



ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM
INTERVIEW ABSTRACT

CONSULTANT: Consuelo Marquez

DATE OF BIRTH: March 13, 1908 GENDER: Female

DATE(S) OF INTERVIEW: December 12, 1997, January 16, 1998, March 17, 1998

LOCATION OF INTERVIEW: Mrs. Marquez' home, San Miguel, NM

INTERVIEWER: Jane O'Cain

SOURCE OF INTERVIEW: NMF&RHM__X__OTHER_____

TRANSCRIBED: Yes: March 24, 1998

NUMBER OF TAPES: Four

ABTRACTOR: O'Cain

DATE ABSTRATED: March 11, 1999.

QUALITY OF RECORDING (SPECIFY): Fair. Mrs. Marquez is difficult to understand at times.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE: Discusses parents' immigration from Chihuahua, Mexico to the United States. Father worked as a farm hand and itinerant produce peddler. Mrs. Marquez married a farm worker from Stahmann Farms and after leaving there in the late 1940s; they worked on several farms in the San Miguel area. Discusses some Mexican American traditions, foods, and use of native plants.

DATE RANGE: 1907- 1998

ABSTRACT (IMPORTANT TOPICS IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE):

TAPE ONE, SIDE A:

Father, Cruz Maya, and mother, Josefa Provencio Maya, emigrated from Juarez, Mexico to Clifton, Arizona in 1907 with two children.

Consuela Maya born in 1908 in Clifton, Arizona.

The family moved to San Miguel, NM in approximately 1916 after Mrs. Josefa Maya witnessed the death of her 4 or 5-year-old son in Clifton.

Cruz Maya found work on farms in San Miguel, and a friend provided a small home for the family.

There was no cotton being grown in San Miguel at the time Mrs. Marquez arrived; grains, fruit, and vegetables were the main crops. Her father would take a horse-drawn cart and peddle vegetables around northern New Mexico every winter for three months.

School in San Miguel. Teacher bi-lingual.

Discusses important man in San Miguel, Don Luciano Rodriguez. She stated he was a “political man”. His daughter was Sophia Waldrip of Las Cruces. Rodriguez would allow credit at his store until bills could be paid after the harvest.

Consuelo’s mother died about the time Consuelo finished the 8th grade. She didn’t get to attend high school, but stayed home to take care of her younger siblings. Her father built an adobe house in San Miguel for the children to live in.

TAPE ONE, SIDE B:

Her father, Cruz Maya, would preserve vegetables and fruit and sell it out of a horse drawn cart in the northern towns of N.M. He would leave every November and be gone for three months.

Discusses dances and other leisure time activities when she was a teen-ager.

During the Depression (?) [she thinks it was earlier than 1932] the people of San Miguel were given boxes of food to feed their families. States that there were no jobs, everyone lived on their “little place”. No electricity to homes in San Miguel. They used lamps or candles. Family did not subscribe to newspapers or magazines.

Begins discussion of an “ordinary” day (cooking, washing clothes) in the mid to late 1920s.

TAPE TWO, SIDE A:

Her mother used to cook outside on an open fire using “two sheets of metal”.

Discusses the poverty the family faced when they first moved to N.M. But felt the family was better off in the United States because of the violence in Mexico.

Discusses her father’s horses, Chello and Lupe, and the produce business.

Describes a wild plant used as shampoo or detergent for fine clothes.

Cleaning the church, using white sand to pack on the dirt floor, and white sand to clean the walls.

TAPE THREE, SIDE A:

Her father built an adobe shed, filled it with sand, and replanted vegetables there in the fall, so they would have vegetables to eat during the winter months.

More about food preservation: chili, corn, fruit, fish, tomatoes.

Discusses home remedies: potatoes were used to treat fever. Sunflowers, rosebuds, and other flowers were used to treat illness. Rosebuds were steamed and given as a drink before and after baths.

Discusses 1918 influenza epidemic, none of her family members became ill, but other people in San Miguel died from the flu. Her mother's belief to avoid infection.

Childbirth in Mrs. Marquez's time: she was assisted by women friends. Women would be given an herb drink (she does not know the herb). Women stayed at home for forty days after childbirth to avoid contagious diseases.

Her husband's family came to Stahmann Farms from Bernalillo. She states husband, Tomas, was born at Stahmann Farms in 1903, as was his older siblings [Stahmann Farms was established in the Mesilla Valley in 1926].

TAPE THREE, SIDE B:

Houses were provided for the workers on Stahmann Farms. Her parents-in-law lived there until they died.

When Mrs. Marquez went to Stahmann Farms in 1938, they were still clearing the land. She remarks that there were many chickens and horses being raised. Her husband took care of 60 horses and trained them as workhorses.

Discussion of Stahmann Farms continues, she believes it was after 1938, when Mr. Stahmann began to bring families from Mexico to work on the farm. In the later 1940's, Isabel Aguirre states there were 3 or 4 families living on the portion of Stahmann farms where they lived.

The commissary building served as a store, a dance hall, and later as a church. Discusses commissary management; it was understood that they were to make their purchases only at the commissary. Credit would be issued at the commissary for the number of hours that had been worked in a week. Mrs. Marquez's brother, Reyes Maya, owned a store in San Miguel. She states the main reason they left Stahmann Farms was because of the issue of being required to shop at the commissary. Her daughter defends the practice followed at Stahmann Farms in regard to requiring purchases at the commissary. Discussion of housing on Stahmann Farms and at Salopek Farms.

Mrs. Marquez's husband earned \$9.60 per week for many years, regardless of whether he was working with the horses or clearing land.

Mayordomos were in charge of the work at Stahmann Farms. A conflict arose over working on Sunday until 12:00, because the men missed mass. Consultant states this was another reason they decided to leave Stahmann Farms.

TAPE FOUR, SIDE A:

Mrs. Marquez's father would catch and cook ecotejas (turtles). Also would cook large worms found in the root of mesquite tree. And water worms that were caught in the river after water releases from the dam were stopped.

Discuss her mother's gift of a rosary, and the custom of arras.

Discusses festivals sponsored by Mr. Stahmann on San Isidoro Day (patron saint of agriculture), every May 15th.

From Stahmann farms in 1949[?], Mr. Marquez went to work at the Lewis Farm (the family lived in Consuela's brother's house in San Miguel). Lewis raised cotton and Mr. Marquez was the mechanic and drove heavy equipment.

Tomas Marquez left Lewis Farm after about three years and went to work at Salopek Farms because the salary was higher. The family lived in housing provided by Salopek.

Roberto Rodriguez was the Marquez's next employer. He raised cotton and sheep.

On Longino's Farm, the last place Mr. Marquez was employed, they raised cotton, alfalfa, and vegetables for family consumption. Longino brought in 60 or 70 braceros to pick cotton. Marquez worked at Longino's Farm from 1957-1967.

After retirement from farm work Mr. Marquez did lawn care.

Mrs. Marquez stated that she was happy at most places they worked. Her husband did not like working seven days per week, however. They heard about jobs by word of mouth. She doesn't remember people getting laid off from the farms. The farmers would sometimes give jobs to the people just passing through who needed money to move along.

Stahmann would give a bonus to his workers every year. Stahmann would provide for all his workers' families at Christmas.

Discusses learning to play piano. She traded housework for her lessons from the music teacher. Isabel and Conseulo discuss changes in the style of music. The first instrument Mrs. Marquez had was a harmonica.

TAPE FOUR, SIDE B: Blank