

Washington County Museum
Oral History Interview with Enedelia Schofield
Date: August 28, 2013

Informants: Enedelia Schofield (ES)

Interviewer: Luke Sprunger (LS)

Transcriber: Pat Yama

Luke Sprunger (LS): It is August 28th, 2013. I'm Luke Sprunger for the Washington County Museum. I'm also a graduate student at Portland State University. Today I'm interviewing Enedelia Schofield about her life in Oregon and about her parents, Emilio and Hortencia Hernandez.

So to go ahead and start, I'd like to ask some questions just about your early years and where you were born. So maybe you could just say for the record where you were born and where you spent your first few years of your life.

Enedelia Schofield (ES): Okay. I was born in Texas, in McAllen, Texas in '58 and then we came up, I believe in '62 to Oregon.

LS: Do you remember much about your years before you came to Oregon?

ES: Not too much. I don't really remember too much. I remember where I lived. We lived in a small home in kind of a tracked area. My father was in World War II so it was at that time new homes but they were very—I now realize they were very small—at that time I thought they were really big. And our neighbors and families were around us, so I do remember that.

LS: And where were your parents from?

ES: My father was born in McAllen, Texas and my mother was born in Reynosa, Tamaulipas [Mexico] but was raised in the United States. Her mother and father passed away when she was young and so it was her aunts who raised my mother in McAllen.

LS: If you had to describe your childhood in Oregon what would you say about it?

ES: You know, through the eyes of a child, wonderful. I think that through the eyes of a child, I remember living in the migrant camp in Forest Grove and coming up and it was adventurous, it was fun. Looking back through the lenses of an adult I realize some of the hardships and challenges that my parents faced and how they sheltered us from that.

LS: And what in particular were some of the biggest hardships or the things that

your parents worked hardest to overcome?

ES: I think the biggest hardships were probably just the financial status of a family of seven trying to make ends meet and four of us being girls and one being a boy, I think that's probably always the hardest—yet the dream, of that American dream of trying to make it better and have a better life. So that's what drove them, and their faith.

LS: And how did your family make ends meet in Oregon?

ES: When we first came it was on the farm and it was Dr. Nixon's land and I think it was called Rainer's camp and my older sisters all had to work in the fields to make ends meet. And then my father went to work for Tektronix so he had an evening—as a custodian was how he started and then went into a machinist. And then during the day he could still work on the farm. And then my mother worked for Birds Eye Cannery in Hillsboro and then later went on to work at the Centro Cultural and helped there. Both my mother and father volunteered there.

LS: I think when we talked before you said that for a while you were primarily responsible for taking care of your younger brother?

ES: Yeah, when I was small. As my sisters we'd go out to the field. My sisters would be the ones that would be picking whether it was strawberries, cucumbers, beans or blackberries or some sort of berries. I think it was actually maybe boysenberries or some other berries, not necessarily blackberries. It was my job to take care of my younger brother. So I do have recollection of putting him in that little red wagon and pulling him from the camp up the hill to where my parents were working.

LS: So at some point, yes, you did obviously start field work yourself. Can you describe just maybe your memories of how that work was?

ES: Of the work in the fields—one of the things that I would always notice is that there were the families like us who were working to make ends meet. And at that time still people in the community obviously picked berries. So then you'd see the other field where the kids who were not kids of color who were picking. And they were talking about, "I have one halleck or two." Those are little cups of strawberries. And I would look at how we had to have the 20 flats or the 40 flats. We had to hit a certain quota every day and I could see the difference of the hard work. We were there before they arrived. We were there after they arrived. It wasn't time to talk and if you spoke the people in the fields would come in and say, "Hey, you can't be chatting. You got to work. You got to work."

LS: Do you think that those experiences doing that type of work, did that impact the rest of your life maybe in terms of the value of work or anything else?

ES: Absolutely. I think that as you grow up and you see what you've done, I think the biggest thing—kind of hesitating on that because there are so many things that come into your head—is that it is hard work and you do have a work ethic of you don't have sick days. You can't say, "I think I'll stay in today." So that just creates a person of—you just get up, you do it and you learn to cope and you learn to deal with it and that's just how life was. There was no such thing as staying back because you're sick. If you're sick you were still out there and picking as much as you could.

I think the other thing is that it makes you appreciate what you do have and it also makes you want something more and more fulfilling. I'm not sure if it's better but at least more fulfilling.

LS: So you are now a school principal. So I'd have to ask you about your own experiences in the school system. Could you talk about maybe some of your memories just when you started going to school and what that was like for you?

ES: I started in school in Forest Grove and I first went to Cornelius Elementary as my first school. You know, I have great memories and also difficult memories because I think that there are things that happened during my life at school that made me have to reflect on the color of my skin or my ethnicity or my cultural background. So I grew up in Forest Grove and went to St. Anthony's Catholic school and I think that was definitely a time that—I now, looking back, I realize my parents really made education a priority to the point where financially they put us into a private Catholic school. So again their background and their religion and their background and education was important.

During that time it was a small school. You get to know everybody. You have an opportunity to build a common foundation. Yet I do look back and wonder why there were some families I never got to go visit their homes and why there was still a limit. And you wonder now was it because of the color of my skin or was it because I spoke another language or...you know, what was it?

The first time I really remember being called Mexican was going into middle school and I was in middle school junior high at Neil Armstrong and I was in the highest math class. And the teacher at that time was like, "What are you doing in this class? You're Mexican, you shouldn't be here." And it was kind of that wake-up call of, *Oh somebody sees me as somebody different*. And so that was the first time I recall that I really felt like that my race was being questioned or the color of the skin was being questioned.

I was very competitive and very goal-oriented so I continued in school—school secretary, just doing everything—after school sports and activities at the school. In high school, you know normal high school stuff. Again you get to grow up in your neighborhood school. Everybody was very open but you could see different cliques and different groups. I think at that time there were not that many kids of

color so it was still very accepting and maybe non-threatening, is the word I would use which is different maybe than now.

I graduated from Forest Grove High school in 1977 and I wanted to go onto college. Somewhere the communication between me and the school wasn't there and so I didn't get the support I needed to have everything in place for college. And even back looking at those high school years there were things, there were times that I would have certain friends say, "You know I can't go out with you because you are Mexican" or "my parents wouldn't allow that." So you would have that conversation and you just kind of think, *Wow I can't believe that this still exists*. But in your circle of friends you could still hang out and do things.

LS: When you hear things like that as a student were you able to try and rationalize that or put that in place or was it something that you couldn't quite understand?

ES: I think when you're going through it you're going through your own racial identity and I think that as a country, we were also going through changes as a country. I still think that when you're in a city or a state like Oregon it was still very lily white and so it was that kind of like 'we don't really talk about that. We're color-blind. We love all. Everybody's okay.' Until you're dating my son or until you're coming over or until you're coming to my house then you wonder. I wish that I could go back to all those people that didn't allow me to enter their world and say, "Why? What was it?" Because now I believe it was because it was the color of the skin or my background.

LS: Early on in school your name was changed, basically by a teacher, from Enedelia to Annie. Can you talk about how that happened?

ES: Yeah, it's interesting you ask about that because I'm actually doing an activity with teachers tomorrow about what's in a name. And again, my name was Enedelia and in the early '60s or late '60s, openness to cultural differences or names I think wasn't—it was difficult. And so instead of trying to say the name it was just easier to change it or to call you something else. And I didn't think anything about it. I actually liked 'Annie' after I got used to it and was Annie my whole way through junior high and high school.

And I shared with you that I have friends who call me Annie and people say, "Oh they must know you from a long time ago." And yet I have people who know me as Enedelia and then people who know me as Hernandez and then people who know me as Schofield. Enedelia Hernandez, Annie Hernandez, Annie Schofield and Enedelia Schofield just gives a different perception and so names really do change. What I think now is people shouldn't have their name changed. And it is our responsibility to learn the name and to accept the name and to accept that person because it truly is their identity. It is who they are. So now I feel like I have these multiple identities that people know me yet I'm the same person but it was

because of the circumstance not because I chose. Probably the only time I chose was when I chose to just say, "Call me Enedelia" or "call me Ene."

LS: Right, and what prompted that decision on your part?

ES: When I went to college at Pacific University at that time all my educational documents, my records were all under Annie Hernandez and so they had to have official records and my official records said 'Annie' and my birth certificate and whatever I had to submit to Pacific had 'Enedelia'. So I had to show proof that Annie Hernandez was Enedelia at that time.

Now I believe that there are lots more laws that really are strict about the names on school records and it's what's your legal name? What is the name you'd like to go by, because I think there were lots of situations that occurred where kids used different names and it wasn't their legal name.

LS: From when we spoke before it sounded like you did very well in high school but you didn't receive support from the school.

ES: I think that, I don't know if it's called support or again whether I was being heard and listened to. I did really well—four point student through high school and graduated in December and I thought I was always saying, "I want to go to college, I want to college." Somewhere, whatever the system— you know however the system was set up— I wasn't heard because I didn't get what I needed to get into college. I was very blessed that Pacific University was willing to take me in without taking SAT [Scholastic Assessment Test] scores, without doing an application way before. And so again I look back through the lenses that time and I wonder what kind of support there were for women in sports, women going to college—just the gender issue in conjunction with the race and ethnicity.

LS: Right. So why was that that you didn't end up taking the SAT?

ES: Just because I never knew I had to. I'm the first one that went on to college from my family and nobody else had gone to college and I figured it was just like school. You showed up the first day and you get into classes.

LS: Right. And was that a test maybe a lot of your other peers in high school were taking that were looking to go onto college?

ES: I imagine now. I don't recall people saying, "Geez I need to take the SAT and get into college." Again I graduated in December and the conversations—I know of people who went on to college. My immediate friends didn't but I knew of people but I don't recall any conversations of, "I'm taking my SAT." What I remember is, "You know I'm going to OSU. I'm going to U of O. I'm going to Pacific." And we didn't talk about, "How did you get there?"

LS: Right. There was never a counselor that let you know that was something that you should do.

ES: No. And yet I would say that the counselors were wonderful. They were there for you. Why that didn't happen, I don't know. So you reflect and wonder—where was that lack of support?

LS: You shared a story about a teacher suspecting you of cheating on a test and you had to retake it. Can you share something about that memory?

ES: Yeah. That was a memory going into the seventh grade and it was that math teacher. And so then it was, "Okay, you need to take the test." Well then I took the test. "Well no, you couldn't have." And I remember statements like, "No way you couldn't have passed. You need to take it again." And I'd take it again and it was like, "No, no. Wait a minute," And feeling like, *Why am I having to retake this? I keep passing yet they don't believe that it's me taking the test.* And again it was all in that memory of *this is the first time I'm being called Mexican. I'm being asked to take these tests over and over and over. What's the reason for this?*

LS: And that was all from that one teacher?

ES: That was all from that one teacher. I think that you go through life being aware of cultural differences and racism. And though you don't walk every day with, *Oh my gosh what's happening?* you do question sometimes the unconscious things that people do but the impact that it has. Because I believe that people don't want to be racist but people sometimes say and do things that they've just done that don't realize the impact. Like my teacher changing my name in kinder. Like that teacher asking me three times to take the test over. Like that counselor or the counselors who...I don't recall them helping me to get into college.

LS: So moving on to college, what was your experience like there at Pacific University?

ES: That was probably the most positive experience I ever could encounter in the sense that it is a high majority of students from Hawaii. So I could fit right in. People thought I was Hawaiian. *[chuckles]* The other thing is that I had professors that were multicultural professors. One was Linda Tamura who was just very, very supportive and Dr. Cabello who without her I wouldn't have entered Pacific University and Ramsdale was the name of the Director of Admissions. So very supportive and wanted you to succeed and I always felt like they were making sure that I would succeed.

And it was also a time when I was able to really embrace my ethnicity and my cultural background because so many people just would assume that I was from Mexico and would ask me like, "Where are you from?" "Well Texas." "No, no like

where are you from?" "Well have you been to Mexico?" "Not really." I've gone to Texas and I've gone across the border but I've never really have been to Mexico. And so during that time was really a learning opportunity and a journey for myself to get to know who I was and who I wanted to be.

LS: So you said that your parents were big proponents of education for you and your siblings. Can you talk about that or what other values they instilled in you?

ES: I think the value of education was probably the most important. And to them they didn't go past I think like second and fifth grade or very, very young is when they dropped out of school. So for them just the goal of finishing high school was huge and whatever you wanted to do beyond. They would say, "You can do anything you want. You can go to college." But there was no experience of that in our lives.

I think the other thing was—I don't think it was volunteering—I'm not even sure what the word is but they had a real dedication to building a positive community. So I think it even goes above volunteering. It's not just, you go to the soup line and you help out and you go to the church and you help out but truly their everyday life was, how do I help people? And I helped people then that makes me feel better. And so that sense of, you're a better person by helping other people.

LS: So I think your father was basically the organizing director for—was it VIVA [Volunteers in Vanguard Action]?

ES: For VIVA (murmurs agreement). VIVA, I remember a little bit about it because a lot of times people say, "Well Ene delia, you came up with the name on VIVA." I remember, maybe at that time I was ten years old and he would have people over and they'd be discussing. And we had like VISTA [Volunteers in Service to American] volunteers. And even that too I think was really good for me to have people that were just so socially active in the community. Again, at that time not understanding that, but now looking back these young people that would come and help out. But he started with the VIVA and then went on with the Centro Cultural.

LS: And then your mother helped quite a bit with Centro as well.

ES: Absolutely. And I think one of the things that I always have admired about the families that started the Centro with my mother and father is that a real sense of family and a real sense of teamwork. Centro would not have been Centro but for the hard work of the women doing the sales. Yet Centro would not be Centro without some of the minds of the men that would get together and think of things to do. And the women would also plan with them but at the end of the day the dinners that they would make were really hard work on all the women. You know the women, what is it, seven families.

LS: Do you think your mother was sufficiently recognized or respected for the work that she did?

ES: I definitely think that she was respected. When I hear you say sufficiently I sometimes think that she was the unsung hero, the quiet strength behind. That people know she's there but you don't need to be in the parade. Does that make sense?

LS: (murmurs agreement)

ES: So I think that they were recognized more as a couple or maybe they could have been recognized more as a couple. Like my father would have a write-up but my mother also had some write-ups. So I think that they were respected as a couple and they were seen as a couple. It wasn't just Don Emilio, mostly it was [Ab]uelo and [Ab]uela [grandpa and grandma], Don Emilio and Tencha. And generally people spoke about them and as a couple. You know, "Go see Don Emilio and Tencha. Tencha and Don Emilio have food for you. Emilio and Tencha, [Ab]uelo and [Ab]uela will take care of you. [Ab]uelo and [Ab]uela will give you food." But that's the tough one because as a child I think I can always say, "My parents were never recognized enough" because they could always be recognized more.

LS: Right. So in addition to all the work fundraising for Centro, what other ways did they help out individuals or the community?

ES: Well with the church and the food bank and going to—I remember many, many times or many hours going to the migrant camps and making blankets to then take to the migrant camps and give to the migrants. Medical, the Garcia Clinic is a spin-off from the Centro. And so just truly always giving, giving, giving, giving, giving.

LS: How about letting people stay at the home?

ES: Yeah, that was very common. Our house was a—people would come and if they needed a place to stay, they would stay. We have some very good friends who every summer as migrant workers would come up, Mr. and Mrs. Aleman, Jose Aleman, they would come up every year. They were from Texas and the muchachos would come up here. I shared that initially there were Hispanic families, Mexican American families coming from Texas. And again some people would just say, Texans. And they would come and later that transition went into more single men from Mexico and so we would refer to them as the 'muchachos' because you know, that could change on a weekly basis, daily basis but the muchachos were always around.

LS: I've heard some other people describe your parents as the ones that really

tried to build community between Tejanos and people from Mexico or from elsewhere. Is that something that you see as rooted in maybe their faith or their central values?

ES: Absolutely. Like when I talked about just building community and I think also they wanted the best for us so them building that community allowed us to enter that in the future. They weren't always out there saying, "We're going to do this. We're going to do that." It was a very quiet non-invasive just presence but the presence was huge and you felt it.

And so absolutely. I still have friends that they will refer to themselves as Texans and that's what they are even if they're Mexican American backgrounds. Some may say Mexican American. Some may say Chicanos and again through the lens that they walked through there were different reasons for why they chose to be themselves.

I wish that my parents were here now because the question I would ask them, "Do you think that at the end of the day it is because of the color of our skin?" And I would say that they would say yes because every once in awhile they would say, "Remember that you may be judged by the color of your skin." So if I have somebody from Texas and you have somebody that's from Mexico and you have somebody that's from Nicaragua, at the end of the day if we're all brown looking, we're going to be perceived as however that person wants us to be perceived.

So to them it was important that we did stick together in the sense of building a community because we really were a mix of that community in the brown skin that we are.

LS: I read a transcript from the existing interview that was conducted with your father that they have at the Washington County Museum, and in that interview he was talking about the few years he spent living in Mexico. Do you know about that chapter in his life?

ES: I do remember that he was living in Mexico right before the war. He was a baseball player and so he played on a professional baseball team in Mexico. And I believe that he went down there because he couldn't find work and so it was to look for work and do his baseball. He loved baseball, loved baseball.

LS: How do you think that maybe that time in Mexico might have impacted his world view and how he saw community?

ES: I know that he came back to serve [in WWII] and that that was important for him to serve. So again living in McAllen is right on the border so living in Mexico and the Reynosa area I don't think that was its own community as a community together. Not like now where it's very, you know you have to have your passport

to go to Mexico and it's a tighter boundary. The border at that time was very open. I think I go back to that their beliefs were really based on religious groundings, Catholicism, be a good person, ten commandments, you know we're here to help each other out. And truly no matter the color of skin that you are, we're here to help each other out.

LS: So I'm going to move on to a few different questions and that would be more about your experiences currently as principal, as an educator and maybe some of the things that you see going on now. Could you talk about maybe some of the challenges that in the Spanish speaking students or students from Mexico or Central America face in your school system?

ES: I think the biggest challenge I think that our kids face is where can you keep your identity and be successful. And I believe that nobody is intentional about racism but that it exists and again in those unconscious actions that you make. So for a person of color it is still a challenge because of getting out of that circle of comfort. There's that comfort zone and we're just not there yet. In my family I have one niece and my daughter at this point who have graduated from college. That has been 50 years of living in Oregon. We should have more. And so we need to question why our kids of color are not being successful in school.

And we need to have hard conversations of why they're not being successful in school and there's now data that shows that even kids who are very bright that come from a high economic status still are not successful at the same rate and level as a white student.

And now that information is out and that's the challenge as a community and as a person of color I sometimes have people—I actually had one person ask me last year, "I don't get it Enedelia, you fit real well. You just fit really well." Well I fit well because they're willing to accept me, but as soon as I step out of that circle and I go to someplace else where I'm the only person of color then you wonder, Why is it that that person's coming up to me and saying, 'Hey, can I help you?' when there are 20 other families with me but I'm the one that's asked. Why are you here? Can I help you? Or people assume we're all from Mexico. So that challenge is of our kids having to build their own identity but being questioned daily on their identity.

And we have kids who act and think as the white majority but yet have a different color and when they're hit like I was in seventh grade you kind of shake your head and go, *Wait a minute*. So I think that's something that's really hard for kids.

I think the other challenges—getting out of the circle of poverty. Getting out of that circle because you give up a lot to also get something and that's a real challenge. The experiences that I have had, that my sisters would not be able to relate to not because they're not smart but because of the experiences that they haven't had. And that's another challenge for our kids is our kids, their

experience. And we have teachers and administrators that may have grown up not also experienced diversity. So in their white world they think they're doing a good job—like my counselors. I'm sure I loved them to death in high school but didn't realize if I would have been that white person with blue eyes would they have spent a little more time with me? That's a deep conversation for a white person to have and a very difficult conversation to have. But yet I have it on a daily basis. If I have a nice car, it's, "Where did you get that car?" with a question.

Now I don't live my whole life and I share that because I see the kids. I don't think that we all live thinking all the time, *Oh my gosh they must be questioning me about the color of my skin*. But if our schools, if they don't represent the demographics of our kids, that's not good. If our businesses don't represent our community, that's not good. And we need to start asking ourselves, 'Why is that happening?' And we need more people like Pacific University to sometimes break down some of the institutionalized racism, institutionalized systems, institutionalized routines to allow somebody to enter a different zone.

And that we could have a lot of conversations but I think for our kids today those challenges are big. Yet the exciting thing is they're growing up in a very diverse community. So we have a group of kids that are growing up in a very diverse community who talk about race all the time who are maybe still living with parents that are saying, "Oh no honey, we don't talk about race. Everybody's equal." When the reality is you're not seen as an equal. And the kids know it. You talk to kids and they'll say, "We all sit here because we're Mexicans and the white kids sit over there. All Mexicans do this but the white kids do that." So we have to have those conversations. I know I have them with my kids because we're people of color but I think those that are not.

So again going back to the challenges that kids of color have is that breaking the barriers. And the community has to help break those barriers because look at how many generations it's going to take. I shouldn't be talking about this 50 years living in Oregon yet I know I may not be invited to certain things just because I'm not in that circle of people.

LS: So this is something that you still feel like you're regularly made to feel different in certain situations.

ES: Oh absolutely. I think it's fair to say and I see it as a positive now. I want people to ask because I think that that brings some awareness on people when they ask. Initially it was like, "Why are you always asking me. Don't ask me about the color of my skin or where I'm from." Now I'm like, "No, ask." Because that's going to help everybody learn and be accepting of people of color.

LS: When we talked before I think we touched on the importance of having role models or figures that students, young people can identify with. Could you talk about that at all?

ES: In order to achieve it you have to dream it. So in order to dream it you have to be able to see something that looks like you. So I did grow up where there wasn't those figures of people of color and I did grow up where I read the Dick and Jane books, that's how I learned to read. And so, in my world that's what I was getting. Again, the unconscious messages that we're getting that builds what we want.

And so I didn't have role models. I didn't have somebody, whether we call them mentors or whether we call them—I guess that's the only other word I can think of mentors or role models—I didn't have somebody where I could go up and say, "Geez, you know this is my first day in college, what should I be doing?" Or, "Wow, I just realized I just brought a tortilla with frijoles in it to eat and people are looking at me. Maybe I better not take this out. You know am I feeling different or what's going on?" And so I didn't have those mentors. My mentors were white people but I didn't have people of color to look, besides my mother and father and those peoples in leadership roles in the church.

But to really ask me—I remember many times my father and my mother going, "I don't know what to do but we'll help you." So it was me figuring it out as I stepped into those other worlds.

And I think that we're doing a better job about that in our curriculum and in the things that we see. I think that Selena, JLo [Jennifer Lopez], the Latina magazine, those are, they're more available. Mexican stations, the Spanish-speaking stations, it's around so that gives you more access to just diversity and culture. But when we were growing up there was nothing and kids need role models. Kids need to be able to say, "That person looks like me. I can be like them." I think it's when you can go back to in history when they did the projects on the colors of babies. I think Anderson Cooper and CNN, in the '60s it was the baby doll project is that you still see white as good and black as bad. And you still question would that be different if we saw more positive, more role models, more people that look like me.

I know that I see evidence every day in my school and in my community from kids who will go, "Oh my gosh, that's Enedelia, she speaks Spanish and she's a principal." And so again that unconscious impact that you have that you don't even realize you have.

LS: In addition to having someone like you in the position as a principal to at least be I think some source for the students to realize that there's someone in the school that knows their language and can identify with them to a certain degree, what other protections or opportunities do students have in school that you didn't enjoy when you were going through?

ES: I think the opportunities and the—I think the fact that it is out there, that kids

of color are not succeeding at the same rate as white kids, I think that's a powerful conversation to have. And then so that forces all of us to look and say, "What can we do?" So there is an emphasis in schools to say—dual language programs. Is this something we can bring in—bilingual programs, evenings with families building a community. And it's just not Mexicans, but it's Asian Americans and other people of color. So that is still very much available to kids.

I think also you can access more people in professional worlds that are people of color. So I know that I have a circle of friends that all of us graduated from college and that we can give advice to kids on how to get into college and I start at my school always saying, "Your job is to learn so that when you grow up you can go to college." If they choose not to go to college, that's their choice but they have their tools to go. And it's an automatic—this is what we believe in. And I don't think that was in the '70s or the '60s for all kids and so that's an opportunity that they have.

I think also colleges have more programs and partnerships with schools and partnerships with kids. Like DREAMers, I think is an example of an organization that really focuses on getting kids of color into colleges. And so there's that real push to not only get them there but to succeed. And I think employment, whether it's my school district or other companies, I think there're starting to look at diversity being an asset and bringing different minds to the table to create and that collaboration and that mode, which I think going back to my parents that that was another probably principle that they brought to us was that you don't do things alone, you do things in collaboration with people. And that the more people you bring to the table and that you can really talk about it the better your product or your activity is going to be. It wasn't, "Well, Don Emilio said we're going to do this so therefore let's do that." But it was more probing of, "What is it that we're trying to do?" and "how can we do it?" and "what strength do you have?" and "what strength do you have?" and "what weakness do you have and how do we work together?" And I think that's another strength.

LS: So if you were asked to identify what terms or labels would you possibly use to describe yourself?

ES: I would describe myself as Enedelia in the brown skin that I am with my unique strengths and my individual challenges. That's how I describe myself.

LS: Okay, rather than use labels that people would—

ES: Whether I am Latino or Mexican American or Texan.

LS: Exactly.

ES: Yeah, I would say in the brown skin that I am. And as I talk more, yes I'm from Texas. Yes, I speak Spanish and I always want to thank my mother

because my mother and I got into it. We got into it because I did not want to speak Spanish in high school and said, "Yeah right, who wants to speak Spanish?" And now every day I thank her and say, "Oh my gosh, I'm so glad that you forced us," because to her it was a skill that you learned and that you could use it for other places in the world. And so there are things that I look back and go, *Okay, I have a skill, it's a language.*

But my identity is, I have a mixture. I'm married to Michael Schofield who has taught me immense things about living in a white world that probably I didn't—it's funny to talk that way but it's because of my education that I've learned to use those words in a more accepting way. But at the end of the day both of us strive to be good people, to help people and to be successful. And that if we help somebody move forward then that's just making us a better person, which circles me back to my mother and father, that that's really what they wanted is be good people.

LS: How do you see the Spanish language, as your parents raised you with, in connection to your identity with yourself?

ES: Oh my gosh, it's like a name. It's you and there are things that you experience through the language that it's just unique. So, language is huge. I think language really creates another foundation as to who you are.

LS: Do you think there are some things that you can't translate exactly or a different feeling that you can only experience, and that's what you're speaking to?

ES: Absolutely. There are words that you can't translate. There are feelings and situations that you just can't translate yet think of how much more that I can bring to the table through those lenses. So yeah I think language is really rich. And going back to what my mother would say and I didn't understand until I was an adult was that language is a skill. It also comes from a background but if I speak Spanish and I come from Mexico and I speak Spanish and I come from Spain, it does bring a culture with it but it's also a skill that allows you to communicate with that many more people.

And you can use it also for your English in schools, I try to really emphasize what language do kids come in with and how can you bridge the language by saying, "Oh you know those are cognates. You know those are the same in Spanish and English. *Situación*—situation and how do you use it to move forward. And again it's a skill. You may not use it right now but what if you wanted to go to South America? What if you wanted to go to Europe and be in Spain? What if you wanted to go some place where you can use it?

LS: In terms of raising your own children, how important has that been for you to teach them the Spanish language, and have you instilled some of the cultural

values that your parents raised you with?

ES: I think it's very important and as much as I've tried to do it it's a challenge because they're surrounded with so much English that I now also understand the challenges that my parents went through. The positive is that my kids see more culture around them that I didn't get to so they walk into any store and as they're going through the aisle, they can go to the Mexican aisle, the Asian aisle and they can pick up different spices and see. They can get on the internet and listen to music and they can listen to different genres. We didn't have that and so my parents really had to work at getting that. And I think that that's why Centro Cultural was so important because it would be a place where you could come and share what music you wanted to hear, what food you wanted to eat and stories that you had in common about going back to Texas.

LS: And are you involved with Centro currently?

ES: I'm not involved with it currently in regards to like being on their board but definitely supporting as much as I can.

LS: Do you think that organization plays essentially the same role as it did when it was founded or do you think that's evolved over time?

ES: You know I don't know enough about the Centro right now. I believe that the mission is still to continue building that bridge and giving skills. I have loved that they focus on technology and language development and that has been really positive. So I don't think that they've lost the vision of the bridge of supporting people of color. I think they've gone also just or Mexican people or people who speak Spanish but really are there to help anybody that wants to come in.

LS: I think that takes care of my questions. Is there anything else you'd like to cover either about yourself or your parents?

ES: I just want to say thank you for this opportunity. I think so many times we don't really appreciate as much the things that maybe were there, like what my mother and father did. And yet at the same time there may be people that understand the great work that they did and I think this is a great way to just continue that history of Oregon and Washington County and that they're oral histories. And it's my perspective of my story and it's what impacted my heart. And I just want to say thank you.

LS: Thank you for your time and your participation.

Search Words:

Baseball
Children

Education
Families
History
Music
Oregon
Religion
Schools
Sports
Strawberries
Students
Teachers
Tortillas
Women

Birds Eye Cannery
Centro Cultural
Cornelius Elementary
DREAMers
Frijoles
Forest Grove
McAllen, Texas
Portland State University
Pacific University
Reynosa, Tamaulipas
St. Anthony's Catholic School
Virginia Garcia Clinic
VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America)
VIVA (Volunteers in Vanguard Action)