

JOSE EVAN PACHECO & ESTELLA VIGIL PACHECO

I don't remember where, If I was born at Nigger Head or at El Puerto.

STELLA: The birth certificate says at La Laguna.

ALICE: When they came here did they come to work in the mines first, do you remember what they used to say how they came here?

JOSE: They came with sheep.

ALICE: Where did they come from?

JOSE: From Taos.

ALICE: Who were the ones that came?

JOSE: That's what I can't understand who, that's what I wanted to know. Who were the ones who came. Some how they came together see, the Pachecos and her family (pointing to Mrs. Pacheco) the Vigils.

ALICE: But who of the Pachecos?

JOSE: I don't know which of them. My Uncle Quirino, my Uncle Manuel, my Uncle Ramon. They were older than my father and my uncle Abran see.

ALICE: Were they their uncles or brothers?

JOSE: Their uncles.

ALICE: What was my grandfather's name?

JOSE: Francisco.

ALICE: And his mother?

JOSE: Inacita.

ALICE: Do you know from who's family, what was her last name?

JOSE: She was a Duran. I remember she was Duran.

ALICE: Did they come here to North Veta right away or do you know?

JOSE: No, that's what I can't understand why or thru where they came. I want to know thru where they came, that they came. Why they came thru there see. They went down below Trinidad to Hohne. Hohne is below Trinidad see. Why did all of them go there? The Pachecos and the Vigils they all went to the same

place. I don't know if they came together or how but they all ended up in Hohne. They stayed in Hohne for a while. I don't know how long but then from there they came thru Las Vivoras and El Graneros you know where they call it El Granero? They came through there. My father used to tell me they came homesteading places here.

ALICE: Do you know who they bought their land from? Do you know how big their land was?

JOSE: That land they bought several years after. They bought the land in North Veta from Benito Maes.

ALICE: Those were your farms?

JOSE: Yes.

ALICE: Can you more or less tell me where the Pacheco's land was?

JOSE: From, do you know where my compadre Ufredo lives? From there on up all the way up to our farm.

ALICE: And this other land?

JOSE: They purchased them later.

ALICE: Were they my grandfather's?

JOSE: Yes.

ALICE: Where did your grandparents live?

JOSE: There by the school, by my compadre Ufredo on the other side of the river.

ALICE: Do you remember the names of my grandfather's family?

JOSE: Yes.

ALICE: Who were they.

JOSE: I have a list with their names and ages, when they were born and all that.

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ALICE: How many brothers did he have?

JOSE: They were four.

ALICE: And sisters?

JOSE: Four. It was my uncle Abran, my father, then my uncle Onesimo.

STELLA: They were three.

ALICE: When they came here did they bring sheep?

JOSE: I understand they came with a small flock of sheep and a small flock of goats.

ALICE: What do you remember about the kind of work you did at the farm?

JOSE: We owned sheep.

ALICE: Is that all?

JOSE: Yes.

ALICE: Didn't you have any goats?

JOSE: A few but their occupation was the sheep business.

ALICE: Did all the Pachecos, your relatives come more or less to the same place or were they in other parts of Colorado?

JOSE: There were other Pachecos here but I don't know where they came from.

ALICE: Were they relatives?

JOSE: No.

ALICE: In an interview taken at Gardner they mention Juand and Franque Pacheco that had sheep up there, did you know them?

JOSE: Yes, they were brothers. Frank was my father's father. They did not live in Gardner.

ALICE: Did Juan have a family?

JOSE: Yes.

ESTELLA: He didn't have any. Rose was a stepchild.

JOSE: That's right he didn't have children. Rose Valvez and Amarante

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were stepchildren.

ALICE: Do you remember if they had sheep in Gardner?

JOSE: No, not in Gardner.

ALICE: Where was their land?

JOSE: Here, this land that was my father's.

ALICE: At Alamo?

JOSE: Yes, from Alamo down.

ESTELLA: I told you all that river land was theirs.

ALICE: What river?

JOSE: There where Raquel, Frank and Ufredo live, up above Mutual all the way to our farm in North Veta.

ESTELLA: Do you remember where we lived, where my uncle Onesimo lived all of that.

ALICE: Are those the farms that the Maldonado's have now? How did they end up with them?

JOSE: When they married the girls and became family members my grandfather gave them all a piece of land.

Alice: Then the Pacheco's stayed with the farms further up?

JOSE: Yes.

ALICE: Did my uncle Onesimo have a farm?

JOSE: Yes, my uncle Onesimo had land here with my grandfather.

ALICE: This other land, who did it belong to, my grandfather's?

JOSE: No, my uncle Frailan did too see. When my grandfather made his will giving the Pacheco's that land he gave this to them. My aunt Sidelia got this land here on the other side from Toltec up and my compadre Ufredo had land there.

ALICE: Then the land that belongs to Faris was theirs too?

JOSE: Yes.

ALICE: You had a lot of land?

JOSE: Yes, a lot of land. From here up above Gordon all the way to the mountains.

ALICE: Are the Maldonado's the only ones with land now? The Pacho's sold all of theirs?

JOSE: Well the Maldonados kept the land that was willed to them see. Major ended up with the land that belonged to the Pachecos.

ALICE: What did you do when you had sheep, did you keep them in the same place all the time?

JOSE: No we would change camp from one place to another. When we moved camp we had burros which we packed to move from one place to another. We had a place in the mountains for the summer months. We stayed in the mountains during the summer months and in the winter when it was cold we would bring them down here to the hills.

ALICE: In what lands did you pasture them the most?

JOSE: Here up above Gordon.

ALICE: About how many sheep did you have.

JOSE: I don't know how many they had when they came but they kept increasing the flock. When we sold out we have five thousand sheep.

ALICE: Why did you sell the land?

JOSE: Because they owed a debt and when we went out of business we had to sellout.

ALICE: Do you remember how much they gave you for the acre?

JOSE: No.

ALICE: What can you tell me about the schools?

JOSE: The teachers were Spanish.

ALICE: Were they from here?

JOSE: From New Mexico.

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ALICE: Were they bringing them from New Mexico?

JOSE: From Garcia. They brought the teachers from Garcia. They were Spanish teachers. We had to read in English and Spanish.

ALICE: How did you read in English if you didn't know how?

JOSE: We had to read in English then translate it in Spanish. Not interpreted, translated.

ALICE: What time did you go to school? How many hours?

JOSE: From nine to four.

ALICE: How many months?

JOSE: Nine.

ALICE: Where did the teachers live?

JOSE: At the farms where they were teaching.

ALICE: Do you remember the families that were in North Veta?

JOSE: There were a lot something like twelve. Ruben Romero was one of the family.

ALICE: Who's son was he?

JOSE: She was my grandfather Francisco's daughter.

ALICE: His wife? What was her name?

JOSE: Genuveva.

ALICE: Did they have children, how many?

JOSE: My cousin Delfino, Raymundo, Onofre, Luis, Soilo, Fedelina, Milia, Rose and their granddaughter.

ALICE: What was the granddaughter's name?

JOSE: Flora.

ALICE: What was his occupation?

ESTELLA: He was a rancher. He would plant and grow alfalfa.

ALICE: Where was his ranch?

ESTELLA: Do you remember where Don Milio lived? Those were his lands. Right in North Veta. Where your aunt Tere and your uncle Raymundo lived. Don Albino lived in North Veta too. I don't know what his occupation was. He just lived there where Chacon, the house following his was Don Albinos and Benjamins. Juan Trujillo had land there. He and Don Crecensio would go north to work the beet fields.

ALICE: mid they have families?

ESTELLA: Don Albino had Benjamin. I guess just Benjamin and Josie. They raised her up.

ALICE: And Cresencio?

ESTELLA: He had boys.

ALICE: Do you remember their names?

ESTELLA: Ben, Frank, Piedad, Rafaelita, Anne and Adelina. Juan Trujillo had Gilbert no not Gilbert, Flor and Soilo. They're the only ones I remember. Don Tomas Gallegos was Martha's father. Do you know Martha? Tenorio's Martha? Tomas was her father. That family, the one I remember were Martha, Loisa, Martha and Loisa I remember.

ALICE: Is Martha Andy's wife?

ESTELLA: Yes, and a Tomas. He had a son named Tomas. He's the one that lives with Dorothy, Mucio's daughter. Thomas Sr. was married to a Tenorio too.

ALICE: Where were the Tenorio's from?

ESTELLA: From Mutual.

ALICE: Were they ranchers?

ESTELLA: No they were from Lucky View. They worked the mines.

ALICE: Where is Lucky View?

STELLA: There below Ojo. Facundo was their father. The old man, the sheep-herder that would come over.

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ALICE: What was Facundo's last name?

ESTELLA: Facundo Tenorio.

ALICE: Was he the sheepherder you had?

ESTELLA: Yes. He was Andy's father.

ALICE: Then if the Tenorio's were not farmers, what were they?

ESTELLA: They were miners. They would work at odd jobs and in the mines at Lucky View. Andrew was there for a while then he left to Grand Junction. He had a big family but the only one I remember is Virginia. Don Ricardo had Samuel and David. He raised Domitilia. Then he married Dona Medina. Isaias Castro wroked for us. He was a sheep shearer. Florencio Valdez just lived there. I don't know his occupation. He was your uncle Nick Valdez's father and my compadre Silvanos, Juanita and Cordilia. My Uncle Abran was a rancher and in the sheep business. My father Armenio and my uncle Abran were business partners in the sheep business.

ALICE: Did you have sheep only? Did you plant?

ESTELLA: No they would raise alfalfa and plant grain and corn only for their own sheep.

ALICE: Do you remember the names of his family?

ESTELLA: Jacobo, Frank, Nacor, Gilbert, Elvira, the oldest and Margarita.

ALICE: Do you remember what year you sold the sheep?

JOSE: 1940.

ESTELLA: Videlia Aragon was a widow. I don't know her occupation. She was Nastacio Duran's and Stella's mother. Viola's mother. Elfido Aragon was Dona Videlia's son. Oh yes, Dona Elena was her daughter, now I remember. Dona Elena was her daughter and Stella and Nastacio were grandchildren. Juan Chavez lived in the monte where Frutoso lived. They would plant and work the mines at Alamo.

ALICE: Do you remember the names of the people who had sheep in North Veta and El Arroyo?

ESTELLA: We were the only ones there at El Arroyo my father, my uncle Frailan and Max Vigil. Max lived in North Veta. Do you know where Dona Nativida lived? Right around there. The Maldonado's lived there close by. He was the richest in the sheep business in the county of Huerfano. He would allow other people to raise sheep. He would let them have some of his own. Maybe he used to rent them I don't know. But, they claim he was the richest in the county. Martina Nieta was an old widowed lady. I don't know her occupation. She was then with a grandson. Then there was my uncle Amarante. He was a cowboy. He had a dairy farm. He had a big family. Yes, he used to milk cows.

ALICE: The rest of the Maldonado's were in the sheep business?

ESTELLA: My Uncle Tobias.

ALICE: Do you remember the names of my uncle Amarantes children?

ESTELLA: The oldest was Adam, Ubaldo, Frank, Bernabe, Andronico, Angelita, Salome and Bertha.

ALICE: Did you support yourselves with just the sheep?

ESTELLA: Yes.

ALICE: Did you sell the sheep or how?

ESTELLA: No, we would sell the lambs and the wool.

ALICE: What month did you sheer the sheap?

ESTELLA: In June.

ALICE: The lambs, when would you sell them?

ESTELLA: In October.

ALICE: Did you sell them here?

JOSE: We would load them and ship them into Denver.

ALICE: From where did you ship them?

JOSE: From here at the entrance of seventh street

ALICE: Where the power plant is?

JOSE: No, a few yards below it. There where the Conoco station is at.

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ESTELLA: It was a beautiful site to see them ship them but it was also sad.

ALICE: Did all the men who had sheep meet there?

JOSE: All of them.

ALICE: Where did you send them? Did you have to go with them?

JOSE: Some of them would go with the shipment to Denver.

ALICE: Were the men that went responsible for all the flock?

JOSE: No the buyer would come down from there, see.

ESTELLA: He would buy them here and all we had to do is ship them. It was the same thing with the wool, see. They would come and buy the wool here and then ship it. Then they would send them their checks.

ALICE: They would buy the wool at the farms?

JOSE: We would bring the wool here to the Mercantile for storage. When a buyer would come we would take him there to see it.

ALICE: Were the sheerers from here or did they come from other places?

JOSE: At first they were local people. Later they were coming in from Texas.

ESTELLA With machinery.

ALICE: Do you remember the names of the sheerers?

JOSE: The old man Chavez that I told you about, Albino Martinez, Casimiro Cruz, my uncle Ruben, my uncle Ruben was a sheerer.

ALICE: Did they come to shear and then leave or what did they do?

ESTELLA: They would provide room and board for them. The boss would provide room and board until the sheering was done.

ALICE: Did they bring their families or did they come alone.

JOSE. Just the men.

ALICE: Did you send for them or did they come on their own?

JOSE: They would come on their own looking for work. Like now, the

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arrived in Walsen they would ask where the sheep owners were and were sent to us.

ESTELLA: They would come with their own camps.

ALICE: Their own equipment too?

JOSE: YES.

ESTELLA: They would provide everything for themselves

ALICE: Then who did you provide room and board for?

ESTELLA: The local mens

ALICE: Did you hire shepherders or did you do all the work yourself?

JOSE: We would hire.

ALICE: Who were the shepherders?

JOSE: Juand de Dios Sanchez, Benito Cruz, Manuel, Lucas Lopez, Elfido Gabaldon, Juan Gabaldon, Elias Vigil and Manuel Ruiz.

ALICE: Were they local men?

JOSE: Yes they were local.

ALICE When you went to town what was the means of transportation?

JOSE: Wagons pulled by horses.

ALICE: How long did the day take:

JOSE: One full day.

ALICE: Do you remember if my grandfather or any relative ever was a school board member?

ESTELLA: Don Albino was for many years. I don't know how the districts were divided but somehow La Arroyo and North Veta was one district. The board member for North Veta was the board memeber for La Arroyo also. For awhile, then they were divided. In La Arroyo the board memebers my uncle Fermin, uncle Antonio, Eliseo Vigil and Abran. Eliseo and Abran are both dead. In north Veta they were Don Albino, my uncle Ruben, Don Castulo and Miliano. When I went to school I would take two grades in one year.

ALICE: Why did you take two grades in one year.

ESTELLA: Because my father would not allow me to go to school. I would enroll in school in December after the crop was harvested and he would pull me out in April. How much schooling did I get? He would pull me out in April to go plant. I was the planter.

ALICE: Then besides sheep you would harvest to sell?

ESTELLA: Yes, my father, he had a few sheep. He used to herd them himself.

ALICE: He had a field?

ESTELLA: Yes.

ALICE: What did he harvest?

ESTELLA: Corn, beans lentils, peas and lima beans (abas). He sold everything.

ALICE: Did the family work the fields or did you hire help.

ESTELLA: When it was harvest time all the neighbors would get together. Do you know how? We would get together and harvest my uncle Antonio's crop and so on.

ALICE: The Vigil's were all farmers?

ESTELLA: Uncle Fermin worked in the mines sometimes and I think uncle Antonio did too. And, during the summer we would get mad at my father because he would not allow us to go during the lettuce season they would go to West Cliff to work the fields. My uncle Antonio would take all his family to work in the lettuce and peas fields. Then they would come and harvest their crop.

ALICE: You never went?

ESTELLA: My father never allowed us to go but they would go.

ALICE: Were the teachers in La Arroyo Spanish?

STELLA: Sometimes they would bring in Spanish teachers.

ALICE: How did you learn to speak English?

ESTELLA: In the schools. That's what they taught us, English.

But, the Spanish teachers came see. I remember the teachers I had. That Anglo lady, I don't remember her name, Falk's wife. She was the first teacher that I can remember. She was a devil, she was mean. Then they brought another Anglo. I don't remember his name. After that they brought a Spanish teacher. He's the one that I told you, defended me. Eliseo Lucero, he came from Taos. That teacher and I corresponded for a long time after he left. He was the one who started us reading in Spanish. Like now if the lesson read - he (pointing to Mr. Pacheco) laughed at Nastacio Cruz because the lesson read "I'm making sand pies" and Nastacio Cruz would say, "yo quiero sampar". We were supposed to say "Estoy haciendo pasteles de arina". He would read it first and then we would sort of memorize it. And he, (pointing to Mr. Pacheco) would not say "log" in Spanish. He kept him sitting.

JOSE: I could not say lg in Spanish. I would say "cuarton" instead of "cuarton". I could not say "cuarton".

ESTELLA: It was very funny. I stop to remember the fun we had. Once we had a story in our book, I don't know if you had that story but it was in our book, The Little Red Hen who Planted the Corn. And, we would read, "The little red hen that planted corn", "La gallinita colorada que siembro el grano de maiz." My aunt Senaida she didn't know that was one thing about the teacher, he lived in my grandfather Vigil's house by my aunt Senaida and during the night he would take us over and teach us, and my aunt Senaida learned very fast and she would say, "Who wants to plant the grain, again?" She would say, "Not I said the dog, not I said the pig, not I said and she learned it very well. After making the cake, who wants to eat the cake, the corn bread that the little red hen made? I do said the cat, I do said the dog, I do said the pig. No, no, no, said the little red hen, I will eat it all. She had memorized it all.

ALICE: She never went to school.

ESTELLA: No she was an older woman.

ALICE: Did you know English when you started school?

ESTELLA: no, we spoke only in Spanish. That's why the Anglo teacher would hit us. She thought we were talking about her.

ALICE: Is that why she was so mean?

ESTELLA: She thought we were talking about her. Like we used to speak in Spanish and laugh. She thought we were talking about her.

ALICE: How did you learn English?

ESTELLA: We were forced to. The teachers would get real mad. But, you didn't learn it in school. You learned it - we learned it when we moved into town. No, I learned it in school. Sure, how was I able to read? You were able to read but you didn't know how to speak. We hardly ever spoke English but I knew it. I was the interpreter in La Arroyo. As soon as they saw an Anglo coming they would run and hide and I would have to interpret. They would bring me from all over to interpret, to see what the Anglo wanted.

ALICE: Did my grandparents know English?

ESTELLA: My father knew a little. My mother knew nothing. He knew but my mother was like Sarita. Your grandmother (father's mother) and my aunt Modesta learned it when they moved here. They did not speak in English over there. That was a problem. The teachers wanted us to speak in English but they would find us playing in a group every time, speaking in Spanish.

ALICE: Do you remember some of the games?

ESTELLA: The one I remember the most is "Pam Pam Pull Away". I don't know the name of it now.

ALICE: That was an English game, do you remember any Spanish ones?

ESTELLA: I guess not. The other game was baseball.

ALICE: I don't remember much about a Christmas celebration in school, do you?

ESTELLA: The programs were beautiful then. As I told you, I don't know how the schools were but North Veta and La Arroyo would get together to put on a program. At the beginning see. They would give us dialogues. They were like a play. They would give us those plays to get us to speak more. They would give English dialogues to the ones that did not know the English. Like in a dialogue your uncle Reynaldo entered the restaurant and sat at a table. Rosa the waitress asked him what do you want? Can I help you? and he answered, "Si, quiero que me traigas arros. Rose did not speak Spanish, she left and returned with a flower. He told her she was dumb. He had not asked for a flower he wanted "arros". She said well to me this is "a rose". I'm telling you the dialogue was in Spanish and English. He would ask for things in Spanish and she

would bring the English things. They would rhyme. It was funny how they rhymed. I'm telling you, the programs were beautiful. Then we used to get together for math. No him (pointing to Mr. Pacheco) because he was very seldom in school. He had the same things happen to him, like me. We would get together and form arithmetic and spelling teams. I would win them, in spelling and in arithmetic. One time Mr. Gallegos said now we are going to have Miss Vigil, Estella work out the problem and prove the answer. The rest will just work the problem see. I would win them. I guess that's why I have a good head for arithmetic in adding and multiplying. They would make me multiply the problem and then divide it to prove the answer. I would still win. I would always win in Arithmetic. Anne Trujillo, Flora, Adelina Martinez, and all the students from North Veta would compete with ours there.

ALICE: Then you very seldom went to school?

ESTELLA: No, they would not let him. He would attend at the most one month and then they would pull him out. He would not attend a full month. If they needed a shepherd and they couldn't find one they would pull him out of school and take him.

ALICE: How old were you when you started herding sheep?

ESTELLA: Eight years old. At the age of eight and Claudie did too, they would leave them all alone.

ALICE: They left you alone at that age in the mountains?

JOSE: Yes.

ALICE: Then you didn't have much schooling.

JOSE: No.

ESTELLA: I'm telling you, what we learned we learned by God's mercy who helped us. This teacher that I told you about, we had two Spanish male teachers, Eliseo and Bernal in La Arroyo and the female teachers were Tina Lucero and Dorothy. I don't know what happened to her. I don't know if she's dead or alive or if she just left, but her name was Dorothy Martinez. She's the one that helped me. She told my father, look Don Juand de Dios, you will not be supporting this girl all the days of your life. If something should happen one of these days and you leave, if she's still small, how is she going to support herself? She had no education. Not even enough to be an interpreter, to become something, she said. You must let her. This year you must give her. She is behind four years and this year you must let me have her completely for the whole semester, go find you a peon. Yes, but the peon costs, my father said. yes, he costs but one of these days it's going to cost her also. She knows nothing. After

seeing your aunt Sarita, she did me some good. I had to take 2 or 3 grades per year. In one year I passed the 6th, 7th, and 8th grades. If you allow me, I will find her a place to stay so that she can take nurses training. She would like to be a nurse. I will get her training free for her because you do not have the money to do it. You can't afford it. My father said, what does she want to learn nursing for, to wash diapers? He didn't let me. The old timers were something else, they didn't notice that one day we would need it. There your aunt Sarita, your aunt Sarita was not allowed to go at all. They would say today you have to wash, today you have to iron, tomorrow we will have a peon and you have to have lunch ready. Your aunt Simosella that had the chance didn't go. When she didn't feel like going she wouldn't go.

ALICE: Did your sister get more education than you and my uncle Claudie?

JOSE: Yes, they got more education than either of us. They attended school more than us.

ESTELLA: They didn't attend that much either. If something came up they would pull them out. If they had to go al hijadero, (then the baby lambs were born) they would pull them out since the last part of April. By the first of April they were all out of school and me right along with them. Them because they would go al hijadero and me because I had to go plant. They would pull us out since April. Since April they would pull us out. They wouldn't take him to the hijadero but they would leave him planting. He was the one who planted. The old timers were something else, I tell you.

ALICE: How did the Anglo teachers treat you?

JOSE: With the teachers, fine. They were fine with us but they used to fight with us because they could not make us speak in English. They would go and complaint to our parents that we did not want to learn, see. We couldn't learn. We were a bunch of dummies.

ESTELLA: They enrolled people over twenty years of age so that they may learn. Like Profirio Pacheco, Benito Martinez and Benjamin Martinez. They were there just in the way because all they would do is mess around. That's all they would do. Finally the teacher complained to the board members and they dropped them. My cousin Evan, an older girl was enrolled and she didn't learn anything. She would bother the rest of us, the younger ones. Finally they dropped them. I think Porfirio didn't even learn his name. They were all forced to go. But like they were forced they didn't learn anything and they withdrew them.

After this the teachers were all Spanish. In North Veta they had Gallegos

for many years. Then Garcia, he was there five years. Then that female teacher, what was her name? Phyllis, she was Felix Cruz's daughter. And, like I told you Eliseo, that teacher stayed with us three years. After Eliseo left, Bernal came for as many years. The teachers that were hired were hired for two or three years. Most of them were Spanish. There was Santana, then this Dorothy that I told you about, then Fedelina, then there was Jovita and then Filda Manzanares.

ALICE: What about the celebration? I remember that they celebrated a lot of holidays, more than today. Do you remember what holidays they were that were celebrated? Or were they saints days?

ESTELLA: Now in June we were remembering they would celebrate San Juan and Santiago and Santana. In June one celebrates San Juan, in July Santana and Santiago, in August San Jeronimo.

ALICE: Why did you celebrate them days?

JOSE: I guess because the first settlers did.

ESTELLA: On Santana's and Santiago's day they would have rooster races. They would kill the poor roosters. They would kill the roosters by hitting each other with the roosters, on horse back. Here in Mutual I remember my father and mother would come but we never came. Some how they could bury the rooster arid then with them on horse back they would pull them out. They would bury all the rooster, except his head. One on horse back, running as fast as the horse could would stoop down and pullout the rooster by the head then he would hit the rider closest to him with the rooster until it was dead.

ALICE: Why did they celebrate those days?

ESTELLA: Because it was Santana's day. It was your day, your saints day. They could celebrate it with a celebration. The 24th of June was San Juan's day and then Santiago. Do you know what they would do with us, the little girls during that day? They would take us outdoors and they would bunch our hair, like this, put it on a log and chop it off with the ax.

ALICE: Why did they do this?

ESTELLA: So our hair would grow fast. Santiago's days was the 24th of July. Santiagos days was a day of great celebration for the people of Mexico. That's how we got our holidays. They were statues with those names. In May it was San Isidros day. San Isidro was the farmer's patron saint and they would celebrate that day so that he would send rain. They would hold a wake for it and would serve a meal. Everyone would eat and have a feast.

ALICE: Everyone from the settlement?

ESTELLA: Everyone. Patricio Valdez lived next door to us. We would walk or go on wagon to San Isidro's wake.

ALICE: Did you have the celebrations in certain places?

ESTELLA: Whoever wanted. If you wanted to celebrate San Isidro that year you would invite everyone over to your house.

ALICE: Did each saint represent something?

ESTELLA: Ya, the majority of the people were Catholics. Yes, if they weren't they would join the community anyway in the celebration.

ALICE: Did the whole community unite for the celebration?

ESTELLA: Things were different in those times, it seems like people were more united then. In those days if a hog or lamb was being butchered everyone came. Everyone came to help with the butchering. I don't understand how that animal (meat) went such a long way. Everyone would eat here and take a piece of meat home with them and there was enough. When a hog was butchered the people from here in North Veta would go to the butchering.

ALICE: How did you inform everyone?

ESTELLA: Like now when Catarina was going to get married, they set a date to butcher the hog and they would notify each other.

ALICE: About a month before?

ESTELLA: Yes, like now in July I would tell them that I had a hog to butcher and I was feeding it and it would be ready by a certain day in August. So, by then all the neighbors knew the day.

ALICE: Was there a lot of people or just certain families?

ESTELLA: No, all the people around. In La Arroyo the following families would get together. My uncle Antonios family, us, my uncle Fermin's family, Uncle Frailan's family, Cruz's, Don Nastacio Vigil and family, Don Abran, and Don Isidoro. All of us would get together.

ALICE: Did people come from North Veta?

ESTELLA: Yes, the ones that were aware. Like now with the Chicos, if my uncle Antonio was going to make Chicos today, he would let us know, like say Friday, Sunday, Monday, Saturday, they never did a thing on Sunday, that's how they were. We would do nothing. They would tell us, we're going to make Chicos. We usually made Chicos on Friday night. We would get together by Friday night, by Friday evening we were ready, by this time we were bringing in the corn.

ALICE: Why did you pick Friday?

ESTELLA: I don't know, maybe so we would have something to do on Saturday. And here we go all of us in the wagon, Oh! it was so much fun. All the children. Not like today, they are always fighting. Here we all were in the wagon with whom ever was going to make the chicos to help him pick the corn. We would pick all the corn we were going to bring and then we would get around to desojarlo. We would peel off a few of the husks to make them. After we were done with the chicos and they were all covered, they would leave us some corn to roast. We would make a big fire and roast the corn. The children not the old people. By the time we were done eating the corn we were all dirty with ashes. We would rub each other with the dirty corn husks. Then in the morning they would start hollering, the old people like my father "Get up let's go to the chicos". Here we were rushing, getting our shoes on to go to the Chicos. We would eat some and then take some home. And we had plenty of everything. Nowadays that nothing is shared we don't have enough of anything. Everyone from each familia would take an arm full home. Everyone would eat there while they were taken out of the hole and then they would take some home. When we made some it was the same. Each family had their own hole for the chicos. Now all that is gone. The Bible says "Don't ask why the things in the past were better." But it was a joyous thing. People helped each other. If a rancher had a job to do and needed help the other ranchers, the neighbors would come over and help him and it was done. Then when the next rancher needed help the same thing was done. They would help each other.

I was with them when we were planting. My grandfather Vigil was the one who made the "circul". That old man was good! They would call him because he was the one who counted off the footsteps. He would count his steps and place a mark. There was eight steps between mark. Then he would start plowing the rows. He would tell us, okay, hijitos let's go. He would pray the Our Father, a Hail Mary and a Sudario. We would pray an Our Father, a Hail Mary and a Sudario and then they would get the teams ready. With his little hand he would control the mansera. Here he goes. The vesanas were straight from one end to the other. After he reached his mark, the rest of us would start and the planters. The other teams and myself. I was the planter but it was a wonderful thing. They would always pray before starting to plant. After we finished planting he would say, okay Lord we already planted for you, for us, for all the poor but not for the thieves. Very touching.

ALICE: What did that mean?

ESTELLA: Well that the siembra was for God, us all the poor people or of need but not for the thieves.

ALICE: Did they steal?

ESTELLA: No, they would share, why steal? As soon as the first field of corn was ready, the word would get around to go pick corn. Everyone went for corn and so on with the rest. In other words we would eat corn all through the summer.

To pick peas the youngsters would go not the adults, the youngsters, about this time of the day, it was cool, here we go all of us with buckets hollering "Let's go pick peas", "Let's go pick peas." We would bring our buckets full of peas. Then when the next field was ready we did the same thing. I think that is the reason why things or food increased so much.

ALICE: Were there some fences then?

ESTELLA: No, there were no fences. They started building fences later.

ALICE: How did they know which was their land?

ESTELLA: Everyone knew what land was theirs. They had roads to divide the land.

ALICE: Like today, if a cow goes in someone else's land they get in a fight, what happened then?

ESTELLA: Not then. I told you, they were very united. They would pastor all the cows over on the top of the hill in La Arroyo, everyone's. In the evening whoever went for his cows first would bring all of them down. They already knew, the next evening it was somebody else's turn, see. The cows knew where they were supposed to go, where they belonged.

ALICE: They had turns within the community bringing in the animals?

ESTELLA: yes. They didn't have many cows just some for milk. They everything was wonderful. Around that time when we got married, the fences started coming up.

ALICE: Do you remember when the Anglos came?

ESTELLA: There were no Anglos. The first one was Falks. He came to La Arroyo.

ALICE: What about Rohr?

ESTELLA: They came much later.

ALICE: What nationality were they?

ESTELLA: German

ALICE: What was their occupation?

ESTELLA: Ranchers.

ALICE: Did they plant.

ESTELLA: They planted wheat and grain. They came from Kansas see and that's what they had learned to do. They harvest a lot of corn in Kansas. That's what they did here too.

ALICE: Who were the first Anglo families?

ESTELLA: Rohr and Harrison.

ALICE: What about the celebrations, what did you do during lent?

ESTELLA: For lent as it is called it was usually during February or March.

ALICE: Did they get together all through the week during holy week?

ESTELLA: Yes. Then they got together since ash Wednesday once a week. Then during holy week they would get together since Wednesday night and would stay for three days. No it was Tuesday night, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, three days.

ALICE: What days did they get together during the 40 days?

ESTELLA: Two days a week Wednesday and Friday, Thursday and Friday. Just them not the people. The people would attend the last three days. The members were the only ones meeting.

ALICE: What did you have to do to become a member?

ESTELLA: Be in the house of prayer and in church. Pray the rosary, I guess. That's what we prayed, a rosary.

ALICE: If it was held for three nights where did the people sleep?

ESTELLA: There with the families in North Veta. We would stay with the old lady that I told you about, Martina Nieta. The rest would go over Don Tomas, I Don Albino. They would go over the neighbors around there. My Uncle Fermin and aunt Pablita would go over to Crecensio Trujillo's house. My uncle Antonio and aunt Fidelia to the others you left unmentioned was Pedro Gallegos, my aunt Fidelia's father, my aunt Fidelia's father lived there and they went there. Different families, the different families that were there. We went there. But they were big feasts. Everything was a feast. When the people got together they were always fed. I don't know if you remember when you were small, I would take you to the tinieblas.

There in the kitchen we would go for supper. My aunt Genuveva was there. My Genuveva was the head of the society. Well there was my aunt Genuveva, Dona Amada Hurtado, my aunt Clodovia and me. Liontino, Dona Tiodosa and a bunch. We would get together to prepare the food for them and like we were all there, the whole family would eat there, see.

