. And that was really my grandmother's intentions, but my uncles didn't marry people (laughs) that believed that way.

MATSCH: The fences were made of wood or wire?

HORMELL: No, they were made out of barbed wire.

MATSCH: And was the house built close to the street, or was it set back?

HORMELL: Ours was like from here to that wall, close to the street.

MATSCH: About 30 feet?

HORMELL: Yeah.

MATSCH: The inside of the house: what was the kitchen like?

HORMELL: The kitchen was bigger, was like this kitchen and this room.

MATSCH: Let's give them a footage.

HORMELL: Okay.

MATSCH: Just approximate.

HORMELL: Our kitchen was big, maybe 18 by 20 [feet]. It was like a big kitchen. We used it as a dining room and a kitchen. It was like a gathering place.

MATSCH: Okay. And what kind of stove did you have?

HORMELL: We had the wood stove. It wasn't until very later on that when my mom got married, that we had a gas stove.

MATSCH: In the '50s?

HORMELL: In the '50s we still had the [wood] stoves. Made the BEST tortillas.

(laughter) So we had a wood stove. We had. . . . We were the only ones in the neighborhood with a sink and plumbing.

MATSCH: Indoor?

HORMELL: Indoor. But for the renters, for the people that rented from my grandmother, we had an outhouse. And my stepfather built them a shower, because before they used to have to take baths in a tub, and warm the water and all that. But we did at the ranch. We did that at the ranch. When we got a little bit more modernized, Gene, my stepfather, built a shower for them, and then they had the big toilet, outside toilet. And then we had inside plumbing with a bathroom and the sink and the whole bit. And then. . . . But outside he built us another shower, because see, there were a lot of girls and they were always fighting for the (laughter) bathroom. So what we did when he made a shower outside in the washroom -- because he made a little washroom with a shower -- and that's where I used to take showers, and I love cold showers because I was

used to it. We had no hot water connected there, so I took showers in the cold water.

MATSCH: In your grandmother's house did you have hot water?

HORMELL: Inside, but not at the shower that he built.

MATSCH: You had mentioned she had an ice box when you lived there?

HORMELL: Yeah, when we moved there, she had a wooden ice box and the ice man would come and sell ice. All the neighborhood had ice boxes then. And a lot of people for the longest time had the -- I don't have one here, I think my sister has it at her house -- but the hurricane lamps. Each room had one.

MATSCH: Let me get this clear: when you moved in from the ranch, she still did not have electricity, and you put it in after you got there?

HORMELL: I don't remember that quite. I don't know if she did it to save money, or if. . . . No, she did have the lights, because my uncles had put that in. She did have the lights. The only thing that her lights were like, you know, this kind that you would have to pull -- you know, you pull the light on and off.

MATSCH: Oh, the chain?

HORMELL: Yeah, the chain, the old-fashioned one. But all those homes had that.

MATSCH: And she had one bathroom inside for you?

HORMELL: One bathroom.

MATSCH: For eight bedrooms?

HORMELL: Uh-huh. Only one bathroom. That's why I say we were fighting for that bathroom.

MATSCH: Was it two-story?

HORMELL: No, it was one. It was just a big house.

MATSCH: And what about heating or cooling?

HORMELL: The heating, in the front part of the house we had a little heater, a gas heater. And then in her room. . . . Yeah, I guess we all had a heating. . . . She had the other kind, you know, the little kerosene heater. I think they just installed one in the living room and in the bedrooms where we used to sleep. And then in my mother's side of the house, they had a heater, one of those kerosene heaters, too. The big ones. But my grandmother had the little black one like that. And then the stove would keep everything warm.

MATSCH: From the kitchen.

HORMELL: The kitchen, yeah.

MATSCH: And what about cooling?

HORMELL: Cooling we had. . . . We were of the very few that had not the air conditioning -- at that time it was a swamp cooler, a BIG one that covered everything. But see, my mom put all that in. When my mom moved in with her, then my mom started improving the house. The house was paid for, but she took over the taxes and everything, because that was the understanding, that they both wanted to do that.

MATSCH: What kind of flooring did you have in the house?

HORMELL: Cement. My uncles built that house, and they did a real good job. It's adobe, and I loved it, because it was real cool. It was a very cool house. And the ceilings were WAY up high. That's why I was looking for ceilings like this, because they were HIGH, high like that -- but all throughout the house, not just in one little part of the



house.

MATSCH: Okay. There was one other question I have. You keep talking about Chester Miller. Was he a son of Winchester?

HORMELL: Yeah, he was in that family. I think he was the son of the Sotelos.

MATSCH: What did he do? Did he work?

HORMELL: (sigh) I don't know what he did. I always remember him. . . . I looked up to him, but I don't remember, I don't know really where he worked. I really have no idea. For the longest time, he was, I just guess, running the farm or whatever, because there was a lot of land that he had. He lived in a shack, but he had a lot of land. I mean, the whole beginning of Mickey Mouse was his land. Like Solares lived there in that one little spot, but he just bought that little parcel, I think. Or maybe he even rented it from you, but maybe he just lived off the rents. That's probably what he did.

MATSCH: Okay. Alright, you had mentioned your older sister worked in the restaurant?

HORMELL: My sister Helen and Isabel both worked in the restaurant.

MATSCH: Did the rest of you do anything to bring in money?

HORMELL: What I did was, I was a dishwasher there, and sometimes after the football games, it'd get real busy. Then I would have to go out there and be the waitress too, but I was just, you know, young, but I helped.

MATSCH: Did they pay you?

HORMELL: No, that was family.

MATSCH: Did your dad help out at all?

HORMELL: My dad supported us, but very little.

MATSCH: Alright, now I want to talk about the education that you received in Tempe. You mentioned that you started out at the Tempe Grammar.

HORMELL: At Tempe Grammar, first and second grade.

MATSCH: And when you moved into town, you went. . . .

HORMELL: To Mount Carmel School. The old Mount Carmel School was underneath the basement, and that's where we started. And then on my -- I guess it was my eighth grade, the seventh and eighth grade, we moved into the new school, which now belongs to ASU. It's a great big long, brick building there on College Avenue.

MATSCH: College and what?

HORMELL: It's on College and Sixth Street. It's near that parking area, that big parking area.

MATSCH: (laughs) There's so many of them!

HORMELL: Before we could say the parking area \_\_\_\_\_.

MATSCH: Was that high school also?

HORMELL: No. No, I did get offered a scholarship to go to Saint Mary's, but all my friends were going to Tempe High, so I went to Tempe High, and that was the best decision I made, because that was another beautiful year of my life, was at Tempe High.

MATSCH: Okay. Now, when you moved into the *barrio*, there was some sort of segregation, is that true?

HORMELL: (stammers)

MATSCH: Well, like in the schools, were the children still going to the Eighth Street

School, or was that gone by that time?

HORMELL: No, by the time the Mount Carmel School started, I think the Mount Carmel School took all those Mexican kids that were going to the Eighth Street School, came to the Catholic school, because then the Church realized that we were not getting fair treatment. And so they realized that we also needed education, and so the Church decided to build the Catholic school and bring these nuns from back East, where they came from Dubuque, Iowa. And they were the BBM nuns. And so they started the Catholic school. When they started, it was like first and second together, third and fourth together, fifth and sixth together, seventh and eighth together, and it was just a little school. And it was really meant to help these Mexican children get the education that they deserved. And so most of those families either sent the kids to Catholic school -- and I think it was only ten dollars a month or something like that, for the whole family -- and then others went to Tempe Grammar. But see, Tempe Grammar, already long before that, had to make the adjustment of accepting Mexican kids because of that Romo case. My uncle, Adolfo Romo, made a big stink about it and finally got into the courts and finally was accepted. But then a lot of the families were kind of -- still kind of scared. Or some Mexican families would say, "Well, we don't need their damned school, we'll go to our own, the Eighth Street School." But they didn't get the drift. The drift was, if they can get the education, OUR kids can get the best education, because the education they were getting at Eighth Street School were not the best, because they were like teachers that were not really . . . even sensitive to the Mexican kids. My mother went there, and my mother was left-handed, and she was tortured by her teacher -- I mean literally

tortured and ridiculed and everything because she was left-handed. And so I know the horror stories that a lot of people have talked about, that they were really tortured. If they mispronounced something they would be treated bad, because they had two languages. Instead of seeing the beauty of the two languages, you know, they just tortured them. And many of them at that time decided to call themselves Spanish because they didn't want -- I mean, that generation you'll find a lot of people say, "Well, we're Spanish, we're not Mexican," because of that. And I think it came, they wanted to identify themselves into something else that they weren't, so that they wouldn't get the bad treatment. And that was happening not only in schools, that was happening in hospitals, that was in doctors. People [were] very cruel in those days. My mom used to tell me that when she was young, if there was some young boys at the ASU that wanted to rape them, they raped them, they never did nothing about it, because it was a Mexican girl anyway, and that didn't matter. A lot of the girls, that's why the parents were so protective, and they always had chaperons and stuff. She used to say that it was really bad. And if you went to a hospital, my aunt when she was dying here, I experienced something, kind of an eye-opener. And I talk about this in speeches that I make for the elderly, so that they can realize the sensitivity of what they went through and why they feel this way. You probably have come across, when you were dealing with interviewing, they don't trust Anglos. And it's because they went through more than what we did. We were like the '60s, you know -- we made the world change, but they didn't. They were very humble people and they didn't do nothing for themselves as far as fighting for themselves. They would have gotten killed, probably, if they did. My aunt was dying here at the hospital,

at Desert Sam [Samaritan] in '88 and they asked her if she was Mexican and she said, "No, I'm Italian." And the reason that she said that was because she didn't want to say that she was Mexican, because there was a person next to her and she's Anglo and they needed to take care of her, she wanted to be Italian at that time so that she was taken care of, too. Because if she would have said, "Mexican," they would have just let her die. And that was really the truth. That's really what happened. And I know it can burn a lot of bad ears, you know, and hurt a lot of people, but a lot of their ancestors that were doctors at that time were not the greatest doctors, because they didn't think of us as people. We were like animals. We were treated as animals. And that's really bad, but that's how they treated them if they were Mexican. And when that happened, I \_\_\_\_\_ myself, "Well, why is she saying that?" You know, in the hospital, why is she saying that? And then we all started laughing. All of us, when we thought about it, and then we all started laughing, I said, "My Aunt \_\_\_\_\_ is WAY ahead of her time." You know, she still. . . . See, she lived in California for a long time, and over there, there was prejudice, but not as much as here, I guess, as when the time that she left. And so she never wanted to come back to Arizona. She had that hate for Arizona, because she felt like she was a person and she wanted to be treated as one. And so she never liked to come back to Arizona. And so when she came back only because I was the one that was going to take care of her until she died. And so then she experience that, and I said, "Tia Dero, people are not like that anymore. It's not the same as it used to be. You don't have to say that you're Italian." And she just smiled. (laughter) She knew what she had done. She knew that we caught up with her. But those are the things that the older generations,

like my mom and my grandmother and all of them, they came with that obstacle. But Mexican people, because we've had so many obstacles in our lives, if there's an obstacle there, we just go around it. I always joke about that, but it's the truth. We were trained that if this doesn't go right, it wasn't meant to be, just go around it and go forward. You don't dwell on it, it's there and it's not going to be removed, so you just go around it. I remember myself. . . . I don't like to say "my white friend." I hate that, it just boggles my. . . . Just something happens to my stomach, I can't stand that. Or I don't like my friends to say, "Well, I'm your white friend." I hate that. In the '50s they were even saying that, and those

are the things that are picked up. Or, "I have Mexican friends just like you that are so nice." I HATE that, because I'm Irene Hormell, I'm not. . . . You know, I have an identity. And so those are the things that I remember when I was growing up, I always used to pray and say, "If I ever get old enough, I'm going to make a difference, and I'm not going to BE prejudiced," because Mexican people can ALSO be prejudiced against me, and not just the other way around, how it was. And so we have, I feel like, in OUR generation, we changed a lot.

END TAPE ONE, SIDE TWO