

T: Yea, original assembly. Smaller assemblies. The chacies are done overseas now, cause there's so many of them for Intel. It's just a part of our evolution.

M: One thing that I should ask you too, to what extent, during all of these years, even before you started your business, to what extent have you maintained a Latino identity here in Washington County? Have you been in touch with or participating in the greater Latino community?

T: All the above. I've always been very proud of my heritage. I've never denied what I am. I've always eaten my beans and tortillas, and tamales and whatnot. I remember that my daughter in fact is on the board, and we are a member of the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce downtown. We support all the Latino functions around here. I'm a member on the Latino Annual Gold Tournament. Where all the Latino's in the state get together for two days, and we all play golf together. And donate money for scholarships and that type of thing. We always go to high schools, talk to the Latino students. Cause we are a role model. And we want to show them that they can succeed. Most of the Latinos in school today are migrants. Which is almost a completely different culture then Latino's of an American birth.

M: Mhm.

T: So we do a lot with the community. Not only myself, but my daughter.

M: And are any of your employees from a Latino community as well?

T: Eighty percent of our employees are Latino.

M: Okay. Mhm.

T: Not because we seek them out. We're a business identity. We will take the best person we can to take the best job for us at a profit. It just so happens that most of the people applying for jobs are Latino, and they're good at it. And they're hard workers. And I don't respect any less. But we also have Koreans, we have African Americans, we have Vietnamese, and Anglo. It's a good mixture, and that's what we want. We don't want all Latino. We don't all Anglos.

Part two begins here

M: Hold on for a second, I'm going to put in another tape.... Okay. This is a continuation of the Oral History with Tino Ornelas. Okay, and I wonder if Tino, you yourself had felt there had been any barriers to you in, well first of all your settling here and working in Techtronics, and then later on founding your own business? Because of your Latino origin.

T: Never in Oregon. But let me give you something that happened to us in 1970, before I came to Oregon, I was up in Seattle. No I'm sorry, that's incorrect. We were here in Oregon already and I was already working at Tech. And in 1972, I think it was. I told my wife, ya know, "I'm getting very homesick, I need to go back to Colorado with my family, and all my family's there. And I'm the only one here in Oregon." And my wife says, "If that's what you want to do, let's do it." So I quit Techtronics, and I went back and lived in Boulder. And had a job in Denver. It was a small shop. Forty people maybe. And I'll never forget, the owner invited everybody out to lunch one day to go get pizza. Except me, he didn't want me to go. So I was sitting in there lunch room, all by myself, while everybody went out and had pizza. I was the only Latino in that shop by the way. And I'll never forget that. And I thought, why am I doing that? Why am I working here? And getting this kind of abuse? I mean, I'm a good worker. I know what I'm doing and all that kind of stuff. So just before Christmas, and we'd been there six months, just before Christmas my boss, my old boss from Techtronics called, and he said, and this guys and Anglo

okay, he said, "Tino, it's been six months since you've left." And I said, "Yea." And he said, "Have you had enough of Colorado yet?" "I said why?" He said, "I've been holding your job open for six months just in case you wanted to come back. So if you wanted to come back, I've got your job here." I was back.

(M Laughs.)

T: I mean, I didn't even hesitate. Techtronics had a moving van at my house in Boulder, Colorado the next day. And moved us back.

M: And what was your job at that time at Tech?

T: Back to the same job I had.

M: Oh, which was what?

T: Making circuit boards.

M: Okay.

T: I was still young, I was still only, I don't know twenty-three, twenty-four years old.

M: So the prototype boards you were...

T: But here in Oregon itself, I have never had any barriers thrown in my way. If I do, if I did, I would allow them. I don't even worry about them, I don't even think about them. Very few. Oregon is unique when it comes to people. Now I'm sure there's a lot of people out there that don't like you because of the color of your hair or your skin or whatever, it doesn't make any difference. It's just, there are people out there. I didn't deal with them. I don't care about them. I don't worry about them. I've got things I've got to do in my life, with my company and everything else. If they get in my way, I just go around them. It doesn't bother me at all. But I'll tell you one other thing, one other little secret that I tell all the Latino students. Here in Oregon, yea you may see a little bit of discrimination. But I'm gonna tell you one thing, there is probably more discrimination from within, then there is from without. And by that I mean, within your own Latino community there's a lot of discrimination from one to the other. I can remember, my mother's a good example. I can remember when I was little, maybe I'd get into a little bit of trouble, and she would try to admonish me about whatever I did. But she would say, "Ya know, you're acting just like a Puerto Rican would act. Ya know, you're acting just like a Cuban would act." Signifying that Puerto Ricans and Cubans were the neat Mexican American, ya know. And it still goes on, within the Latino community. Within what you call the Hispanic community. There's a lot of that going on.

M: And maybe apart from that, what other problems do you see the Latino community out here having to deal with?

T: Oh, education.

M: Mhm.

T: Number one. Really, we got to educate more. Right now I'm at a point where I'm saying, we need to get a way from these ESL classes, we need to throw those out, and start forcing the

migrant kids to start learning in English, and speaking English. If they're going to be a success and I'm probably one of the best examples you can look at. If they're going to be a success, that have to speak English. They have to read. They have to. And I tell them that. If you don't speak English today, you're going to fail. Now what the hell's wrong with you? You have to speak. I mean, and still some of them say, "No, I'm going to speak Spanish. And I'll just talk to my own people." Alright. You'll fail.

M: Uhuh.

T: So, I'm really involved with my own contemporaries out there in the Latino community, cause the leaders, and we're all, most of them are for ESL, I'm against it. However, there are some ESL's... what I'm against is that these schools get so much money for an ESL class. They get total funds for a student at, say five hundred dollars a year. Well if they put some in an ESL class they get 1.5 times that amount from the federal government. So they'll get seven hundred and fifty dollars. So what they schools are doing, is that anybody with a Spanish sur name, will automatically go into the ESL class, even if they're fluent in English already.

M: Uhuh.

T: So it's a business decision.

M: Not an education decision.

T: Not an education decision. And I'm against that. That's what I'm against. There are a lot of migrants that don't speak English and need to get in there. And I guess down in Woodburn, I was talking to one of the guys down there, and the way there doing it seems to be right. In the first grade it's eighty percent Spanish, twenty percent English. Second grade fifty/ fifty, third grade twenty percent Spanish, eighty percent English. And by the fourth grade they're fluent in Everything. I can understand that and I think I would agree with that. But eventually, between the first and the fourth grade they must speak English. They must read English. Fluently.

M: Mhm. Well any final thoughts, or things you'd like to say before we bring in Joy and Nita.

T: No. people tell me that I'm a success, that I'm a role model. Ya know, I don't think that way. I just think as a business man and that I'm moving forward. And that if I can help others, show em' the way that I've done it, be a role model, be honest, be ethical, and help the community as much as possible, I would always do that. I firmly believe that a healthy community breathes a healthy company. So that's what we're doing. And that's what we intend to do for as long as we own this company.

M: Okay, well thank you very much for the interview.

T: You're very much welcome. There's one thing that I do need to tell you about my family and the big problems we had in our childhood. There was my older sister, my older brother, and my younger sister. I am very successful in my business. My younger sister is the first female Warden of the state prison in Colorado. My older brother has a Masters degree, he is a professor of English. Also in the state prison system. My older sister decided she just wanted to be a housewife, and so she's a homemaker. Which is very successful also. So even though the four of us children had such a traumatic childhood, we're all successful.

M: Mhm.

T: We can only attribute that to our grandparents. Our loving, the nurturing there. Our Aunts and Uncles that took care of us. Not to our parents. And that's all I want to say.

M: Okay, thank you.

....

M: Okay, it's still November 1st, 2000 and we're doing an interview now with Nida..

N: Nida Warner.

M: Nida Warner?

N: Mhm.

M: And you're the daughter of Tino Ornelas?

N: Mhm. Correct.

M: Let me ask you first of all just when and where you were born?

N: I was born March 20th, 1969 in Seattle, Washington.

M: Okay. And how long did you spend in Seattle then?

N: We moved to Oregon probably when I was about six months old. So I never lived there.

M: Never really lived there...

N: Never really lived there no....

M: And so you grew up in Washington County then?

N: Correct?

M: And Beaverton was it?

N: Beaverton.

M: Except I guess, your visit Colorado, also when you were quite young?

N: When I was very young. Yes.

M: Well first of all, well yea do you remember anything from that visit?

N: the only thing I remember is the snow drifts. There were lots of Mountains with snow and that's the only thing I remember.

M: uhuh. And what do you remember about growing up in Beaverton?

N: Ooh. Let's see, in Beaverton. I could even give you my address. No, I'm just kidding. I grew up in Beaverton. I attended Sunset Valley Elementary School. Which is no longer there. It

actually was on Murray Boulevard. And currently there is a Home Depot there, it's the corner of Murray and Sunset highway. And I went there from first to fifth grade and then they actually closed it down, or actually the school district shut it down. They sold the property to ESI who was a high-tech company. And they actually moved into the Sunset Valley elementary building. And just left it the way it was, with the classrooms and everything. It was hilarious. But it was very sad because I was in fifth grade, and they shut it down, so for my last year of elementary school I had to transfer to Barnes elementary school. Um, that was very difficult for all involved. Because you had one year left, the people of Sunset Valley Elementary were basically split up. Some of them went to Terra Linda Elementary, some of them went to Barnes Elementary, some of them went to Cedar Hills Elementary. So they were basically split up all over. Then after that I went to Meadow Park Junior High. All three years, back then it was seventh, eighth, and ninth grade was the middle school. Or Junior High. And then I went to Sunset High school for all three years. For my sophomore, junior, senior year. I graduated in 1987 with a 3.4 average. I started working when I was 15 years old. In high school, after school, three days a week at a medical clinic right across from Sunset high school. I have a very strong work ethic. So I always worked. (laughs). I never took the time to enjoy high school. Which is my one big regret but I got really good experience there. And I was able to maintain my GPA of 3.4 and I went to, went onto Portland State University, full time. I was the very first, one of the first students to receive the UMass scholarship. Which was the underrepresented and minority scholarships that the State of Oregon started in 1987. Trying to increase the minorities that were going into education. And it was tuition only scholarship, and it was good for any school in the State of Oregon. It was a state college, so it was Portland State University, Oregon State University, Western Oregon University, or I believe Southern Oregon University. And you could go to any of those schools, but I had no choice because Portland state was a commuter school, and I was still working at the time and the scholarship did not cover anything else other than tuition. So I chose to go to Portland State. I graduated in 1992 with a degree in Accounting. During the entire college years I was continuing to work (laughs). I have always worked (proudly) never took anytime off. I was at the medical clinic for until I was nineteen.

M: And what did you do there?

N: I started out as a file clerk. And then I moved up and became a medical receptionist and the insurance billing clerk.

M: Mhm.

N: It was a small clinic. But I left there and I went to Lanther Enterprises. It was Beaverton Honda at the time, but it's no longer there. Gosh everything I've touched is gone. I was a receptionist there, nights and weekends. Switchboard operator. I never sold a car. Would never date a salesman. (laughs) And I stayed with Lanther Enterprises until 1994. Actually, it was not quite until 1995 because 94' was when I got married. But I stayed with Lanther Enterprises all through college and after college, and when I left there I had done pretty much done everything there was to do, except sell cars. I had worked in their corporate offices, I learned day to day accounting, accounts payables, accounts receivables, payroll, journal leger. Pretty much everything there was to know about business. During also during that time, between college and working at Beaverton Honda, I was also working here at Ornelas Enterprises on the weekends doing the books. We opened in 1991. So between 1991 and 1995 I was working two jobs and going to school pretty much. It was very interesting. 1995 I left Beaverton Honda, and I came and started working here full time. It just got to be too much work. They were both, I originally started working the books at Ornelas Enterprises were very small, very easy to do. But it got to

the point where I was juggling two full-time jobs. I just couldn't do it anymore. So I left. And I here I stay.

M: Well you mentioned that you went to Portland State as apart of minority, I forget what you said exactly....

N: It was the Underrepresented Minority Scholarship. They called it the UMASS. They no longer have it. But they started in 1987, and it was a scholarship for tuition only, good for four years in college. Or five years I believe. And at the time, the State of Oregon created it so that they were trying to increase the enrollment of minorities in upper education. And I applied for it and received it. I was very very lucky to get that.

M: To what extent when you were growing up, and well men of course, well obviously you identified yourself as yourself a minority because you qualified for the scholarship...

N: Right.

M: But to what extent did you feel your cultural identity?

N: Growing up here in Washington County, when I was growing up, there were hardly any minorities. Quite frankly, when I graduated from Sunset High School, I think I graduated with maybe four other Hispanics and maybe one person who was African American. I mean it was, there was none. The language was not an issue when I was growing up. I knew I was Hispanic. My parents cooked Hispanic foods, my relatives, they visited us off and on. I was proud of my heritage but I didn't speak the language. And it wasn't something, they didn't have Cinco de Mayo festivals back then on the Waterfront. That's something pretty new. I was aware of it, but I was not engrained in it.

M: Mhm. And so you didn't participate very much in cultural activities in the Latino Community?

N: There wasn't one. There wasn't any. There wasn't any! (laughs). Ya know, one thing that my father and mother always talk about is that when we first moved here in 1970, they had talked about opening a Mexican restaurant. A Mexican food restaurant, cause there was none. There were none in Washington County. There were none. And they decided they just didn't have expertise to run a business, run a restaurant business. And now they kick themselves because they're everywhere. They could've have been the first, could've have been Taco Bell. I don't even think Taco Bell was around back then. But they could've been the first but they didn't have the guts.

M: Perhaps the guts got into a better business anyway.

N: Yea. So..

M: and did you feel any sort, were there any sort of barriers for you, or later on in life, as a result of your Latino heritage?

N: No. No, there was only one time. Ive never felt any racism or discrimination ever. There was one time I actually had a kid call me a "spick" in ninth grade. I mean, it was a little racist. But I've never had any barriers put up, I've never had anyone do anything derogatory to me, or say anything bad to me. The only thing is they think I speak Spanish sometimes, which is interesting. I've had people ask me to translate letters, and I don't speak or read a word of

Spanish. So it goes in reverse. They think I'm Hispanic, I should know the language, and I don't. so there's a little bit of ignorance there.

M: Mhm. And what would you say about your parents? How would you describe your father? As a person.

N: As a person? Oh he's honest. Driven. Very very down, down to earth. But he's also the dreamer. He's the dreamer out of all of us. The three of us own this company. And he's the one who dreams and does the sales, and is very people oriented. Myself and Joy are a little more down to Earth. I am an accountant. I deal with rock-solid issues. No gray areas. It's a little bit different.

M: And how about your Mom? How would you describe her?

N: She's very down to Earth. I'm like, if you want to look on a scale, Tino's the dreamer, the sale's person. And then I'm right in the middle. I can kind of see both sides. Joy is the one, she is black and white. There are no gray areas for Joy at all. There is none. So, you can kind of see it on a continuum.

M: Well Tino told me earlier about setting up Ornelas Enterprises, and about how he left his job at Techtronics and had to borrow the money to get this started. And about how he consulted with Joy. How did you feel about it at the time? As apart of the family?

N: I had no problem with it. We actually all sat down as a family and talked about it. and I had no problem with it. The only problem I had was when the bank actually wanted my car title. (laughs) and I had a problem with that. They didn't get it. Cause yea, obviously when you take out a loan they wanted collateral. So they took Joy's car title, and they took all this lean against the house, and all this other stuff. And they wanted my car title and uhhhuh, I don't think so! So that was the only problem I had back then. Other wise I was for it. It was pretty scary. But at the time I was pretty much self-sufficient. I had a job, I was living at home, but I had a full time job. I was going to school full time. So I didn't see, I wasn't freaked out over any type of financial needs or anything. On the contrary I was expecting if something happened, I'd have to start paying rent. (laughs).

M: Yea. And what did you see in the early days of the business? I understand there wasn't too much business in the first year or so..

N: No, that's why it was really easy juggling working the books here and working the books at Beaverton Honda, and going to school full time cause it really wasn't that much to do. In a way the books were minimal, the sales were minimal. But then again, there were no headaches. We had no employees, ya know we weren't juggling hundreds of customers. We weren't juggling hundreds of orders. So it was a little bit easier, cash flow wasn't there, but it was a little bit easier.

M: And tell me a little bit about the job you had just before you quit and came and worked here full time...

N: I worked for Beaverton Honda.

M: Right.

N: ...In their corporate office. And right before, the last position I held there, I was their payroll clerk for their entire company. So for over three hundred employees I processed their payroll and did all their stuff like that. The one about Beaverton Honda, they were a great company to work for, they were really really good to me during college. Like they switched my schedule when I needed to, and my classes appeared. And all that. But there was no where to go, unless on eof the managers died because it was lifetime employment. So the managers were going to be there till they died. So once you moved laterally through the company and learned everything there was no way you could move up. And I understood. And they understood that too. In fact, my manager's still there. She's been there for fifteen years. I check in every now and then to see how things are going; she's still there in the same position.

M: Uhuh.

N: Very scary. Very scary.

(M Laughs)

M: Has, you're the chief financial officer of.....

N: Mhm. Correct.

M: And well I imagine that you're seeing, well it kind of sounds like that was your career before, mostly in finance as well...

N: It was mostly in accounting. Yea.

M: Okay. Well actually we should talk about that for a minute. So being a chief financial officer is a little bit more than being the accountant, I guess (chuckle).

N: It's a little bit. Tino and Joy and I, all major decisions of this company are joint. So I do all the books, and profit and loss, and payroll. And when we look at equipment, we look and see how effective our cash pull numbers are. But all our decisions are joint. I can make recommendations but that's about it. Tino has the ability to override us though. Just so you know. (both laugh)

M: And are you looking at the broader picture here then? Also just the financial area here then at yourself personally?

N: Yes, yes. All of us look at everything in a broader picture. I'm a little more cautious than Tino. Tino is, "We wanna hire all these staff members, we want to buy all this equipment." And I'm a little bit more: I know we need it, but I like to do things in steps. So it's implement it. So there's the difference in Tino. And we talk to each other so we don't rush headlong into things. But then again we don't not do things. Does that make sense?

M: Mhm. Can you talk a little bit about how the business has changed? I understand that in the beginning there were all sorts of little products that only I would manufacture. Including little boxes for golf balls....

N: Our first order was little wood boxes for golf balls. We've done all sorts of products. I mean, we're still really diversified. We built little things, little cable assemblies that go into drink machines. Ya know, when you go to McDonalds and they give you a drink. Inside there, we

make the cable harnesses that go inside there. Actually what the stuff comes out of it. we make circuit boards that go into fruit processing machines. So that when fruit is put on a conveyer system, and it can read and find out if it's bad or not, and shoo it off. And so we make the boards for that. We've made the little cork feet that go on the bottom of Hewlett Packard printers (laughs) It's just multiple, hundreds of thousands of different assemblies.

M: Mhm. Where do you see the future for this company?

N: Future? Unfortunately, the company is pretty much driven by its customers. We've grown 86% over last year already in sales. Our profits are really good; we are getting new orders and customers daily. I foresee we're going to continue to grow.

M: Mhm. And you expect to continue your involvement with the company for the foreseeable future?

N: Yes. Correct. Tino, Joy, and myself. Tino actually keeps talking about stepping away a little bit. Joy says there's no way she's ever gonna leave. I don't think they're... they were so ingrained in this company... I don't think they're ever gonna leave.

M: Mhm.

N: And I wouldn't want them to leave because it's too much. With the three of us, we can handle it. But when, for example, Tino and Joy go on vacation, it's a lot of pressure. Cause I'm the only one here (both laugh) Got dirty people looking for answers from me, and it's very difficult so...

M: So you needed to get more into areas of personnel management and all...

N; Well not so much that, I have no problem with personnel management. It's just a matter of having someone to back me up. To do the overflow.

M: What about, to what extent are you personally involved with the greater Latino community these days?

N: These days. I am on the, I am the treasurer for the Hispanic Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce. I am also the chair of their scholarship committee. Which is the real reason I am their treasurer, because they won't let me do one or the other. And I really like doing the scholarships (laughs). And as the chair of scholarships, I run and we actually do the leap, last year we gave about 36,000 dollars in Latino scholarship to area.... To actually students in Oregon and southwest Washington. Not just high school seniors but also people continuing their education. We send out the flyers, we send out the applications. We go through them, I collate them, I make sure they're correct. And I'm on the committee that actually picks the winners every year. And I've done it the last four years. I was just named the Commission on Hispanic Affairs for the State of Oregon. I have not had a chance to go to a meeting yet because I was just named to it. So I'm not quite sure how it happens. That's about it though for the Hispanic community.

M: And how did you come to be appointed to the Hispanic Affairs...

N:.... The Commission on Hispanic Affairs. Actually, I was named to the Oregon State Board of Professional Counselors as the public member. I'm not a counselor but most boards in Oregon have at least one public member, a public applicant. And it's a licensing board and we do

discipline and all of that. Well I had talked to our administrator and said, "Ya know, this is a pretty easy door. I wouldn't mind having one, being on another one when I get out of school. I'm currently pursuing my masters. And all the sudden one day, I get a letter in the mail. Congratulations, you've been appointed to the Commission on Hispanic Affairs (Laughs). Oh my word, what is this? I got a call, and well okay, well someone from the board counselors said you had time for another board. And so there ya go.

(both laugh)

N: It was kind of by default.

M: Okay. What do you see as problems that the greater Latino community out here in Washington County face? Or what do you think are...

N: The, I've seen the evolution. Cause like I said, when I was going to high school and elementary, and junior high there was not a language barrier. We didn't have a whole lot of influx of immigrants. We did have, at the time, there was a lot of Asian immigrants. They were coming over during the Cambodian crisis. But there was really no Latino, there was really no Latino, there wasn't a large population. The biggest problem right now is the influx of immigrants who don't speak English. There's a very wide rift in social services. I'm also on the board for the Washington County Commission on Childrens and Families. And there is, even in Washington County, there is very wealthy, if you look at the per capita income because all the engineers from Intel drive it up. Well, So then there are more in county with a rising poverty rate. And that is the big problem you have influx in..... (tape ends)

30 second gap while Tap changes over

M: So how'd you meet your husband?

N: I met my husband, let's see, in high school. He went to Tigard High school; I went to Sunset high school. My friend was dating his friend. And we all met at the laser light show at OMSI. Which no one who's older than me remembers. But there's laser light shows, where you go there and watch lasers. And we just looked at each other and thought each other was cute. And that's how we met. And we've been together ever since. We've been together for fifteen years, that long... fourteen years excuse me. We've been married for six. He's a real estate appraiser. Actually a farm appraiser with Washington County Taxation. He's the kind of guy everybody hates cause he raises your property taxes. But he's a residential real estate appraiser.

M: And do you have a family?

N: No, I have a dog. I always tell everybody, I don't have any children. I have a dog, named Lacey and a cat named Murphy. Those are my family members.

M: Okay, well good. Thank you for the footnote.

N: That's okay.

M: Okay we're back on tape here. I was about to say, anything else you'd like to say here? About your own life, or the company, or the situation with the Hispanic community today?

N: Gosh, ya know. Off the top of my head, I really don't know. I don't know.

M: Okay.

N: One thing I wanted to say about the company, that we are a minority certified company. However, we are very prideful of the fact that we have never run a contract based on that. We do not want contract based because we are a minority company. We want contracts and customers who come to us for our quality, our reputation, and our ethics. We would turn down, I believe, if someone came to us, only because we are a minority company. We, and I know Tino agrees with me. There was a time when Affirmative Action was necessary but we minorities have the power and ability to make it on our own. On our own hard work and their own worth. We shouldn't have to rely on government assistance. This is from someone who actually got a scholarship from the government. What can I say? (Laughs). I'm not frugal, I won't turn down free money. I think minorities are just as good as anybody else. And through hard work and perseverance you can do anything anybody else can, and you shouldn't need a hand up to do it. Absolutely.

M: Okay, well thank you very much.

N: Thank you.

M: Okay, this is Michael O' Rourke for the Washington County Historical Society, and I'm talking now with Joy Ornelas...

J: Ornelas.

M: Haha, okay. I keep saying Ornelas. Joy I wonder if you can tell me first of all, when and where you were born?

J: I was born August 25, 1947 in Monterey Park, California.

M: And what were your parents studying in Monterey Park, California?

J: My father drove a truck, transporting gravel. And my mother was a waitress.

M: And how long did you live there?

J: Till I was fifteen.

M: And what do you remember about growing up there? What sorts of things did you do as a kid?

J: Oh, we just went to the beach a lot. And went to Puddings Dome Dam. We used to swim there a lot. We went camping, quite a bit. Almost every weekend. Our favorite was having the holidays over at my Aunts house. She had the holidays there all the time. A big dinner. I had an Uncle that was blind at birth. And he played the slow guitar. So we used to sit around the living room and we'd sing all these country western songs while he played his slow guitar.

M: (laughing) Well that sounds like fun.

J: So that was great. We used to roller-skate quite a bit. On the sidewalks. We used to play roller derby. My brother and sister and I. we had quite a bit of fun.

M: And how was school for you?

J: It was fine. My parents liked to move. So about every three or six months, we would move. So it was really hard on all four of us kids for school.

M: Just moving to different places in the same town?

J: Well they, in different states. They liked Reno, and then we'd go to California. Then in Reno, and California. And it just kept going back and forth. In fact, those are the two: Reno, Nevada and California.

M: Haha, okay.

J: So yea, it was difficult.

M: Yea, I'll bet it was difficult move all that. And what was your maiden name by the way?

J: My maiden name was Brooster.

M: Okay. And after your first fifteen years, I guess living in the combination of Reno and California, where did you find yourself next?

J: My stepfather at the time was transferred to Seattle, Washington in his job. So we lived there.

M: Uhuh. Okay, so you started, when did your stepfather come into your life?

J: When I was probably twelve.

M: Mhm. So your parents split up at around that time?

J: Right, after about seventeen- eighteen years of marriage.

M: How was that? For you?

J: It was a little devastating.

M: Yea, I'll bet.

J: Yea, the mother like always ya know, wills your ear to bad things about your father. Ya know, but then you mature and become an adult. You start calling them and talking to them and you find out, ya know, it was through a divorce, ya know. The mother said this and said that, but it wasn't true type of thing. You kind of get distant from your one parent. Over the years of growing up and maturing, you get that closeness back.

M: Mhm.

J: Sometimes (chuckles).

M: And that's what happened to you?

J: And that happened yea.

M: And so you moved to Seattle. And were there for awhile before you met Tino, is that right?

J: Yea, let's see. Probably three or four years before I met Tin.

M: And you were going to school and working, is that right?

J: Uhuh. Going to school and working.

M: And how did you meet Tino?

J: I had a stepsister that came up to stay with us. And she met these couple girls that she went to school with. And they met these Navy gentlemen. And there were four of them. And Tino was the only one that wasn't paired up yet. And they introduced me to him. And that's how I met him through my stepsister. Through her group.

M: And then the two of you had a courtship for how long there in Seattle?

J: Eight months.

M: Eight months. Uhuh. And then you got married in Seattle?

J: Uhuh. Right.

M: And I guess, started to raise a family there?

J: Yea, mhm.

M: And were you still working during that time?

J: No, I was and then, I stayed home with the children.

M: And what were you doing before you stayed home?

J: I was waitressing.

M: Okay. And Tino was working at Boeing, I understand.

J: Boeing. Right.

M: But he, I guess, got a call from a buddy down here, working for Techtronics....

J: Yes. Uhuh.

M: And how did you feel about moving that year to Washington County at that time?

J: I didn't think about it. It just, it was just whatever. He wants to move down there, lets move down there. I just didn't have any thoughts against it. Kind of a little excited to do it. Cause a little new adventure, ya know.

M: To what extent were you aware of the cross-cultural aspect of your relationship with Tino? Both positive and negative.

J: What do you mean cross-cultural?

M: Well I mean, you come from Hispanic background, and it sounds like you were raised differently in California....

J: We do live around Hispanic.

M: Well yea yea, I guessed.

J: When I was growing up in California. We lived next door to a Hispanic family. And their children were the same age as we were. So everything with them was gay old times.

M: Uhuh. And did you have, at what point did you meet other members of Tino's family? Would you say?

J: Probably seven months in our relationship. We took a flight to his home in Colorado, and I met his whole family.

M: And how was that? What was that like?

J: It was great. They just expected in family. Like it's naturally. They were all really friendly. I felt real relaxed. Didn't feel like a bump on the log or anything, I felt very much included.

M: Mhm. And then, I guess, shortly after Tino, well not shortly after but a couple years after, he started work for Techtronics, he decided he wanted to try life in Colorado with ya?

J: Yes, we'd never actually lived around the family. Or were close to family, when we lived here in Oregon. My family, part of it was Seattle, part of it was Southern California, and his family was Colorado. We wanted to try it basically for our children, because they weren't around cousins, and grandfathers, and grandmothers, and aunts and uncles. And we went there for six months. And it was a bad choice.

(both laugh)

M: Didn't work out?

J: NO. (laughs)

M: Why didn't it work out?

J: The family problems, issues, finance.

M: Oh yea.

J: Oh, just the basic family things. We've used that all because we're basically loners. And we saw how it was affecting our kids. But the kids loved it there. In fact, they were devastated when we came back. Because they had the taste of cousins and aunts and uncles and all the attention and stuff like that, which they hadn't had before. And so they really didn't want to come back. But we did.

M: And you say you thought it was a problem, from your own point of view for the kids?

J: Yes, uhuh. Because with our son, I noticed, he was in second grade and he wouldn't go to school. And it just kind of seemed strange that a little second grader would go and cut school. Ya know, something's wrong there. He liked being there because of the family, but for some reason he wouldn't go to school. And it could've been the school, it could've been the teachers, environment, anything. But he basically wanted to be there for relative, but didn't want to be there for anything else. It wasn't good for him. It didn't seem like it was good for him.

M: And at that point, you had two kids, is that right?

J: Mhm.

M: And is that how many kids you have now?

J: That's it. Just two.

M: And what does your son do?

J: He does a website at home. And takes care of his own son who has brain damage, from a babysitter.

M: Uhuh. Oh dear.

J: And so he has to have one hundred percent care all the time. He'll just be three this month, November, 29th.

M: And the website is for?

J: Just for all different types and kinds of people. He just has all this list of customers and stuff that he sells to, or something like that. Kind of like contract...

M: Okay. I see. I thought there was a website for OEI or something...

J: Oh no no no. No, he did work for us about a year to help us get started. And it just wasn't his cup of tea. He wanted to venture out, but he did help us for the first year or so.

M: Uhuh. What did you think when your husband told you he wanted to go into business on his own, here?

J: Well, before his service ended at Tech, we had kept talking about maybe opening a Mexican restaurant. Ya know, doing a little business. And at that time, there were very few Mexican restaurants around. And we just kept talking about it and talking about it but nothing really serious about checking into how you invest it, and get the money and all this. And then when he was caught up in one of the labs at Tech. and it took him quite a long time to get over the

devastation. I mean it really really crushed him. Big time. And it must've been eight months, maybe close to a year, and we were sitting around at the table, and we started talking about all the people that retire and after awhile they retire, they get kind of bored. Why don't we open some kind of a business, and hire retired people. And they can have part time jobs or something. And we started talking about that he had the experience in the procreant side of it, I had the experience with all the electronic assembly, our daughter had the bookkeeping, accounting, and our son had the assembling of electronics. And why don't we go for it. And I think it really hit, that it was really true when we were sitting at the bank. And I thought, what are we doing?

M: Uhuh. And yet, you didn't actually start in electronic assembly, is that right? I understand the first few contracts were for other kinds of assemblies.

J: Yea, our first jobs were making cardboard boxes that you put three golf balls in. It was for like little advertisement specialties for a business. Someone has a little model plane, and all we did was put a label on it. Ya know, just lots of little things like that. We just took anything we could get.

M: And I forgot to ask you actually about your job, for what was it... I forgot the name of the company?

J: Instrumentics.

M: Instrumentics. That's right. How many years did you work there?

J: I worked there going on sixteen years.

M: Wow. So you'd been working there for a long time. So was that more or less ever since you moved down from Seattle.

J: Yes. I didn't know electronics. And Instrumentics took me as a housewife and mother, and taught me all of it, and I was with them ever since.

M: And you were a supervisor, towards the end of your career there?

J: Yea, uhuh.

M: Or when did you become a supervisor.

J: Probably the last two or three years before I left.

M: And that was what, that was managing an electronic assembly group?

J: Yea, I had about thirty-two employees.

M: Okay. And what was the product exactly?

J: They did medical products. They were heart-monitoring items. They would, there like the EKG/ ECG machines that run the heart rate strip, paper strip out of it. Or there was Meetsa, that you could wear over the belt, a little monitor like that. Or you could wear little fingertip

electrodes. And after you record, you could put the photo receiver on it, and it could transmit back to the hospital or doctor's office. And make another strip, and see what's going on.

M: And prior to becoming supervisor, you were doing assembly on these machines, huh?

J: Mhm. Right.

M: And so then when you started the business, I guess you continued to work, for how long?

J: Yes, oh. Well let's see we opened OEI in 91'. I think I a hundred percent came over in 92' or 93'....

M: Okay, so for a year or two then.

J: Yea. Yea.

M: Okay. And then when you came over here, what were you doing for the company?

J: basically, about the same thing I was. I was being the HR, human resource. The supervisor, for the assembly of the work. Making sure the orders had gone out. Just about everything. Whatever needed to be done. Anything that wasn't in the office. I was basically mostly out with all the employees. Yea.

M: Mhm. And what would you say were turning points for the company? In terms of its success?

J: Probably listening to one another. And being open to suggestions. Being honest to our customers. Just many many things.

M: And I understand I guess there was a big contract with Intel, that I sort of stuck themselves a bid here. Reworking circuit boards for Intel, is that right?

J: We were, are you talking about the chacies?

M: Chacies. Yea.

J: Ohh. Yea, the chacies were probably our biggest freelance project to where we just didn't have the small building we were working in. We had to lease another building across the parking lot. And just to work on them over there. We had them stocked over there, working on them there. We had them stocked in our other building, working on them there. We had so many trucks, that were just picking up and delivering, daily. It was just.... Looking back, I don't know how we did it.

M: Uhuh. Was that a point where the company really stuck up in its business then?

J: Yea, Intel got the slot. In that area. And yea, that was our biggest. The beginning of all it. In fact, Intel is the first company that awarded us our plaque of being so flexible. Never saying no, being flexible, and taking a challenge on no matter what.

M: Is Intel still a client?

J: Yes, yes they are. They're not quite as big as they were. But they're definitely still here with us.

M: And you mentioned that you take care of human resources for the company...

J: Mhm.

M: And I understand that about eighty percent of your work force is from the Latino community is that right?

J: Yes, uhuh.

M: How do you recruit employees?

J: I used to advertise in the Oregonian. Or advertise at the employment office. And then word of mouth. Or just people that want to walk in and fill an application out. We've grown so much, that anymore that, and financially were able to do it now which we weren't before, I am able to use a temporary services. We didn't have that luxury before, because they're quite expensive. I have about ten temporary services that I call regularly. If one or two don't have people that I need, because the way the work flow is, I need the person to start that day, or the next day. There's no way I can wait. So if some services don't have people, I just keep calling. And I would really really like to have one temporary service only. And they would love to have me just as their own client, so I don't go anywhere else. But they don't always have the people available. That's why I have to go to so many at one time to try and get employees. But that's how I hire people.

M: And are these then just temporary employees?

J: They are for the first three months, but if I have an opening, they are given first choice, if they worked out in quality, attendance, team player, attitude, all of the above. And then I always go, I've had them for three months and why not invest in them, cause I already know how they work and they'd be a good candidate. They'd be an asset to the company.

M: Do you recruit at all employees directly from the Hispanic community here? Or is it mostly through temporary services then?

J: If I get calls from anybody, in any organization at all. And they have some applicants, I always make appointments. I don't necessarily take just the temporary services. And so I am always open for calls and when they do I make appointment. We chit chat, we give them a little slaughter test, see what they can do, and if I can bring people on that way, I do it.

M: I think I read somewhere, that Central Cultural in Cornelius, I guess that's where their located. That they had some sort of electronic assembly business, not that they directly ran, but that they were affiliated with the company, but apparently not OEI. But you haven't heard any word from them directly then?

J: I haven't heard from then. Uhhuh.

M: Okay. And I've heard that Anita, or Nita...

J: Nita yea.

M: Is a member of the Hispanic Cultural Affairs Commission of Oregon now. Very very recent apparently.

J: Mhm.

M: But do what extent do you, or does your family interact with the greater community of Latino or Hispanic's out here?

J: Well ya know, Nita and Tino do all of it. And there always out there. There always involved with something. With me, I'm always internal inside. I don't ever leave. It's not that I don't want to go out. It's that if all three of us are gone, as often as the two of them are, all our employees wouldn't have anyone here to go to, or to make them feel like they're still noticed type of thing. So I've always chose to stay here. But Nita and Tino yes. Very very much, very much involved with the community. And many many Latino organizations.

M: Had you sensed that there'd been any, not just in the recent years with OEI, but over the entire period of Tino's employment here and even earlier. I mean here in Oregon, and even earlier in other places. Have you ever felt that your family, that there were ever any barriers because of the Latino roots, or discrimination of any kind?

J: Ya know, I've never seen that. I hear a lot about it elsewhere and stuff. But I've never witnessed it. I mean of all the years, Tino, we've been married thirty-three, thirty-four years, and I've never heard, never run into it.

M: So it just hasn't been part of your experience at all?

J: Never. Were just taken like anybody else. I mean, there's never been anything against him or the company which is really good.

M: Yea. What do you see is the future for OEI.

J: Oh, growth. Getting more busy. We're so busy now and it's good because I look at to where we're able to keep all these jobs. All the employees we have right now, jobs for them. And that feels good. It's scary each night you go to bed and wake up in the mornind and think, oh no I have all these responsibilities. I don't have a boss anymore to depend on. You work it out, I don't want to.

(M Laughs)

J: But I see that we're just going to keep going up. I mean, it's just, we had up and down slopes. And for some reason, two just kept going up and up and up. And it's amazing. It just keeps coming in.

M: Well that's great. Looks like I'm almost out of tape. But any final thoughts, or things you'd like to say as part of this interview?

J: Just one, that for anyone, don't be afraid to start a company. And many people say, there is no way I could work with my husband, there's no way I could work with my wife, ya know. Well, you really really can. Because if you treat it like a job, you just go in everyday, it's a job. You have to get it done. You have people depending on you. You don't think about it's your spouse. You can get along perfect. we have never had anything, no fights or eithers or nothing.

M: Well that's great. I want to thank you very much Joy. For taking the time to do this. And we'll take care of the business here now.

J: Okay, thanks.

Search Terms:

- Agriculture
- Agriculture History (Florence, Colorado)
- Armed Forces
- Architecture, Domestic-Mission style
- Automobiles
- Biology
- Brothers and Sisters
- Businessmen
- Catholic Church Buildings
- Cities and Towns
- Civic Improvement
- Communities
- Computers
- Couples
- Daughters
- Education
- Families
- Families- History
- Farmers
- Farms
- Households
- Houses
- Marriage
- Migrant Labor
- Minority Students
- Offices
- Parade
- Religion
- Rural Families
- Rural Schools
- Schools
- Science- Study and Teaching
- Social groups
- Student Activities
- Students- Social Life and Customs
- United States. Navy
- Universities and Colleges
- Women
- Work

Local Terms:

- Barnes Elementary

- Beaverton, Oregon
- Beaverton Honda, Lanther Enterprises
- Boeing Company
- Cedar Hills Elementary
- Commission on Hispanic Affairs
- ESL classes
- Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
- Hispanic Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce
- Hong Kong
- Instrumentics
- Long Beach, California
- Meadow Park Junior High
- Portland State University
- Seattle Sea Fare
- Seattle, Washington
- Software Engineers
- Sunset High School
- Sunset Valley Elementary
- Techtronics
- Terra Linda Elementary
- Tigard High School
- Underrepresented Minority Scholarship
- UMASS
- Vietnam War
- Washington County Commission on Childrens and Families
- Washington County Taxation