

Oral History Interview with Margaret Garza
Washing County Museum
At Public Service Building, Hillsboro
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G= Margaret Garza
O= Michael O'Rourke

O: This is Michael O'Rourke for the Washington County Historical Society beginning an interview today with Margaret Garza at the Public Services Building in Hillsboro where she works and today's date is March 15 if I didn't say that already of 2001. Margaret, I am very happy we got together here today finally.

O: I'd like to start off with the very beginning of your story. Can you tell me when and where you were born.

G: I was born in a little town called Genado, Texas, back in 1959 and I'm the youngest of seven children.

O: And you spent did you spend any time in Genado?

G: Not really, I just happened to be born there and it seemed like we moved to Port LaVaca which is like 18, 20 miles from there and then my father worked in Houston on the pipeline and so the Port Lavaca location was where my aunt lived so that was central to everybody and a good location. From there we seemed to learn about the Great Northwest and we ventured off on this excursion to the northwest and later became came to realize that that was what was referred to as the Migrant Story.

O: How many years were you in Texas then?

G: I was in Texas up until about the age of four, four and a half.

O: Have any memories from that time?

G: Memories of my aunts and things that we did together and the kids were all young at the time and were all living together in one household and we kind of seemed to be in the way I think because it was a second family that was living with my aunt and so and she only had two children so and we were seven plus my mom and my dad so I think we kind of got in the way but.. other than that I had great fond memories of my youth in Texas, It was very hot. I don't know it's all on kiddie time so everything seems to be bigger and better than probably what it really was.

O: So you had sound like slept right in the house they had a lot of the kids

G: Oh yeah, a lot of the children and because were we a lot we naturally drew a lot of other kids to the household so the doors were constantly going one way or the other was like a revolving door process ... the refrigerator door was being slammed and kids were running up and down the hallways, so it was always a very busy family environment.

O: Was your first language Spanish then?

G: You know that is a question I've been asked repeatedly and you know the youngest of seven I was brought up with both languages but I have to admit it was probably Spanish I learned first. And I say that because my mother never worked, my mother never spoke English at home unless it was something where she was speaking to someone who was not a native Spanish speaker. And given that mom was home as a housewife and raised all of us, that's my assumption that I grew up with Spanish first and then because... or both because I'm the youngest of seven so by the time I came around there were older kids already in school and certainly English was the language that was spoken in school. So it's always been this kind of gray area. Now I know that at home when people ... certainly my parents would ask us questions we'd always went to the formal and conducted all our conversations in Spanish. So that would kind of lead me to believe that I was probably raised first with Spanish and then English.

O: And then your parents did speak some English then?

G: Yes. My parents had very limited education. Both are from Texas, born and raised and they went to up until about the third grade in education. Dad was very good at adding and subtracting. He was very quick to pick figures up and so for whatever reason was able to do that. He went through the military, fought in WWII and had good command of the English language in order to get through that. I would assume. And then my mom has gotten relatively good command of the English language. One of the things that happens when you grow up with a family where two languages are being spoken and you have kids and the parents feel potentially inadequate particularly for legal jargon, they defer to the children for translation and interpretation. So I think it was just a matter of them getting nervous as to what was really being related to them and were they really interpreting that information accurately.

O: And so your parents did that ... they called for the children to help them out?

G: Oh sure. [? 06:34.7] "What did they say?" and I'd say "What do you mean? What if I wasn't here?" but So they did depend a lot on us children. And actually it'd end up being a great learning tool for us because were were doing things me myself and probably the middle children and the older ones doing things that you don't normally do as children and your interpreting for insurance and insurance claims or liabilities or what have you, you're interpreting at the bank, to put together a car loan and ... balancing check books, which for me was a game as a child it was adding and subtracting how fast could I do that, writing checks not really recognizing really what that whole process was really about. Cause I remember telling Dad "Hey, just write the check. Just pay it." [Laughter] And he'd say "We have to make sure we have money in the bank." So anyway we'd learned those kind of things and were exposed to that household responsibility at an early age. And we didn't recognize the things we were doing at the time, at least in my case I didn't until I got older and thought "Good Lord, I was wheeling and dealing with the banker at a very young age and not realizing what I was doing. But we accomplished the things that we the family needed to have done, and certainly what my Dad needed to have done.

O: And then you said the family had entered the migrant stream when you were about four years old?

G: Yeah.

O: Tell me about that. First of all, why did the family decide to leave Texas?

G: It was a financial decision more than anything. Many families had that my mother knew and my father knew in Texas had talked about coming to the Northwest and how it was abundant in dollars, particularly when you have large families because there were many crops here that had to be harvested and the more people you had and the more hands you had to pick the crop the more money you would stand to gain over the summer. And so that's really what intrigued my father plus I think one of the other things was that my parents were ready for a change in their life with their family and that kind of prompted the curiosity to move the family to a different location, cause my brothers were older than I and they were teenagers and so they started to get into their curiosity, schools and hanging out with guys and doing this and doing that and my mother thought that "maybe it's time for us to go somewhere else and maybe this agricultural life is what we really need to do and let's just look at that positively." Although I have to tell you my mother was somewhat reluctant to come to the Northwest, cause how do you get there, have enough money to get there, how do you that's enough, and what if the car breaks and all that kind of stuff.

O: ... Which is thinking of some of the practical problems...

G: Oh, yeah very much so. She's always been the more practical one I think I concur. Well, I don't know, Dad was pretty practical too. That's how we got here. And it was in the early sixties that we got here and took the Migrant Stream for a couple of years and ending up settling here in '66, I guess, we settled in '66 here.

O: And when you say you were in the Migrant Stream for a couple of years, was that just here in the Northwest, moving around the Northwest?

G: It was actually primarily here in Oregon and primarily here in Yamhill, Washington county area. And so we were harvesting the first crop that would come in that we would come for. Would be the strawberry cause that would be the first crop that really was available and we'd usually stay through the walnut season so early fall, late fall. Some of the things my older brothers talked about was one having the issue of having to leave their schools early so they were being pulled out of school early in Texas to get here available to harvest to crop and so they would matriculate them in school and then it was a matter of their records not arriving with them and then going through this whole questioning process: what do you know? What don't you know? And what grade should you really be in? And that became an issue after years and certainly as my brothers and sisters were getting older and trying to graduate which was an important thing for my dad and my mother to see their children graduate, the older ones finally said "You've got to make a decision if we're going to stay in Oregon or are we going to stay in Texas cause we're losing too much school. And by the same token we were still here in September and then by the time we moving back they're like "Where were you?" you know, so there's all this questioning. And so the questioning from the school system as to the material we had learned, were we really capable of going on to the next school, the next grade, and then more importantly I think for us kids, it was a question of "Were our parents really taking us here? What's important? Is it the work or our education? And I didn't feel that as much certainly

cause I was young, but my older sister and older brother they were the ones who were the proponents to have mom and dad decide, make a decision.

O: So you'd go back to Texas through the winter.

G: Uh huh. And then we'd just get ready in the spring to come back out here. And we made good money. There was good money. We didn't come to very gloried living condition.

O: Was your first year here, was it in any camp?

G: Yeah, we lived in a migrant camp. There were a total of ten to twelve cabins in this migrant camp. It was a small room probably 10' x 12', 2 large beds, one on a lower level, one on a bunk bed situation. A wooden table that was extend from the wall. A tiny little stove that had one or 2 burners on it. There was really no running water....[14:52.1] that we accessed from a central location on the grounds. For bathing and washing clothes, there was another location. No running water for the bathroom ... they were basically what I call the outhouses... So that was an eye-opener for us, cause we hadn't seen that part in Texas. Probably my mother and my father had in their youth growing up. They didn't have all the indoor plumbing but certainly by the time we came around there was indoor plumbing in the homes that we lived in in Texas ... but when we came here, in the Migrant Stream, it was just not one of the elements that we had in the migrant camp. It was the first year... even if the conditions were not really what we'd like, we made it the best that we could. We really enjoyed meeting the other families that were coming here from other states, getting to know their families. In some cases, the camps provided, some of the volunteers would come in and bring movies and that would be ... you would see off a projector and they would just put it on a blank wall, and they'd put a linen up so you could see the movie. They would take us on field trips now and then. Some of the migrant schools would come out and they would take some of the kids. But for the most part, most kids were working. We had a little bit of exposure, cause my sister was older and she was curious about how do we get the kids out and to see what else is out there from where we currently are. She was always asking... she always seemed to get out of the migrant work and she always found herself working at a glove company or working at the local health department, doing fine or what have you. That gave here a greater exposure then to ask and other people to ask questions of what's going on in town, how do we get there, that kind of thing

O: How to connect to the larger community....

G: Exactly. She was the outlet for that.

O: Do you remember that first trip up here?

G: I don't. But you know I heard the stories as my brothers and I sat and discussed it. I remember that mother ... I remember coming in station wagons and there were various colors of them every year that we'd came for whatever reasons.

O: These were cars your family owned?

G: Yes, we owned and I just remember us all getting together. I remember the melting of crayons because it was so hot and of course we didn't have air conditioning in the vehicles and that was for us younger kids to be entertained. I remember eating endless rows it seemed of baloney sandwiches cause that was cheap and inexpensive, right? I remember my older sister being the navigator so she always sat up front and said " Dad, you've got to get off here. It's l-

whatever. We've got to turn here or whatever". And the younger ones were always right in the middle cause that was where there was less space available so it was either my sister or me cause we were the younger two. I remember scorching coffee being poured down the back of my back and as the coffee cup was coming from my mother in the thermos to my dad. So those kind of ... I remember my brothers sleeping on the hoods of vehicle at night ... we would stop to rest.... And so they'd bring out the blankets and so they'd sleep on the hood or on the top of the vehicle... I remember every now ... and also the patrolman coming by and making sure we were okay and if we needed anything, if we had any vehicle problems... What else do I remember? I remember going through Colorado, seeing all the beautiful landscape of the rocks and all that and Dad stopping to at least give us a little glance of that What else do I remember about all that?..... My brothers remember more vividly I mean they laugh at the things my dad did, they things they did..... [laughter] And I remember my mother praying always, I mean always. She always had her rosary... her Hail Mary's, Our Father's to get us from one place to another.

O: And so the church was pretty important to your family?

G: Yes. My mother has always been real active in the Catholic church. She started it when she was young. She was one of the she belonged to some of the orders..... in San Antonio, so she was very active in choir and all that kind of stuff... and even after we settled here, she had that natural instinct, gravitating to that and so she'd create, she as well as some of the other Hispanic families that had created their associations whether it was ... part of the board, part of the church board, the readings, the collections, into all of it, she was into all that stuff, and making sure there were people ... making sure all that went through.

O: You mentioned that you enjoyed meeting the other Hispanic families doing the migrant work at that time. How would you get together and socialize with them?

G: Well, we'd socialize from the time we arrived to the camp site, cause we all parked about the same.... There was one central location where everybody parked. From that of course, given that we were twelve clusters of a labor camp, so we would see each other coming and going and certainly we all worked all in the same fields together. Dad had six rows of berries and whoever was next to us had whatever and they were usually coming from the same labor camp that we were at so we socialized as we were doing work . We socialized as we went to church and church functions, we socialized if there were any local entertainment that was good for the families like fairs, like the state fair, I remember , Dad had taken us too. And whatever [22:52.0] local fair was in the area, cause that was always something that my Dad always took us to as a reward mechanism. What else? How else did we socialize? Just after work we would always come back to the migrant labor camp and it was like an open campus kind of thing and in the middle was the area where you could get the public water and off to the left would be the laundry and the shower facility and way out here of course were the bathrooms. In front of all the cabins where we lived and because it was so hot during the summer there was a natural tendency to have their doors open, the kids kind of playing outside and the adults would kind of be watching to make sure the kids were okay and weren't fighting or whatever and that strangers weren't coming by. So it kind of revolved and evolved all the time.

O: Sort of like open communal space that was shared.

G: Exactly and we would ,... we'd have stories in the morning. I remember my mother would always say " You guys hurry up and get up cause the Garcias are already in the car." And we'd be like "Who cares? Let them go first. What do we care." [Laughter] But that was kind

of a motivator... you should be embarrassed kind of thing. So my brothers would die that my mother would even have the audacity to say that. And the other thing was that we would always... as we would ride it was a checking point just to see who had returned from previous years, who was new, why didn't certain people return or a) it was that they had stayed and so we'd adventure out to find where they were and why they had stayed and what jobs they had. That's kind of the whole kind of the social networking that went on.

O: Checking in at the beginning of each year to find out the gossip on everybody?

G: Exactly! "Where is everybody?" Yeah... "How come the Garcias, or how come the Gonzalas or how come the Vierelzas [?] didn't come this year? Where are they? What happened?" And you get to find out and undoubtedly somebody knew them or worked with them... they were coming from the same general area they were from.

O: They'd often lead you to something....

G: Exactly. Or "Didn't you know they stayed last year? They're living here now in Dayton and have a house right downtown in blah blah blah...." Or "They've become the supervisor or the crew person for the field" or whatever. That was the socializing.

O: So when you came up here you were still pretty young. Were you part of the work crew?

G: Yep, we were part of the work crew. Because you know what, unfortunately this law, this minimum wage law is not just the books you had [laughter]. I worked very closely with my father. I always for whatever reason got tossed in with him. So I picked the strawberries on the same row he did and he would give me the hallicks [sp?] which are the small little boxes that create the whole flat and so I would pick in those and he would Anyway that's how we would do it. Or in the beans I would work on the same side and he would help me carry my bucket or whatever it was we were doing. And so I was kind of a mentoring program I think and my sister I don't know who Rita worked with ... she must have worked with my mother... but they never put us together because we were the same age and we fought a lot. [Laughter] If the truth be known. And nobody wanted to work with Joe because he had big hands and he was always in ... he was so competitive with himself and with the rest of kids that it was ... my father always said "OK put him next to me on the other side of me and me[Laughter] some sort of family feud going on.

O: Cut down the fighting to increase productivity?

G: Exactly. I'd end up being on the bad side of the ... they'd got up on the bad side and they'd look at each other the wrong way, it was like they were at each other's throat, so my dad would say, "Well there are some controls here I have to cling to. Otherwise they're going to run us off out of the camp." Or whatever.

O: Well did that first year meet the families expectations in terms of how it worked out?

G: In terms of finance and dollars? I believe so, yeah. Otherwise we wouldn't have kept coming back. And that was the unfortunate part was that we all laugh now "Damn, we shouldn't have worked so hard the first year. We shouldn't have been successful and then come back. [Laughter] But it was. My mother has been the one who has always been reluctant, I think. She didn't like the distance. And certainly after my father decided to settle she didn't like it at

all. We had never been here through a winter, and so it rained a lot, it was really gloomy, it snowed a lot that year.

O: What year was that you stayed here?

G: '66. And then ...

O: That's back when Oregon still had cold winters.

G: Exactly. And my sister was graduating from high school and that was the year my dad decided to stay and so they weren't available for her graduation. She graduated on her own. And so there were some significant things that ... why my mother was so reluctant, and why she wasn't completely joyous of us staying here, although you know financially she understood it, you know all those other things emotionally. It didn't set well with her. Plus I think it also didn't set well with her because she didn't like to have the family disjointed in any way shape or form. And that came just from her own personal upbringing because she had had step-sisters or half sisters and they were never together and to this day she was ... she doesn't know where they are. That kind of thing. She never had a mother and father situation. She was always raised by her aunt or grandmother. When her grandmother died, she was raised by her Aunt [Sun?] and so for her to have to go through this and to finally have your first child, and someone you know who is going to graduate, and has done well in school and then your not there as a parent to support that action was a major thing for my mother.

O: That was that first winter?

G: Yeah. And then fortunately my sister stayed with my aunt and my uncle and they've always been close to us and very good. But luckily there was enough support there, and my sister Mary knew that the reason we were staying in Oregon wasn't because my parents weren't supportive of her, but because of financial reasons and she was part of that process of the decision being made. "Well, Dad then you stay and you'll need to fly me home and fly back cause I need to graduate with the class that I've been used to. I want to get some scholarships out of that and I have to pack." That was the only reason they allowed her to go back cause she was so adamant about it, and the rest.... My brothers, the four that followed her, said she's got to go. Otherwise we're all going and we not coming back. So that's how that whole thing translated out. But you know if I think it had had it not been for mother's ... mother was always very positive about everything. Do it for the benefit of the family and be selective about how you go about doing things. And we'll try to support you as a family. She was always very low-key about that because the situation she had with my father, my dad being very strong, very conservative, man of the house, all that kind of stuff, she worked the system quite well, she was very studious as to how that had to happen.

O: And you mentioned that for economic reasons it was best to stay up here. What was that? You presumably wasn't migrant work during the winter time. Would probably by this time you'd developed other things ... ?

G: What had happened was that my father had because he had been here had been coming and going for four to five years, the and because some of the families had settled, Hispanic families that we knew who had settled, Mr. Lunsanez [sp] who was a farm crew leader and for some of the large farms in the Dayton area, advised my dad that there was a farm here in Chehalem mountain that was looking for someone who had a strong agricultural background that could help with, to filberts and the walnuts and everything else that transpired during the

winter and would provide full-time employment basically throughout the year. And provided a home and provided ... so my father explored that option and came and visited with the farmer, the landowner and it was a great opportunity for him and his family he felt. That's how we ended up staying. So it was year-round employment.

O: In those earlier years when you went back to Texas, would you [33:53.3]

[34:03]

O: This is Michael O'Rourke for the Washington County Historical Society continuing an interview today with Margaret Garza at her office in Hillsboro. The Public Service Building.

So when we left off last time, Margaret, you had told me the story of how your family had come here and also about after you had been up here a couple of seasons, you made a decision as a family to stay here. Which your mother wasn't thrilled about, and which your older sister had some immediate problems with that. Can you tell me what that meant for you? What unfolded after you settled here?

G: Well, for me, I was young at the time, so for me that basically meant we finally had a place to live in that was ours. We had going to the same one schools throughout the year. We knew, or I knew that we would probably have a lot of work when the harvest season came. And I knew that the majority of the family would be together. My oldest sister would at one point return so that didn't look so gloomy. But I think for the most part, even though my mother was having a terrible time making the adjustment of staying here, I think, she was positive enough to let us all understand that it was positive thing for the family as a whole financially that we stay in Oregon. So I think once that was understood, we pretty much all bought off on it.

O: And you were, I forgot, how old you were at the time?

G: I was in , when we finally stayed, in ... up at Chehalem mountain, I was in second grade.

O: Still pretty young.

G: Very young. I was in second and my sister was in third.

O: OK. So then you continued to attend school and worked in the summertime?

G: Uh-huh. Yeah, basically. My sister and I were probably, let's see, two or three of the total school that were Hispanic at that time. The only other thing we did, of course, was ... somehow people understood that we were the people who had settled and that we had come out of the Migrant Stream. Particularly in the spring when the farm workers, or some of the farm owners, their children were also attending school and they would make little innuendoes now and then. Of course the teachers would always correct them and tell them "That's not appropriate. We're not here to discuss that." So it was an interesting

O: What kind of innuendoes?

G: Oh, just things like "Oh yeah, she's just one of the,.... She comes from one of the families that works out in our fields".... That kind of stuff. But you know you are children at the time and you don't Now that I'm older I think those kids probably didn't know any better, they're just speaking probably what they heard at home. But certainly it does something to you as you

going through school at a very young age, when you're being casted out as ... well as another cast out, so now I really have to ... " At least in my case I turned that all into a positive. "One way or another, I going to overachieve you. I don't know how it's going to happen, but I will." [Laughter] And so luckily for me I paid attention and was pretty quick with a book so was able to combat some of that.

O: But you felt it?

G: Oh yeah. It was very much. There was a lot of that, as I say from the children of the landowners. They did make those strong mild statements about "When are you going to let these girls go?" or "They need to go pick strawberries" or "They need to go do this" and "They need to do that." Some of the teachers for the most part were pretty strong about "That may be so but we're not going to discuss that in class, while Margaret is in class, or while any of us are in class. Mind your own business" kind of thing. And some of the teachers, I still have good ties with them ... Mrs. Slaughteshoe [sp] was very clear about that. She just wouldn't put up with that. She'd say "You know what? If you've got another agenda you take care of it some other place, but it's not happening on my watch, unless you want to go to another class. " She was very out-spoken in front of the whole class about that.

O: That's great.

G: Yeah, no. She was very strong. That may have been one of the reasons I was so And my second grade teacher was very good, too. She was your typical old older school teacher type but went pretty much by the book. Was very talented in her teaching style and was very protective of each and everyone of her children in her class. She didn't like those hurtful kinds of comments. I think having that one teacher on the one hand and then on the other I had Mrs. Slaughteshoe who was the music teacher was full of energy, was vivacious and was a forward thinker.... Those people kind of let us, at least me, in the right direction to discount those negative statements and go on.

O: Did you feel..

G: I'll tell you one of the things I was going to school through ... I was in grade school I was things I remember the teachers even the office administration would say " Now you know you guys can't be speaking Spanish. You need to only speak English." And we'd say "Well, yeah. I was just talking to my sister about something and it had nothing to do with whatever, I mean, it was just personal." And if "You know, you must always speak English." And I said "Okay". So I went home and told my dad. "They don't want us to speak Spanish in school. They only want us to speak English." And my dad said "Okay. Then just speak English. Don't speak any Spanish there." And I said "Okay. That doesn't make sense to me because I speak both languages but okay, if that's what you say, that's what I'll do." He said, " Remember, all you are there for is to learn. And if you already know that and they don't know it and they don't want you to do it, don't do it." I said, "Okay." So we didn't speak Spanish anymore, my sister and I.

O: In school, huh?

G: No, no. Not in school, no way. But then as the years progressed, cause Siaster started their second grade, my sister was in third, by the time my sister and I got to fifth and sixth grade, which was what, four years later, five years later, people more people had started to settled and more Hispanic people started to come earlier in the year. So there was this need all of sudden to have people speak Spanish to kind of be the go between, the intermediary. And because

we were a know factor my sister and I, we were in the community, yes they knew we spoke Spanish, and yes they knew we spoke English, cause we were in their schools, they would say well, I remember the day, "Well, we want you to come here because we want you to be able to translate this thing and we want you to make sure that the kids are understanding." And my sister and I just looked at each other and we said "What? Now you want us to speak Spanish? I thought you told us you didn't want to." I said, "No we can't do that. We have to go home and ask our dad." So we went home, I remember I marched home and said to dad, "Now they want us to speak Spanish, cause we have all these kids Hispanic kids now. And my dad said "Well, okay, if they're asking you now, now you do it." And I said, "Okay, I guess this is the way it works. It's okays now." And so it worked out well. It was basically for the school they were trying to figure out where the poor kids really were. We helped, but it is a confusing thing for children to say, "Today you can't" and "Tomorrow you can". That was a good example for me to learn at a very young age. As I'm trying to tell people "No you can't do that" or "No, you won't do that" when you're supervising, some of those tapes come back and say "Well, think about this. What's the impact really here?"

O: When you were a kid in school did you feel any discrimination from people other than from your classmates? Like from any of the teachers or the adults, or outside the school?

G: Uh-uh. Never. Never. Never felt any discrimination. Actually I didn't feel ... you know I guess I didn't really classify even those negative things that those farmowners kids said to me. I never really classified that as discrimination. I guess it was a form.... It wasn't until I was a senior in high school that I really came to grips with discrimination. Because I had.... My father had always imposed on us to go to school, to get an education, to do the best that you can because that little receipt, that piece of paper they gave you in school was going to be our way to get out of the fields and to move on and have better jobs and better opportunities for our own children. So I would always excel in class. I always wanted to be on honor roll. I didn't know what that was at first but when I found out I said, "Great that's what I want to do. I want to have a 4.0. I want to be better than everybody else. I want to prove that to myself. So I was on a mission from grade school through high school to do that so I was on National Honor Society, I was on most of the clubs you could belong to. I created some of the students I went to school with, we create our own Hispanic Associations just so that we could have some assimilation amongst ourselves. And then when it came to that final year in high school, after we've done all these things, all these great things I taught and I tutored many of the public, like for example the Hillsboro police chief's kids, all the kids that were in there, I tutored them in certain classes, either math or Spanish or whatever I tutored. I was very quiet about those things. I just did what I had to. And I got paid for some of that expertise. But when it came to my senior year in high school, when it was all these scholarships that were out there and available, and I remember one teacher when I was in Mid high [sp] had told me "You know Margaret, you don't really need to worry. When you get to high school and are wanting to go on to college, there's going to be all sorts of awards, scholarships for you." And I said, "Really? Why?" He said, "It's because you happen to be Hispanic and you happen to be female." And I said "What?" And he says, "Yeah." I said, "You mean it's just going to happen?" And he goes, "Yeah." And I said "Okay." So in my mind, I conceptualize that I'll apply ... the school I was attending. So then when I ... but I still kept my grades up. I was graduated number four out of a class of 600. I applied for all these crazy little scholarships that we had here: Rotary, who knows what they all were. Not once did I get a scholarship. Not once. I had worked my buns off, I had done all those extra-curricular activities, I had help build [????], I had helped put the Virginia Garcia, I had helped with all these things, and this high school could not recognize me. Not one measly little thing. So that year, it was a hard thing for me. It could have been a real critical turning point for me. Do I continue? Do I believe in the system? Or do I just get the hell out now.

Cause I was basically where I wasn't, I was the youngest of seven kids and six of the kids had all gone through Hillsboro High school. And none of them, as my brother Fred says, "None of us were as applied as Margaret was. None of us could come back and say there was discrimination. But damn it, on this one case, what else could we call it?"

O: Yeah.

G: And then, I had a teacher who was a very good friend of mine. Who was able to access data from the computer at the high school, so we could do comparatives with the other kids that were drawing the applications, the kids that were actually being given the opportunities on the scholarship against me, that I had competed against, and there was really no reason. There was no reason. We had comparatives all the way around. "What is going on here?" But when all was said and done, they were all white kids, they were all teachers' kids, kids of people who were pretty prominent in the community. And I thought "Crap, this thing is all wired. There is no way I'm ever going to break through this. And so then I sat down and my brother said, "You know what? The one thing, Margaret, that they can't take from you is you study habits, the grades you accumulated to this point. So he said, "Don't worry about it. You haven't needed any money up to this point. So go forward. Apply to the schools you want to. If they accept you, we'll figure it out. One way or the other we'll figure out how you will financially be able to pay for that life." So then, we had someone, someone called from the Seattle Department of Justice. So the Feds came in and they investigated and there was things that they found that were unjust, that were done here. And my dad said, "Don't do anything more. I don't want anymore of this stuff done, cause if they don't want to give it to you on who you are, and on your merits, then the hell with them. You go on and do what you need to do. " And because we really didn't have the resources, I mean, it was going to take more money to get us to the next level, and we didn't have that kind of money, and my dad said, "You know what? Are you going to sue them? And what do we benefit from that? How do we benefit from that? And how does Margaret benefit? Is this going to hurt her in the long run? Is this going to put a black mark on her?"

O: But Margaret was pretty angry at the time.

G: Oh, I was furious. My whole family was furious. We were all furious. But we turned it again, we always turned everything into a positive. "Fine, I've got my credentials, I've got my habits, and I applied to the schools I wanted to, I got accepted by all the schools I wanted to, so I just said "Fine, I'm done for all practical purposes. I've graduated from Hillsboro High School, I will come when I want to and you will still graduate me with honors as I leave the school. And you know, we had the teachers and the counselors and they were all in tears "Oh, this has never happened, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah" And we said, "Right. Right. I'll see you in 12 years because I'm sure one of my siblings will have this happen." Yeah, that was not a very good experience to go through. But I left there and went on to Lewis and Clark and managed to get through that, and

O: And how did you pay for that?

G: I worked, because I had been working at the Hillsboro Police Department. I came on at the Hillsboro Police Department through SETA. There use to be some federal funds. I worked through that and they eventually hired me as a temp or something. I would work there every summer and every winter, Christmas breaks, spring break, and then I worked in the evenings, cause it was open 24 hours, so I could come and work in the evenings for \$5 or whatever. That's how I paid for college. Chuck came here and it went there. [Laughter] And plus I got

some financial aid from the college and then I applied for one scholarship at Portland State University. That's where the office was held, but it was a national organization, the Martin Luther King Association. They funded me all four years that I was in school. And I don't remember the exact amount, but I'll tell you a funny thing, my dad drove me there to apply when they were doing the screening for this application and then my dad said to me, cause everyone is sitting in the lobby, and everybody was African-American, he says, "Do they know you're not African-American?" And I said, "Dad!" And he said, "Well, because look at all the kids that are sitting here. Are you sure you applied for the right scholarship?" "God, Dad, I hadn't even thought of that!" So I head into the meeting and getting into this screening with this full board of about seven to eight people, I think. I said, "You know, before we start this interview, I have to ask a question." And I said, "I'm only asking because my father so politely asked me out in the lobby, "Is this a scholarship only available to African-Americans." And they said, "Why would you ask that?" And I said, "Well first of all, because it's a scholarship issued by Martin Luther King, and he was a very prominent African-American". And I said, "Second of all, they majority of the folks out in the lobby are African-American, except for me. I'm just curious if anybody else other than me and the African-Americans that are here.... Are we even eligible? Maybe I shouldn't have even applied." They said, "Oh, no, Margaret. It's open to all minorities." And I thought, "Thank God." [Laughter] And I ended up with that scholarship. I was told later that "not only because of your academic and extra-curricular activity, but we figured that you were pretty bold enough to ask that question we knew you'd probably go places." [Laughter] [55:30.0]

O: That's great. Well you just mentioned that you worked with your parents during your school years on things like Central and Virginia Garcia Pride (sp? 55:46) and of course I know that they were involved in that probably Central comes first or maybe something came before Central....

G: Actually there was. There were two.

O: OK. Why don't you tell me how your parents and yourself got involved and [can we] The community in that way.

G: What happened was that many of the Hispanic families that had settled here were large in number in terms of the kids and we had ended up through some Vista volunteers and a Jesuit priest would come , had started having some masses at St. Matthews and so that was kind of the meeting ground where everyone came together every Sunday at 5:30 or something in the evening.

O: Was this Father Breezer [sp]?

G: Yeah, Father Breezer. And from that Fr. Breezer was really kind of the organizer because people came to him when they needed things. And that's common because he's a priest and so people would tell him the problems they are going through. And Fr. Breezer became was very good friend of my father and Mr. Hernandez and all those folks. It became very clear very soon that there was a lot of need in the community, there was need for when people arrived for a place for them to live. And not only a place for them to live, but everything that went inside that home and maybe funding and maybe money to rent the first house. All that kind of stuff. So my father, who had owned a business when he was in Texas always liked the money aspect of things, and my mother had always been very active in the church in San Antonio and all the society kind of stuff and all that. She was always the care-giving, the justice for the community, that was well bred in her system. When we came here and they saw this and they were close to the priest, Dad and his cronies or his friends at the time set up a group called Los Amigos

Club. The Friends Club, and you've probably heard a little bit about that. Some of the founders but not all the founders it was kind of another little group, but one of the first primary groups and basically what they did was set up a non-profit to help raise funds to help Hispanic folks as they migrated into the community. So it was kind of an emergency fund if you will. And the way that they raised the money was that they would have dances once or twice a month either out at Forest Grove Amory or out at Hillsboro Amory and they would contract out a local bands and then all the money that came out of that after paying expenses would be left in the kitty, and then as people needed that money, the board would come together and they would determine those needs and they would follow the money out. So if someone had died, for example, and he had been here a year and someone had died and they needed to get back to Texas then we would help pay for the flight and whatever accommodations that needed to happen. So that's kind of what, that was one of the first groups that were established. The other group that was established was Los Amigos Club, and , who was the other, Los Voluntaris [sp] did Eva talk to you a little bit about the ... that's the arm that moved to St. Alexanders of the Altar Society women from St. Matties, and then they went over to St. Alexanders.

O: No, they didn't tell me about that.

G: It was a group of women which are basically altar society women and they also were a group of folks that were established and ran simultaneously and actually started before and ran simultaneously at the time we started with the founding of Central. And the founding of Central was primarily that these families that came together felt that there was not only the need to address day-to-day needs as people came to the community, but once were here, "Where can we convene?" Where can we help? Where can ... and What are we going to leave our children? Because if these are the things that we're currently going through ...the difficult time finding places to celebrate because people don't understand our culture then where we go? And how do we satisfy that, take care of that for the kids that come? If we want to expand and resources that are in the community to ourselves, how do we do that? That was the reason they needed.... And really one of the reasons the Central was founded. And then from that was an unfortunate situation where one of the migrant families lost a child because they didn't have medical insurance, they were denied access to medical assistance, and so from that and my sister happened to be a nurse at the time here at the county, so she was able to research many of the findings on that. So there again these families that were so entrenched together to help each other and help the community as a whole said, "You know what? We need to do something about this. We need to find where there are resources, where there is money available to set up something for those who do not have insurance. Where do they go? How do we get them taken care of?"

O: How was that Virginia Garcia's main problem? Was she Just didn't have?

G: Insurance? And you know we had kind of seen that in our own As we had grown up because luckily most of us had been healthy, but I had one sister who was a year older than I who was always, I call her the clumsy one, she'd fall off the porch, she'd fall off the swing, always..... And those were minor things where you sprain your ankle, you twisted your arm, or you've done something.... So those kind of medical bills are within reach, at least you can put into some kind of payment schedule, you can pay that off. But it seemed like it was either ... She was like in fifth grade and I was in fourth, and she had come down with a rheumatic fever, and we had brought her here to Tuality, here in Hillsboro and they wouldn't see here, because we didn't have medical insurance. And she was deathly ill, I mean deathly... We could have lost her. Luckily, we knew of St. Vincent's so we rushed her to St. Vincent's and they saw her

immediately. The nurses and the sisters of Providence said, "We're grateful you brought this child here. Because she would have died. " So we had kind of had that experience already. When that happened, it was very clear to us, that yes, those things were happening, and yes, we needed to have a place to take care of the farm workers, of the people who didn't have all these other financial instruments in place. That's why the creation of Centro, was primarily because the founders were seeing the needs themselves first hand and actually being involved in the community. They knew what was missing.

O: When I look back on it, it seems kind of remarkable in a way that Central and in particularly Virginia Garcia Clinic. The clinic was up and running less than a month after Virginia Garcia died.

G: Exactly. And you know I think that happened was because if the Sisters of Providence had not given that initial grant and that went quickly. They were able to come in with those dollars right off the bat. But if you don't have that kind of system in place and someone willing to give you the dollars, then, yeah, it can take you a long time to get the resources to capitalize something of that magnitude.

O: Do you know anything about the that particular story? About how the contact was made with the Sisters?

G: You know, I don't know. But I'm sure my sister Mary was the nurse at the time. I'm sure... and Dr. Maclum [sp 1:05:58] But I'm sure they told me, but I can't remember off the top of my head what the whole deal was there. There were some activists in the community at the time and my sister Mary kind of floated in and out of them. I'm sure that's how they got wind of that.

O: Well, Emilio Hernandez told me that she went up to Seattle to meet up with the board of Sisters of Providence, and had a conversation with the, I believe he said he had some other people along with him....

G: Probably. Because, you know what? They never traveled alone. I mean, at that time, it was real interesting because the families that were here, there was never a need to have a spokesperson, or to say Emilio is going to be the representative and only he needs to go. They all kind of ... because it was such an interest and they really made the time and the commitment, so they all went. I mean everybody went. I'm sure that if Emilio was the one who went, then I'm sure my dad and Mr. Nohofa [sp 01:07:14], all that cadre of folks went with him, cause that's the way they operated. It was just an understood thing. Because I remember one there was an incident way later in the '70s I think and there had been a fellow that had was working here at the Employment division and his name was Jose Composs, something, anyway I can't remember, he had started to represent himself throughout the majority community, he was saying that he was a Hispanic leader and that he would ,,..... they could come to him and he would tell them .. a voice of the community .. I remember being at this meeting that was convened at the priest's home at Conelius and my father and all these elders came and he came too and they basically unveiled him of all his rights and said "You have no right to speak for all of us. If there is an issue, we can handle it. [silence 1:08:24]

[1:08:42]

O: Roll tape now. You said you yourself worked at Centrol and at Virginia Garcia too?

G: Actually my sister Mary was the first nurse, and then my dad and my mother were the petri dishes, they were the lab runners. They would take all the specimens and take them to the lab. My brother Daniel was a janitor for some time.

O: Was this volunteer work?

G: Yes, for the most part it was all volunteer work, when the clinic first opened up. And if it wasn't, it was for nominal pay. I have never worked at the clinic myself, but I have been on the board for the Virginia Garcia Memorial Clinic and I've been on the board for the Centro off and on since I guess I served tea and coffee as a young child to come up with the funds for that. So I've maintained my fingers in those two organizations, only from the perspective that we do not lose sight of what those initial facilities were set up to do, to provide needed services for the community. And sometimes what happens is that as empires are built, people forget how we got where we are. And I want to make sure that doesn't happen.

O: Have you seen any signs of that happening?

G: Every now and then you catch.... You go "Wait a minute. Why are we here after all? What are we doing here? Why is that person not having access? Or why do we think we need to do that?" Then you shift it, you say "You do understand that the reason the Centro was set up was for the following reasons. And if you are telling me there is a reason we can't do that, then I need to find a reason of how we can do that. That's the mentality we will always address. The reason we are here today is because there was a lot of work done to get to this point. And we can't lose sight of that. So I'm sure those directors at times would like me to be gone.
[Laughter]

O: You're on the board of Centro currently?

G: Uh-huh. Yes.

O: And the Garcia Clinic, also?

G: Yes. Both boards. [1:11:33] I'm on that and a multitude of other boards.

O: Well backing up a little bit, to your own story ... so you went to Lewis and Clark, you made it through. What was the college experience like for you?

G: It was great. I guess given that I had already experienced the worse that I could probably experience at Hill high, anything else would have been better. And I knew that I was there just to get my credentials and then I would be on to bigger and better things. It was a liberal arts school for the most part, and so the professors were pretty open minded about a lot of things. For the most part I found people to be pretty open and pretty receptive. I didn't have any negative experiences at Lewis and Clark. I had good ones. Good teachers and great students that I went to school with.

O: What did you study?

G: I studied business administration with an emphasis on finance and accounting and then I did a minor At Lewis and Clark you have to have both a BA and so I did a ... my second was a Spanish literature, which was the complete opposite of sci-fi [sp 1:13:00]. I didn't even think about it actually until I was just shy of credits and one of my professors said "Why don't

you get this?" I said, "Ah, I don't know, what do I need that for?" and he goes "It's a second degree." And then the light went on, and I said, "Oh, yeah, of course!" So, that's why I ended up with those two degrees. A lot of work. A lot of late nights, not only that ... on the bus ... difficult at times because it was tough for my parents to understand that I needed to be away at school, tough for them to comprehend why I had to fill out so much paperwork at the end of every year and ask them to fill out personal income tax returns and all that kind of stuff which was none of my business particularly. And that just because they didn't understand. And even though my father understood the importance of going to school, I couldn't get him to take me to school. And that was a very frustrating thing. I mean I had been accepted and had gone on and done all these things, but I couldn't get him to physically transport me there. So that became a very frustrating emotional period for me. But luckily I'm the younger of seven and the others stepped right in. I'd just pick up the phone and say "Mary, Dad doesn't want to take me. Rita, Mary, somebody help me. I need to get to school." But some of it I think, most of that I think was, fear because that was traversing all the way to the other side of Portland and dropping me off and then how would he get back? If he got lost? I really think that that was the issue although he would never have said that because he was elated any time I was home on break, or home going somewhere with him he was elated that he could introduce me as the daughter that was going to Lewis and Clark. I mean I could just see it, he would just glow. As a kid though, and you're going there, it just doesn't click. How could you glow and then not want to take me? I don't get it. But then later it all came to bear, cause that's Dad was afraid, he was afraid to drive all the way out there. But he wasn't afraid to drive all the way from Texas. [Laughter] But he had a navigator at the time, too. I have to remember all these things. Yeah, so that was probably if anything the frustrating thing for me. My parents not really not totally comprehending what I was going through. College work wise, and emotionally, some of the things they were tripping me up on, for lack of a better word.

O: And not really realizing it, huh?

G: Exactly! Without realizing it, and I know that, and then me recognizing and saying "Well, who can help me through this process?" And luckily I had my brother Freddo who was going to U of O at the time, who couldn't help me with transportation at the time and things like that, but he could at least shed light and say "You know, don't worry about that. Don't spend so much time agonizing over that stuff. Just get there and find somebody else, get on the bus, or do whatever." So that helped guide through that whole process. But certainly it was an interesting time for me from the home to that, and never really envisioned that until I was there.

O: Were you separating a little bit from your family life during those years?

G: Oh, very much so. I had to, in order to survive. In order to pay for school, go to school, I mean ... I didn't have time ... I remember coming home and my brother saying they were going to these dances to bring in income to pay for some of those emergency ... and I'd say "No, I can't. I've got to study." And so you know I'd be studying and they'd come how late at night and be talking and ... And part of it too, was you know, your own self-esteem. If you don't have the money to pay for yourself, why are you going to pay for that luxury? Even though, my brothers were willing to do it, I just couldn't do it. Part of that was ... Most of that was the part my parents had injected in us as kids. "Don't take anything unless you've earned it, unless you can pay for yourself." And it wasn't a priority at the time. I just thought, "No, I'm going to go there and get hung up on that stuff. It's going to take how many hours of my studies. I can't afford to do that. Because what if something comes up during the week and I need to come help Dad do this, or I need to go with Dad to do this? Because I still had that responsibility once I went to college, I didn't let go of that. I still had to pay the bills, I still had to respond to

whatever. He'd call me at school. I knew there was something he needed so I had to respond. And that was the other interesting thing, because if he needed something he know exactly how to get there in a minute. [laughter] That was the whole interesting thing. I couldn't get it to this day. I think it was fear for the most part.

O: You were working with the Hillsboro police during at the time to help pay the bills. What were you doing with the police?

G: I initially started their, counting all the meter money, just for consolidating, getting them on ledgers, and then when those didn't get paid, we'd issue warrants, and I'd process the warrants and all that kind of stuff. And eventually I got trained to become a dispatcher, and so I would do the dispatching for graveyard or swing or whatever. I always did what they needed. For transcriptions for some of the reports for the detectives or the police officers that were on the road. The cleaning and the maintenance of files. So just stuff that could be done on off-hours. That's kind of what I did.

O: Did you like that job?

G: I loved it! It was great. It was the best training field for me for a multitude of things. One, it was safe and my father enjoyed it. He knew I'd be safe there, and he liked that kind of thing. And then the other things was it was open 24 hours and I had become a good friend to the chief of police and I had become that because I had tutored his kids in school. And so he knew what I was really about, and he had kind of checked that out. And he knew that the only reason I was there was because I needed to go to school. And that was the avenue to pay. And as long as that was work for me I would be there. So it worked. It worked out really nicely. It was off the bus line. I didn't have to ask my dad to pick me up or take me in. It was easy. It worked really nicely. And they were able to keep me from you know during the time, all my four years of high school and all my four years of college. And so I'm very grateful to them for allowing that. Plus, it showed me a lot of things. How to research things, how to find things out, how to ask things in awkward situations, which I might not have had access to at such a young age. And ... what else was good about that place? I don't know. It was a good place to grow up. Oh I know. One of the good things was to the detectives showed me how to drive. [laughter] Cause my father wouldn't show me how to drive, he wouldn't allow anyone in the family to show us how to drive. I thought, "Well, I wonder how I could do this." So I commissioned the detectives after hours that all they needed to do was spend a couple of hours with me. It wasn't government equipment, it was their own personal vehicles. Yeah, I remember, that was one of the good things.

O: And then you, ... what happened when you graduated from Lewis and Clark?

G: When I graduated from LC, I ended up working.... What happened was that last month before I graduated, I had gone down, I had gotten wind that there was a Hispanic conference in Portland. And I thought "Oh I've got to be there. I've got to get back into the employment field and I don't know anything about what's gone on because I've been cocooned here or working.... So I ended going to this conference and I ended up meeting a lady who had an office in Portland who was working looking for employees who had gone to Lewis and Clark and had not found the students she was looking for. So, anyway I told her I was the next best thing to anything and gave her my resume. Then I kind of forgot about it and graduated and went on to Denver and came back and did Texas, and then came back and said, "OK, I've got to get serious now." I then reissued that one resume with a cover letter and applied to everyone else here. I heard from her right away and so I went to work for her. I worked there for fifteen

years. It was a private consulting firm, business consultants. I worked there for fifteen years, came in as a entry level consultant, which meant basically I had to do everyone else's ugly work which was fine training ground for me. I got all the bad cases, clients. Then I worked myself up to a full-time consultant, a real consultant, I guess. I ended up becoming the manager, and then the second-in-command of the corporation. So it was a good place for me.

O: It sounds like you were quite successful there.

G: Yeah, I was providing technical businesses services to businesses. It was great they brought me in at the entry level when they brought me in with the worst cases, cause that's the best way to learn. It was an interesting office, because when I first came there the lady that was the branch manager, was the only female and then there was all these males, and they didn't want to share any information with you, cause "Here's the new kid. She doesn't know anything, what could she know. Why'd they hire her?" But after a while, they became ... they loosened up, they started to share some of their knowledge and information and it all went from there. And I got along real well with the clients, bringing solutions to the problems that they had.

O: Now you said you met the woman who eventually hired you at this Hispanic conference. Was part of the reason of your hire, your contact with this Hispanic community?

G: Well, not so much with the Hispanic community, although, Grace is Hispanic and some of the contracts she was executing at the time was with the US Department of Commerce. Even though there was no need for the language, she felt it was important to allow opportunities for individuals such as myself coming out of school and to train them and develop them. So they'd be, I guess, good, I don't know, what's the word I want to use, so they'd be knowledgeable and they could be well versed in other facets of work if they were to leave there. But it was a great working relationship with me there. New lines of credit for you clients, knowing what the economic impact is going to be for that, expanding their product lines that they have, or expanding their office facilities because they're bringing in x number of employees, yaddi, yaddi, yaddi, and trying to find the resources to pull that whole thing together. Its' fabulous to be able to do that and have a ripple effect throughout the corporation or those companies ten times over. And then you just leave it, and then you go on and pick up another file and you do something else for those and so you have all these friends of people you have helped. I think that was a good starting ground for me professionally because I had come from that kind of helping people, how do I help you, how do we get an answer to this, cause that's kind of what my mother and father had taught us as a family. How do we help the community. And I was getting paid for it. It worked out really nicely.

O: And then was the next job with the fairgrounds?

G: Yeah. And then I went and worked What happened was when I went to work at the fair complex, I had been called by the executive director of the fair complex, because they knew I had relocated to Hillsboro, cause I had been living in Portland, and they knew I was kind of back in the community cause they folks had seen me and so he had gotten wind of my name and said, "You know what, your name has been given to us because one of the promoters, one of the large music promoters, was my client. And they kept asking him for all this stuff and he says "I don't know, I'm not going to get involved, call this lady who helps me do all this stuff". So that's how they got my name. I came and met with him and he wanted me to be on the board for the Hillsboro Chamber of Commerce [sp 1:28:39]". I said, "You don't even know me." He goes, "All the Thinks your great and Don thinks ... great. And you'd be perfect. " I said,

"Well, let me give you my stuff." And so I did. And so the first official meeting that I had actually out at the Hillsboro Chamber of Commerce with the president of the chamber, Carol came too and the executive director of the Chamber was Kal was the president at the time. And Kal was late and I said "This is a nice way to try to introduce somebody and then you're late." And then he said, "The reason that I'm late is that" And then he explained he had just lost his marketing director and whatever, and I said "Well, why don't you give me the requirements for that and I could probably call a couple of the people cause I know the people currently looking for employment. And so I did. That night I went home and diligently said "Okay, this is your five or six people call them [1:29:38.9] Then when I got done with it I thought "This is crazy. I'm trying to relocate back over there, why don't I apply for this job. It was a considerable drop in pay, but I thought "Well, just apply and see what the heck. So I called him and said I know your deadline is like tomorrow night and I want to apply for this job." And he says "You're kidding me!" And I said, "No." And he says, "Okay, but you know we're going to go through an interview process and I can't guarantee that you're going to get the job." I said, "That's okay, no problem. Go ahead, I'll apply." Well then I got a call for the first interview, and then the second interview, and then I got hired. That's how I ended up here, it was purely a fluke kind of thing. That's how I ended up at the fairgrounds. Never in my mind had I ever envisioned that I would be at the fairgrounds. Never, ever.

O: So it was important for you to get back out here?

G: It was important for me to get back out here, because the community had grown so much and there were a lot of needs. I kept hearing that when I was out in the business community. The community was growing and they needed someone here, people they could trust and blah, blah. And so that was what my need was, to get back here. Plus my mother was here and I knew that I would probably be getting married soon, and so my husband was from here. So I thought, "It would make sense to go back there." Plus 217 was getting really congested at the time [laughter] and I really did feel It really did feel like it was way out there, and to kind of my brothers and sisters to come see me .

O: And so you were dating your husband at the time?

G: Yeah. We were just dating at the time.

O: And how did you meet him?

G: Actually I'd known him for years. He happened to be the ring bearer at my sister's wedding. But you know we were so young at the time that ... I don't remember him from ... he could have been anybody's ring bearer and I wouldn't have remembered him. But anyway I lived with his sister. His older sister and my sister were good friends. Later on in life, his sister needed her, we ended up rooming together in Portland and one day she came home and she said, "You know, Mar, you oughta give my brother a chance." I said, "Forget it. I've known you guys forever. I don't want to get involved with that." But I didn't really know him. I knew of him and so then ... I had kind of dated him when we were younger, and ... naa ... "This isn't going to work." And he was saying the same thing. But then you know where you get older and she says "You know you have some of the same spending habits, money habits he has, and so she was the one who convinced ... And I wasn't too keen about it initially. But it's worked out! [laughter]

O: Worked for the fairgrounds?

G: Just shy of five years.

O: And then you the fact that you were back out here meant you got more involved in things here again as well?

G: Um huh. Well part of the thing with the fairgrounds is that the position.... When I first came in I came in as a marketing position. One of the things I was told when I was first hired there was "You know, Margaret, we felt that ... Cal has said there's a large Hispanic community growing here. We feel there's a ... We know there is a communication break-down between our people and the folks that are coming through the door to the facilities because either they don't come back or when they do rent the facilities we have a multitude of problems. And so it can only be that they're not communicating back and forth. And so I said "Well, it could be. Without knowing until you get into that situation. So when I came, I was able to grow that part of the market because there's a need within the Hispanic market to celebrate almost anything under the sun, which is great for that fair complex because it leases space. When children are born, the baptismal ... then there's another thing that I didn't know about until they told me ... first communions, then there's the 16th birthday party, and then there's the weddings and yaddi yaddi, yaddi. All these things, and so I kept saying "You know, we really are missing out on the opportunity, and so I was ... Cal said "Get out and see what you ... shake the bushes around. See what's out there. So that also gave me the foot out the door to go out and do all these things and so it was great. And a lot of those things happened after hours. And so it didn't really matter. After five or after six. And plus I had already come from the community so people who had heard that I was back immediately told people "Oh, yeah, Margaret is there, go to her. She'll be able to point you in the right direction. And plus I was leasing the ground and so I came in "Yeah we did the contracts... " blah, blah, blah. " Get it done."

O: We're close the to end of the tape, so when we reach the end of the tape we can call it quits

G: I came in as marketing director for the fair complex and I left as ...and then two and a half years later I became the executive director of the fair complex. And then I left there officially February 28th of this year.

O: And now you're working

G: I'm working with Assessment [sp] Taxation as their senior management analyst.

O: Was that a step up for you?

G: No, it's a step down.

O: You seem to make these choices [laughter]

G: But you know what? It's always, there a reason for this and God sends me in these mysterious avenues and then it all ends up working out. But it's been really great because of where I am and with my family, and also allows me the opportunity to understand how this side of the house works, cause even though the fair complex is part of the county, it kind of operates as it own business because we don't receive any general fund dollars. This is a whole different picture on this side. And so I'm exposed to the whole bureaucracy for lack of a better word, of how this whole organization works and what makes it tick.

O: Is that why you made that move, because you wanted a more diversified experience?

G: No, actually I left there because I was very unhappy with the current board of directors of the fairgrounds, the current fair board out there. There was a lack of ... and not only that board, but the commissioners, there was a lack of structure that was not a structure. I couldn't operate in that, and so I said "If I have to do this, you guys have to do that." Blah, blah blah. I said, "I can't operate like that."

O: By lack of structure, you mean you didn't know where you were from day to day?

G: Yeah, there were many things. People said, "Well, don't worry about that, cause come December, we'll have taken care of that." or "Come" I'm usually the one that it gives you enough time, and you tell me you're going to do something, then I expect you to do it, right? So I had different opportunities where I tested that.... I can say that I tested that and they didn't come through, and I said, "Okay, this is how you want this to work. I can't operate under this environment ... where there's no checks and balances, I guess." It was an unfortunate situation, but And it's not just Washington County, I need to make that very clear. That is a pervasive illness within fairs as a whole and I frankly felt that if I didn't make a statement within the fair industry that ... it will never ... there will never be an opportunity to fix that unless someone stands bold on things that need to happen. And so finally I think some of those things will happen. And there will be some change. I don't know how quickly it will happen and if it never happens, frankly I don't care, because I'm not there. [laughter]

O: In the few minutes we have left, is there anything else that you could think of that we haven't talked about, that we should really make sure

G: No, probably not.

O: I know that you're quite proud of your parents accomplishments, in setting up Centro and ...

G: Very much so. And I think I made a comment to you earlier that one of the things that I reminisce with my friends is that ... we've had all these opportunities and all these resources all our lives and we are supposedly more educated and it seems as we become more educated and we have more resources the less we do to give back to the community. I said that only because my parents had maybe third grade education, and they were not facile in both languages. Certainly were not facile with numbers, with no secondary education, and look at the things they were able to accomplish. So we have a long ways to go to meet up to that.

O: Your parents are still ...

G: My father passed away in 1980. But my mother is still living.

O: Okay, well, Margaret, I want to thank you very much for all your time and all your help on this project.

G: If anything comes up, that doesn't seem right, well just call me.

O: Alright. Well thank you very much.

G: Thank you!

LCSH Search Terms

Acculturation
Agricultural laborers — History
Agriculture — History
Brothers and sisters
Cabin
Celebrations
Children
Civic centers
Civic leaders
Clergy
College campuses
College teachers
Communities – Oregon – History
Community and college
County fairs
Dance
Daughters
Education
Families
History – Societies, etc.
Labor – United States
Local history
Oregon
Oregon – History
Religion
Sons
Student activities
Students – Social life and customs
Women
Woman agricultural laborers
Women – Employment

Pronouns

Margaret Garza
Public Services Building
Genado, Texas
Port LaVaca
Houston
Migrant Stream
Yamhill County, Oregon
Washington County, Oregon
Mary Garza
Mr. Lunsanez
Chehalem
Mrs. Slaughteshoe
Hillsboro Police Department
Hispanic
Hillsboro High School
SETA
Lewis and Clark College
Martin Luther King Association
Central / Centro
Virginia Garcia Clinic
Fr. Breezer
Los Amigos Club
Forest Gove Armory
Hillsboro Armory
Los Voluntanis
St. Alexanders
St. Matthews
Eva
Altar Society Women
St. Vincents (Hospital)
Sisters of Providence
Dr. Maclum
Emilio Hernandez
Mr. Nohofa
Joes Composs
Cornelius
Daniel Garza
Rita Garza
Freddo Garza
Hillsboro Chamber of Commerce
Washington County Fairgrounds
Washington County Assessment Taxation

