

Antonia Castañeda

Antonia Castañeda: Reflections on a Career in Chicana/o Studies

Chicana/o Studies Oral History Project

Interviews conducted by
Todd Holmes
in 2018

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Antonia Castañeda (Photo by Luz Maria Gordillo)

Abstract

Antonia Castañeda is professor emeritus of history at St. Mary's University. Born in Crystal City, Texas and raised in the Yakima Valley of Washington state, Professor Castañeda received her PhD in history from Stanford University, representing one of the first Chicana graduate students in the program. She held faculty positions at UC Santa Barbara and the University of Texas, Austin before joining the history department at St. Mary's. She is the author of many publications within the field of Chicana/o Studies, such as: *Chicano Literature: Texts and Context* (1972); "The Political Economy of Nineteenth Century Stereotypes of Californianas" (1990); "Women of Color and the Rewriting of Western History: The Discourse, Politics, and Decolonization of History" (1992); "Sexual Violence in the Politics and Policies of Conquest: Amerindian Women and the Spanish Conquest of Alta California" (1993); and "Engendering the History of Alta California: Gender, Sexuality, and the Family" (1998). In addition to her scholarship, she has actively worked to advance the inclusion of gender and sexuality in the field. She is a founding member of the scholarly organization Mujeres Activas en Letras y Cambio Social (MALCS), and co-editor of the Chicana Matters Series at University of Texas Press. In this interview, Professor Castañeda discusses: her family background and upbringing; her educational journey from high school and the University of Washington to graduate school at Stanford; her experience in the profession; her reflections on the development of Chicana/o Studies during the early years and how the field evolved over the decades; the struggle of Chicanas to gain equal footing in the fields of history and Chicano Studies; the reception of Chicana/o Studies at the universities she served; as well as her thoughts on important works and high points in the field over the last fifty years.

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Project History

By Todd Holmes
Berkeley, California

Over fifty years ago, UC Berkeley anthropologist Octavio Romano founded the publication, *El Grito: A Journal of Contemporary Mexican-American Thought*. In many respects, it was one of many actions of the time that sought to channel the educational aims of the Mexican American civil rights movement into the corridors of higher education. And in the years that followed, scholars on campuses throughout California and the West built upon those objectives, ultimately establishing the academic discipline that became known as Chicana/o studies.

The Chicana/o Studies Oral History Project was established in 2017 with the goal of commemorating fifty years of Chicana/o studies and documenting the formation of the field through in-depth interviews with the first generation of scholars who shaped it. As a research unit of The Bancroft Library, the Oral History Center has enjoyed rare access to the academy since its founding in 1953, compiling one of the richest collections on higher education and intellectual history in the country. Interviews with Nobel laureates and university presidents fill this collection, as do those with renowned poets and leading scientists. Thus, oral histories with the founding generation of scholars in the field of Chicana/o studies were a fitting addition. Moreover, documenting the formation of an academic field aimed at studying the Mexican American experience was a rare and special opportunity all its own.

The importance of the project was without question; the reality of executing a project of this size and complexity, however, ushered forth a host of logistical challenges. To that end, we at the Oral History Center forged partnerships with scholars and universities across the country, establishing what could be considered an unprecedented collaboration to document the history of Chicana/o studies and celebrate the scholars who played a vital role in its formation. I first created an advisory council composed of recognized junior faculty in the field. Establishing the council was important, as it not only brought a larger, community voice into decisions on the project's scope and direction, but also seasoned expertise to the nomination process for interviewees—a procedure that likely proved much lengthier and more complicated than anyone anticipated. Ultimately, the council helped develop a list of over twenty-five prominent and pioneering scholars to be interviewed for the project.

The second part of this collaboration developed with universities. The Oral History Center is an independent, soft-money research unit at UC Berkeley, which means the office receives very little direct support from the university. Endowments and fundraising underwrite the OHC's operations. For the Chicana/o Studies Oral History Project, a generous consortium of deans, provosts, chancellors, and presidents stepped forward to extend support. Stanford University sponsored the first two interviews, with the University of California Office of the President raising the bar by pledging to fund all UC-related interviews. The pledge not only sought to highlight the role of UC campuses in the field, but also served as a call to arms for other universities in the West to follow suit. Many university administrators answered that call. Deans at UT Austin, Arizona State, and the University of Arizona pledged support, as did administrators at Loyola Marymount, Gonzaga University, UT San Antonio, Brigham Young University, and the University of Houston, among others. Again, highlighting the leading role of

California in the field, the California State University system agreed to fund all CSU-related interviews for the project. The outpouring of support behind the Chicana/o Studies project stands as an inspiring collaboration within the academy.

The scholars included in this project represent some of the most influential writers, educators, and activists in the field of Chicana/o studies. To be sure, their contributions to the field are many, from teaching and scholarship to mentoring and administration, with each playing a unique and significant role in advancing the study of the Mexican American experience from a mere idea in the late 1960s to a mainstay on college campuses across the country five decades later. I'm indebted to each for their generosity and participation in this project. They not only opened up their homes and offices for the interviews, but shared their work and experiences with sincerity and candor. They also exhibited a noteworthy level of humility, as each would be among the first to call this project far from complete. Projects are often imperfect, and this oral history series is no different. Some of those we wished to include, such as Juan Gómez-Quíñones, passed away before they could be interviewed, just as funding complications have delayed the inclusion of others. Thus, as the first installment of this project goes to press, we remember those who passed before they could participate and look forward to the new additions to be made in the years to come.

This project significantly advances our understanding of the development and evolution of the field of Chicana/o studies. Yet the development of Chicana/o studies, as captured in these interviews, is more than just the story of a discipline. It is the story of a generation of scholars who broke through barriers to take their place in the nation's universities, and spent their careers documenting the history and experience of their community. It is the story of educational reform, where scholars of color demanded that America's curriculum equally include all its citizens. In many respects, it is also a story that highlights another side of the civil rights movement, one where actions in the classroom, rather than those in the streets, proved the long-lasting vector of social change. It is my hope that this project does justice to that legacy.

Advisory Council

Miroslava Chávez-García [University of California, Santa Barbara]

Raúl Coronado [University of California, Berkeley]

Maria Coterá [University of Texas, Austin]

Matthew Garcia [Dartmouth College]

Ignacio García [Brigham Young University]

Mireya Loza [Georgetown University]

Lydia Otero [University of Arizona, Emeritus]

Stephen Pitti [Yale University]

Raúl Ramos [University of Houston]

Oliver Rosales [Bakersfield College]

Mario Sifuentez [University of California, Merced]

Irene Vásquez [University of New Mexico]

Interview 1: October 22, 2018

01-00:00:12

Holmes:

All right, well this is Todd Holmes with the Oral History Center at UC Berkeley. Today's date is October 22, 2018. I have the pleasure of sitting down with Antonia Castañeda, for the Chicana/o Studies Oral History Project, and we are here at the Casa de Cuentos at the Rinconcito de Esperanza, a very historic home in San Antonio's Westside. We are joined today by Stephen Pitti, professor of history and American studies at Yale University, and four graduate students from Yale University: Lucero Estrella, Sandra Sanchez, Mario Jose Plascencia, and Hector Peralta. Antonia, thank you so much for arranging for this wonderful place to conduct the oral history, and also for taking the time to sit down with me today.

01-00:01:20

Castañeda:

Well thank you. It's a pleasure.

01-00:01:23

Holmes:

Well, our two sessions together, we really want to capture your background and experience within the development of particularly Chicana studies, but maybe let's start with a little bit about your background and your family background.

01-00:01:40

Castañeda:

I'm a Tejana. I was born in Texas, although not raised here. My mother's family, my maternal family, is from Piedras Negras, just over the river, and my paternal family, my father's family, is from the area of San Benito, and in his case, he's part of the historical population. His family had been in Texas since the eighteenth century. My mother's family comes during the Mexican Revolution but not because of the revolution. They came for reasons of labor as opposed to political reasons of being pushed out by the issues and violence of the revolution. At any rate, they settle in Texas. My maternal grandparents settle in Crystal City, which is at that point being developed, and they needed labor to clear the land, and so my grandfather, Benito Rodríguez then, becomes kind of a foreman in that process in overseeing the Mexican labor force, the Mexican, Mexican American, but principally, Mexican labor force.

I am born in Texas but not raised in Texas. When I was four, my family migrated to the state of Washington, and before that, we had moved from Crystal City, which is where we were from and we were born, to Eagle Pass, and then from Eagle Pass to the state of Washington. This is right after the Second World War—I am born in 1942. My father, who had previously worked for the ice plant in Crystal City for fifteen, close to twenty years, lost that job, and worked, actually, briefly, on what becomes the Prisoner of War Internment Camp in Crystal City, largely Japanese, Latin American Japanese, Peruvian, especially, and it is very difficult to find work other than as manual laborer, and my father, at that point, is semi-skilled—he's a carpenter, not a formally trained carpenter, but that's his work. And so, he does what many

men do, Mexican American men, at the time, he leaves and goes to work in the shipyards, and he winds up in the shipyards in Vancouver, Washington, and he's there for a couple of years while we transfer from Crystal City to Eagle Pass, and then when he comes back on vacations—so the story is, my mother says, "Well, we have these five children," at the time, "and I do not want to raise them in Texas, because life is so difficult here, especially for Mexicans, and so, this family is going with you when you return to Washington."

And so we did, and we traveled from Texas to Washington in a flatbed truck, in a *tronca enlonada*, (tarp-covered flatbed truck) with other families. I haven't been able to get the names of all of the families that we traveled with, but it was at least four or five families, all with children, on the back of this flatbed truck, in March, and traveling the 2,000-plus miles from Texas to the state of Washington, and the truck had near accidents: snowy, snowy roadways; the tarp broke. I want to convey the difficulty of that trip, and of the fact that most of the people—I don't remember the trip, I was four years old—but most of the people had to stand the whole way, because the whole bed of the truck was full of suitcases and tires. And this is an era also when traveling across the country for anybody was difficult, but in that case, for people being transported to work, it was especially difficult, because you could not stop, necessarily, and replenish your food, or your water, or the milk for the children, and particularly because you were not served inside, and so there are stories about stopping and trying to go to get milk or to get food, and not being able to do so.

So that whole process, those journeys, are not documented. Those stories are not told, so we don't have that history, that labor history, of people crossing the United States, to work as laborers, and for me, there's multiple issues. One of the issues is that—because it's an area that I'm interested in and a project that I've been working on for a long time, and it goes in fits and starts—I have an interest in women and gender, and I'm interested in the process, which in many cases, this was the first time that families had migrated that distance. So as a woman, a mother—a wife—of several children, packing for a journey that you've never taken, to a place you've never been to, to a climate that's very different from your own, how do you decide what to pack, what to take? What do you need to take? You are responsible for feeding this whole family. You're the provider of sustenance for the family, and so what do you take to cook with, to cook on? You're used to working with *molcajete*. *Molcajetes* are very heavy. You're used to working with *sartenes*, *sartenes* that are cast iron. Those are very heavy. How do you pack? What do you take? On the trip itself—it's 2,000-plus miles, two, three nights and days of travel—what do you take to feed this family that you're responsible for? So, those are questions that I want to work up, because I'm interested in food, or that I do work on. I've got a couple of articles that are in process.

So, the other dimension that I want to underscore about not just the trip but the whole reality at that moment, that historical reality of labor forces in the United States, and the process of labor, and that is that we're coming out of the Depression—we are journeying from Texas to Washington State. Out of the Depression then, we see, and we have studies, some oral histories perhaps, but certainly some studies, about the migration, the Great Migration of African Americans from the South to the urban centers, to Chicago and other places. We have some histories, some studies of the migration, the Dust Bowl Migration, also of that era, just right before.

So, we have some understanding of those dimensions of the labor force, of the US labor force that produces food or products, but we don't have studies or information about this very significant migration of Mexican Americans. And I want to underscore that these were US citizens, and the treatment was of non-US citizens, and so we wind up in these spaces, agriculture labor, where the Dust Bowl Migration migrants have been, and we wind up in labor camps with one or two families who are part of that migration, but not many, because the Dust Bowl Migration migrants then get treated very differently and get absorbed into the societies, whether it's in California, or whether it's in Washington State. They eventually can, not in all cases obviously, but become some of the farmers that then oppose unionization.

And so, it's this larger labor history, both in terms of gender and race and ethnicity, that I am deeply concerned about, and think that we have not yet had the possibility of developing those studies. There is certainly documentation that one can access, but more than the actual printed materials and documentation, it is those oral histories. And so, the girls that I grew up with, we're in our seventies and eighties, and so, those oral histories are not collected, or the young men, that population, who were children or who experienced that migration. It was a migrant route, and it started in Texas in March and ended back in Texas in September. If people were migrating to the state of Washington, and the migration from Texas was from San Antonio down to the Lower Valley, if they were migrating to the state of Washington then, and following the crops, of course, the different cycles of the crops, but in the state of Washington then, one of the major industries of agribusiness then and still is the production of hops, *húpulo*, for beer, and so some of the major, major concerns, businesses, were hop-growing entities, and that's where we wound up.

We wound up at the Golding Hop Farm, which, the owner at the time was John I. Haas, Incorporated—H-a-a-s—and most of the hops that they produced and packed, pressed and packed, went to Germany. But the point is that the hops, the growing season, I mean the process, starts in March, with the planting and the placing of the posts that will hold the hop yard in place, and then the placing of the wire that becomes the base for wrapping the vines. That process starts in March, and then there's multiple processes it goes through, maybe June, and then there's a period of growth, July and mid-

August, and then in August, mid-August, the hop harvest starts and goes from mid-August to mid-September, day and night, because they have to get the little *bolitas*, the little hop fruit. Then there's a process of stripping the vines, of pushing it through, of cleaning, of standing at the conveyor belt and taking out all the leaves, and then pushing it through to be cooked, and pressed, and packed.

And so, back to my family: everybody worked, and so the women, my mother and the women in the camp in the labor camp, worked both in the fields, and then during hop harvest, on the line, on the conveyor belt. I started to say we all worked, and so, at that point, yes, everybody worked in the fields. We all worked in the fields. The Yakima Valley is one of the most verdant valleys in the United States because of the Reclamation Act of 1902, and so that enabled the development of irrigation and agriculture.

So, the Valley expands mightily in terms of agricultural products, and so there's all the row crops, and then there's the hops, the hop yards, and then there are the orchards. There are orchards there in the Valley, but it varies. So the largest apple orchards are in the Okanogan, not in the Yakima Valley, although there are apple orchards in the Yakima Valley, but the row crops are tomatoes and potatoes and onions and cantaloupe, and then asparagus. You harvest it in the morning, then there's a period of more growth, and then you harvest it in the afternoon, and so we would work before going to school. "Cutting grass," that's what it was called—it wasn't marijuana, it was asparagus—with a fork-like tool—we worked before school, went to school, then worked after school, in that particular crop. That wasn't the case with all of the crops, but it was the case with some.

Since hops were the major crop, that period of growth there isn't as much work in the Valley, then we would migrate internally, we would migrate then from the Yakima Valley to the Skagit Valley, which is north, beyond Seattle, to harvest berries: strawberries, raspberries, to harvest peas. What was another harvest in that part of the world? Mainly we worked in the berries, so from one labor camp to another, although by then, when we were doing the internal migration, we were no longer living at the Yakima Golding Hop Farm. We had moved from the Yakima Golding Hop Farm to another hop yard that also belonged to John I. Haas and it was a single home, but it was right next to a big hop kiln, and to lots of hop yards, and then we moved to Granger, and that's where I graduate from.

So, what I want to stay about this era, about that migration and about growing, about that experience: that experience shaped me. It is the basis of who I am, and I say that if I have any sense of social justice, it comes from there, from that experience of living in a labor camp. And it was a community. I know that my family lived in a community in Crystal City, but I don't remember, because I was too young, but it was a community of workers, and it was 95 percent Mexican American, Mexican, Tejanas, Tejanos. So even though I

wasn't raised in Texas, I was raised Tejana. I was raised with the food, with the language, with the culture, with the songs, with the traditions, with the experience of *Tejas*, and part of the experience of *Tejas* was a very deep sense of injustice, and a very deep sense of history, and of a history that was untold. What I mean by that is, it's a history that we learn sitting around the table, and hearing stories, but there was no reflection of it in the books at all, and it was a period also where stereotypes and disparaging stereotypes of Mexicans were ever present. What I came to understand later is that *injusticia* cut across, wherever we were. So, it was maybe slightly better in Washington, but not much.

01-00:22:24

Holmes:

I wanted to ask you, Antonia, if you could talk a little bit about your experience in school. So, you become really one of the first generation of Chicana scholars, walking in that path, but as you were just relaying that background, that's a very uphill walk. It was a very unlikely walk for many people, and so maybe discuss your experience of education, in that kind of environment?

01-00:22:57

Castañeda:

Well, so I went to a rural school because we lived in a rural environment: McKinley High School—McKinley Grade School, sorry, and McKinley Grade School, which is now Heritage College, in the state of Washington. So my grade school is now Heritage College, which really charges me. I love it. So, I am here, and I was able to do what I did because of the economics of my family. I mentioned that my dad was a—semi-skilled is the term that I was looking for—a carpenter, and so he becomes, in this labor camp, he becomes kind of the handy person, handyman, and works on the pressing of the hops and making the crates for shipping them. The point of that is that he had a year-round job, and we lived in the labor camp year-round. Everybody left. There were very few of us that stayed, but the point is that he had a year-round job. He had an income. He was paid a dollar an hour, but it was year-round, and we did not have to continue migrating, so therefore, I could go to school year-round. My brothers and sister and I could go to school year-round, and we did, in this little school.

So, it was this rural school, and I want to underscore also precisely because it is such a misrepresentation of Mexicans and Mexican Americans as not being interested in education. Our parents understood the importance of education, and wanted us to stay in school and finish, and they promoted education, and in my family, we were able to do that because my dad had a year-round job, and other families, as much as they wanted to promote education, they were unable to because they had to continue migrating, and pull their children out of school, and so on.

So, to respond to your question is, my grade school experience was very nurturing, both at home and in school. The teachers, on the one hand, they

cared for us. On the other hand, I also grew up being told by these wonderful teachers, whose names I still remember, and who were very, very kind, and who enabled me to grow and thrive academically as a child, they would say, "Well, are you sure you're Mexican? Because you're not like them," and I would look around and wonder what the hell that meant, because of course I was like them. These are my friends. These are the people I grew up with. These are my, yeah, these are my mother's friends. What do you mean I'm not like them? Of course I'm like them. They were trying, I think, to be kind in their own way, but when you tell a child that they're not like the people that they are of, I think that that is not healthy, and I knew something was wrong. I didn't have the words to be able to say, "What do you mean?" but I knew something was wrong. So, on the one hand, that formation, and their wanting me to thrive, enabled me to. On the other hand, there was this other tension that I could not, as a child, know what to do with.

High school was similar. There were, as we progressed through the grades, there were fewer and fewer of us. By "us," I mean Mexican Americans, because people migrated, and as they migrated, then the children got further and further behind, and eventually, of course, dropped out. So there were fewer and fewer of us that reached high school, and then when I was in the tenth grade, my family moved to Granger. My dad got a job. He had a major accident. He fell from a kiln, and so eventually, he got a job at a dairy farm in Granger, and so, we moved to Granger, and I graduated from Granger. Similarly, I was one of very few, and again I had teachers who were interested, and one teacher in particular, Wiley Johnston, who taught Spanish. He could barely speak Spanish, but he was a really good, caring teacher, and so he formed with us a club called The Accolades, and it was a future teachers club, and he would take us to different locations for meetings and such. And that was really part of my formation, and I'm ever grateful to Wiley, Wiley Johnston, who enabled me, who also nurtured, and he said, "You should go on."

So, I graduated from Granger in 1960, from Granger High School, one of very few Mexican Americans. My older brother, {George}, and I both graduated from Granger, and throughout the whole time, since I think I was in the ninth grade, I worked in stores. I worked in fields, but I also worked in stores: worked in a jewelry store for a while in Toppenish, Washington; I worked in the grocery store in Granger; worked in the drug store in Granger; and again, this is the Yakima Valley. It is an agricultural valley, and if I haven't said and I need to say, the Yakima Valley, Yakama—when we moved there it was Yakima, Y-a-k-i-m-a, but subsequently, the Yakama people, changed it back to its original spelling, so it's Y-a-k-a-m-a, Yakama. Anyway, it is a reservation. I grew up on a reservation. The whole Valley is a reservation, but the indigenous population were treated as badly as we were, or worse, because it was their land and their home.

So growing up, there's a whole essay that I'd like to write. I won't, because I'm not going to, it's too late, but there's a whole essay about Western towns, frontier towns, and Toppenish, Washington; and Wapato, Washington; and Sunnyside, and Zillah. The social structure is very clear, and very hierarchical racially, racially and ethnically. At this point, it's changed some, particularly because the Yakima Valley, some of the towns are 90 percent Latino, or close. But in that era—fifty, sixty years ago—that was not the case. It was very hard. It was very hard growing up there, and so I worked in a drug store, and maybe you don't need this much detail. You can edit it out, but I'm going to tell it anyway.

01-00:31:11

Holmes:

Oh, absolutely.

01-00:31:12

Castañeda:

So I worked in a drug store, and I liked working in the drug store, and the people that owned it were very nice, very kind. I'm working in the drug store as a clerk and as a soda clerk, because at that point, there's a fountain, and I made really, really, really good lime sodas. So there's several young women, young Euro American women, the wives and daughters of the business people in town, and with children—they're young marrieds—and my mother had been there, and had bought something. So there are these stools on the counter, and one of the young women put the child down, and the other one just as quickly said, "Hey, don't put that—pick that child up! A Mexican would have stood there." Well my mother had just been there. So it's those things, those experiences that shaped me, and the tension was, for me anyway, thinking about it now, on one hand, treated well. I never directly specifically had any racist or racial remarks directed at me specifically, but, they were all around me, and in that sense they were directed at me, and in that case, it was very, very direct.

It's that tension that's always ever present. I had a girlfriend whom I loved dearly. I spent a lot of time at her home. Her family were very kind and welcoming and loving to me. That's where I first had white gravy. I never heard of white gravy before, but it was very good. I enjoyed it. I love it. I still love it. I make it on occasion. And, I could stay at her house overnight but she couldn't stay at mine, I don't know, because I was Mexican, but also because the issue of sex and race. I have three older brothers. At that point only one brother was home, but he was—so, no, she couldn't stay. My brother was going with a Euro American girl and her parents were just very, very distressed about it and very concerned. So those elements were present, and we moved from the labor camp. The place where we lived in Granger was a tarpaper shack, literally. I'm not kidding. It was a tarpaper shack, but it was a roof over our heads.

01-00:34:34

Holmes:

Well, talk a little bit about your decision to go to college, and your experience of going there to Eastern Washington State. Were you the first of your family to attend college?

01-00:34:46

Castañeda:

I was, and I went to college because, well, as I said, my parents promoted education. They said, "We can't help you, but we won't stop you," and I had this teacher, Wiley Johnston, and I was part of The Accolade group, and several in that group were going to college. And so, I don't know whether Wiley or who said—I think really it was Wiley who said, "You really should go." So, I want to say it was kind of happenstance, and maybe it was, but Wiley's really kind of responsible for my going on, and I didn't know what I was doing. You had to fill out applications, so I filled out applications. I knew that my parents didn't have money, and I didn't want to worry them, so I forged their signature, because showing them the applications and all the filling out and stuff, would have been incredibly stressful for them, and they had enough stresses.

One of the things that certainly we know that we don't necessarily often address, although more so more recently, is how absolutely stressful poverty is, the stresses and the strains. I used to think periodically when I was trying to write papers and trying to work, and I was at Stanford and was going crazy and felt stressful, then I would think of my mother and the stresses that she experienced and I thought, 'Okay, I can do this. I don't have to worry about feeding six children, and working in the fields, and all that.' So, I filled out applications, and I got a hundred-dollar scholarship from something, and this is the era of Sputnik. This is the era of the National Defense Education Act Loan, and that they're providing funds if you study languages. I think Wiley told me about it, so I applied for that. I got an NDSL loan, and I got a scholarship for a hundred dollars, and I saved some money while working. And on that, I went off.

My parents drove me to Eastern Washington. I was the first in my family to go to college. At that point, all of my brothers and sister—I have a younger sister, but at that point, she was very young. At that point, all of us graduated from high school, and in that era, graduating from high school was almost like now graduating as an undergraduate, because people didn't, often. So, we all graduated from high school, and my parents said, "Well, we can't help you but we won't stop you," and why that matters is because, this is an era when certainly, Mexican girls didn't leave home. Mexican American girls didn't leave home, and so in our community, there was some consternation about Irenita, because my name is Antonia Irene, and at that point, my family called me Nenita, and so that's how I'm known in the community.

So there was some consternation in the community about me leaving, and that created problems, I'm sure, for my parents, because they probably got told,

"Why are you doing this? You can't do this." But they took me and left me there at school. Subsequently, my best Mexican American girlfriend, I learned later that—we used to write to each other. I was very good about writing letters at that time, and so her mother forbade her to write to me, because I had left and I was away, and who knows what I was doing, and who I was doing it with, and so she didn't want that influence for her daughter, of this young woman out there on the loose.

So, Eastern, I was in this space. It was beautiful. There were trees. It was green. I used to climb a tree and read sometimes just because it was so beautiful, and I could sit there and look. Where I grew up—I loved how I grew up, and I love who I am—but aesthetically, it was dirt. We grew up with dirt, which is another essay, about dirt, but that's another matter. So, I'm at Eastern, and I'm in this dorm with all these women, and so yeah, I make friends, and it's interesting and they're all white, or Euro American, except me, and then this woman who was my roommate named Valerie, who's Italian from Idaho. So it's very different. On the one hand, I grew up with all Euro American kids in the schools and so in that sense, it was familiar, but also, the institution was very unfamiliar. And of course in that era, you lived in dorms and you had curfews, and on Sundays, you put on your best duds and you wore gloves and you went to dinner. I don't have any gloves. Who the hell had gloves? I had work gloves, but I didn't have little dainty gloves.

Anyway, I find the issues of race and class are very present, but particularly race. So, I have this boyfriend, Bill, whose last name I still remember, but I don't need to say it, who was in ROTC, and at some point, Bill says to me, "I need to ask you something." "Sure, ask away." "So, are you Indian?" I didn't know what to say. I said, "Well, not US—Mexican. We're Mestizos. We're mixed race." I don't think I said "mixed race" because I didn't have that language, but I said, "Not US," and he said, "Well, I'm from Coeur d'Alene, and the Colville Reservation is near my home, and my parents said I could not go out with you." So, that ended the relationship with Bill. So again, it keeps coming, in the state of Washington, far removed from racist South Texas, where my mother thought she would find refuge. So all of those elements are part and parcel of this process.

I wind up with rheumatic fever while I'm there, and so then I stay out a year, and then I go to Western Washington State. By then, it's 1962, '63, yeah, because I stayed out a year and worked kind of as a typist, a secretary at the Prosecuting Attorney's office in the state of Washington, in Yakima, for Yakima County, and lived with relatives in Yakima. So I worked there and served as an interpreter. So there I am, interpreting in courtrooms, and I'm nineteen, twenty, and as part of my job in the prosecuting attorney's office is to go to the county jail every Monday and write down the names of the inmates or the people who were picked up. Most of them are Mexican, Mexican American. Some of them are young men. These are formative

experiences. When is the World's Fair in the state of Washington where the Needle is? Is that '62, '63?

01-00:45:07

Holmes: I think you're right.

01-00:45:08

Castañeda: So anyway, that's when I go from Eastern to Western Washington College. I did not want to go back to Eastern Washington College after that experience with Bill. It just was too distressing. I didn't know enough to be angry. I was just hurt. I didn't know enough to be enraged, and to just pound the hell out of him or something, [laughs] but yeah, I didn't know enough at the time. I just knew that it was really wrong, and I was deeply hurt, obviously. I was deeply hurt, at the same time I grew up with Indians. We didn't use the term at that point—this is '62, '63—"Native Americans," but these are the folks I grew up with, there were Indian people in the labor camp, in the Golding Hop Farm. They were not Yakama. They were from Wyoming and other places, but they were Indian people. I grew up with Indian folks. I grew up with white folks in the labor camp too, but not many, and they were more the foremen types. So, it just was very distressing and unnerving, and yeah, I didn't know enough to be angry and to be enraged, and just kick back, but I knew that it was wrong.

01-00:46:49

Holmes: I wanted to ask you to talk a little bit about the transition to Western—you begin to major in Spanish, is that correct?

01-00:47:01

Castañeda: Yeah, you know, you don't have a major early on, and so, I am in college, and I'm needing to determine what I'm going to do. I wanted to be—it isn't so much even that I wanted to be a teacher. I wanted an inside job, let me put it that way. I wanted not to work outside. I wanted not to work in the fields, and so yeah, so I thought, 'Okay, I could be a teacher,' and Spanish seemed to be the most viable at the time. I didn't know enough to know that I liked history or that I could or should or might—

01-00:47:50

Holmes: Were you able to take some history classes?

01-00:47:52

Castañeda: Yes, eventually, I took some history classes. Somehow, I wound up in ancient history, and so, my first semester—it was a two-semester course—in my first semester I got a D. The second semester, I got an A. So, I think that's about the time that I decided I liked history, but I didn't know that I could major in it, because there was no help, no direction, no mentoring. And I don't think that that was necessarily any different. I don't think I was singled out to be not mentored. I think it was just at that point, I didn't know who to ask, or there was nobody, certainly nobody in my family or community that I knew that I could ask, "What do I do?" or "How do I do this?"

So, I got a BA in Spanish, and a related degree in education, because I wanted to be a teacher, so I was able to get a teaching certificate. And so my story about Spanish, which I didn't learn very well: I had instructors, one instructor in particular, who was the Spanish professor, but he, too, couldn't speak Spanish very well, and I'm not quite sure how knowledgeable he was about grammar and so on, but the point is that he would take me aside, and said, "You speak Spanish very well. You do very well, so here, take the test. You don't have to come to class." So, I didn't have to come to class, which, on the one hand, was fine with me. I thought, well, good, I can work some more, but that meant I didn't learn the grammar. I didn't learn Spanish. I didn't learn the language. I grew up speaking Spanish, but the Spanish that we spoke at home was not formal Spanish, and nobody in my family had formal training in Spanish. My father went to the third grade; my mother didn't go to school at all. So, we spoke Spanish at home, *hablamos español casero, en casa*, and I didn't get that formal training either, so I'm at Western, and I do graduate with a major in Spanish, but I don't really have very much academic training in the language.

01-00:50:27

Holmes:

I know from there you move on next to the University of Washington, to start graduate work, a master's degree, I think in 1970?

01-00:50:38

Castañeda:

Yeah, in '69, '70.

01-00:50:43

Holmes:

What inspired you to go to graduate school? I think this is where your study of history really begins. Talk about that development for us.

01-00:50:56

Castañeda:

Well, let me see. I'm at Western majoring in Spanish. This is the sixties, and this is the era of the Upward Bound program. While I'm at Western, I get involved with the Upward Bound program, and there's two projects: the Upward Bound program and, what's another one? Project Catch-up. Anyway, the Upward Bound program was for high school students, and the other for junior high students. At Western Washington State College, Professor Tom Billings establishes the first Upward Bound program, and so I work with the Upward Bound program for two summers—it's a summer program—and then eventually, I become the associate director of the Upward Bound. And as the associate director of the Upward Bound program, I travel throughout the state of Washington visiting the students who were in the program, but then also trying to recruit for the next year. So in that sense, I get a terrific experience in terms of traveling the state and meeting students in all these communities, and especially, they're African American and Native American students. At that point, there aren't that many Latinos that are in the program, but there's some.

I marry, and finish my degree, and then move to Seattle, and I apply for a teaching position in the Seattle School District, and I ask to be placed in an

inner-city school, because I'm working with Upward Bound. I'm aware, the students are coming from Garfield High School, from Franklin, from Roosevelt. I married a Euro American, lovely Euro American man. We live in Kirkland. We're businesspeople. He owns a shoe store, but I want to work in the inner city. So I'm placed in Garfield High School, and I teach Spanish at Garfield. But this is the era of educational and political and social and cultural, on the one hand, renaissance, on the other hand, upheaval, and this is principally an African American school. Not quite half of the student population is African American. There's a vice principal, the Home Economics teacher, an English teacher who are African American, and me. That's it. So, the principals decide that they need to reconfigure, so they invite me to be a counselor, with no training in counseling.

So I become a counselor in the school, and also I work with the multicultural center that is established nearby. And on that basis with the high school and with the multicultural center, we develop a program to take high school students on a tour of five campuses as part of an introduction to undergraduate colleges and universities. I know you asked something else, and this is a long way about it, but I'm going to take this tour if you don't mind. And so, we take a tour. We take fifty students from three high schools to Washington State University and to two colleges in Oregon, and another college in Washington. We are at Western Washington State University and it's like three o'clock in the morning, and I get woken up and told our students are being harassed by the frat boys. This is a group of African Americans, Asian Americans, a few Euro Americans, and a couple of Latino students. I'm the director at this point, myself and this other young teacher, African American teacher, and so we leave. We get up and leave and take the students and get them all on the bus and get the hell out of there. Again, I say that to underscore the consistency of this experience, not just for me, but now, these are high school students. These are inner-city kids, and we're trying to engage them, and we have the money to provide this trip and all of that, but the trip gets marred by this experience.

So, graduate school, I am at Garfield High School, and one of the people that I meet at Garfield High School is a professor at the University of Washington, whose son is about to transition from Meany Junior High to Garfield High School, and he's a professor of Spanish, of Mexican literature in particular, and his name is Joseph Summers, and so, he says, "There's somebody you should meet at the University of Washington. I think you have a lot in common." And so, he facilitates that, and the person that I meet is Tomás Ybarra-Frausto, and so Tomás, at that point, is teaching Spanish at the University of Washington's television program, and so, Joe encourages both Tomás and I to go on to graduate school, and helps facilitate the process for both of us, Tomás and myself, and then another teacher at the time. I'm teaching at Garfield High School, Tomás is working at the television station, and Roberto Maestas is teaching at Franklin High School—so, two high school teachers and the fellow who teaches Spanish on television for children.

Tomás is from San Antonio. Roberto Maestas is from New Mexico, and then I'm from Texas but raised in the state of Washington.

And so Joe brings us together, and we all apply and get accepted into the graduate program, the MA program, at the University of Washington, and we all go into the Spanish department. Both Roberto and I are teachers in the Spanish program in high school, although by then, I'm working more as a counselor, and Tomás is teaching Spanish. The other dimension that I'm sure you know and I'm sure it has come up in your other interviews: this is an era, if we look at the cohort of Mexican Americans, Chicanos, Chicanas in graduate studies, we're going to find most of us in Spanish departments, or Spanish programs, maybe Latin American. It isn't like we were in English departments because English departments didn't want us.

Now, I have to say, Spanish departments didn't necessarily want us either, and what I mean by that is, we spoke Spanish but we didn't, at least in the framing of academic departments. We didn't speak Spanish because we didn't speak, "correct Spanish." We did not speak formal academic Spanish, and so we were curios—*curios*, *curiosidades*—to some degree, folkloric in other ways. Basically, at that point, the professors in Spanish departments, particularly those who taught languages, or maybe peninsular literature, were Latin Americans or peninsular Spaniards who didn't know anything about us and were not interested, and could have cared less, and we were not up to their caliber. And so they didn't want us in Spanish departments either, at least not language departments, and so again, we're stuck between a rock and a hard place. But in our case it was Joe Summers, and there were other people, not just Joe, and there were other people in other departments in other places where also Latinos, Mexican Americans are able to get degrees.

01-01:00:49

Holmes:

Is this where you first encounter Mexican American history, Mexican American literature—because I know, if my notes are correct, you also taught what would be considered the first Chicano history and Chicano literature class there at the University of Washington.

01-01:01:09

Castañeda:

We did. We did, you're right, so thank you. So, the genesis of all of this is that this is the era of the Chicano movement, this the era of the women's movement, this is the antiwar movement. So basically, we were really clear that we needed to create the space and the entities to, well, to study and learn about ourselves, and so we created these departments across the country, beginning in California, which is where the first Chicano studies departments are developed, and in Texas also. Texas was a year or two later. I think Texas was 1970; California in 1968, '69. This is the era of the walkouts in certainly in California, and in Texas. This is the era of the growth and development of Chicano newspapers across the country, so we were reading and being informed, and the network was developing and strengthening. So yeah, this is

the era of we, my generation, the generation that I'm part of. The people that I've mentioned, we are the generation that established Chicano studies, Mexican American studies, whether it was in California or Texas or Washington.

We confronted the university, walked out, challenged, had meetings, and we didn't do it by ourselves. We certainly had allies, not only Joseph Summers, but other folks in the university, and it wasn't just us. It was ethnic studies, so African Americans and Asian Americans, we were all scrambling. The interest in history was because we challenged the university that we needed to have these courses, and so we challenged them and we created the space, then we had to teach. So, we kind of scrambled. So it was on that basis, trying to *excavar*, to excavate, to find, to locate, to pull, and so we mimeographed I don't know how many pages of primary and other documents, whatever we could find. And Chicano studies develops, from my perspective, as an interdisciplinary course of study for a couple of reasons: one, because we knew from our lives that you couldn't separate literature from history, and you couldn't separate philosophy from something else. It was all intersected, part of a whole.

And so that was one reason, and the other reason was precisely because there weren't these separate categories. In terms of our trying to find material, we had to cut across everything, whether it was history or literature, language or cultures, music, or art, all of the above. So, we began to put together those courses, and in my case, I taught not only in our developing Chicano studies, ethnic studies program project, but also in the developing women's studies, the women at the U of W who are developing women's studies, the professors and graduate students, and so I taught women's studies, and I taught La Chicana, the first Chicana course.

01-01:05:51

Holmes:

Talk a little bit about that experience, and more importantly, the reception among students.

01-01:05:57

Castañeda:

Well, the reception among students, it's so difficult to tell the story without diverting, in a sense, because I can't talk about the reception of the students without talking about the fact that we, given the reality that we faced, we had to go out and recruit the students. So, four undergraduates that were there at the time and myself then, we got money, the university funded us, and we spent the summer of 1969 canvassing the Yakima Valley, in particular, to recruit Mexican American, Chicano students. So we went to dance halls. We went to churches. We went to labor camps. We went to any place—in the high schools—wherever we could identify and hold a meeting. We managed to recruit the first cohort of ninety Mexican American, Chicano students from the state of Washington to the university, and it's on that basis that we established Chicano studies, Mexican American studies; that we established

MEChA; that we established El Teatro del Piojo; that we established a community; and [Lander Hall], where most Chicana/o students lived. Can't remember what hall it was at the University of Washington where they were housed.

So the reception of the students that were in the class, it was, they were interested, they were hungry, but it was also their first experience. They too were the first in there. They too came from the fields. So, it was layered and complex and convoluted, very difficult at times because we were all students. We were graduate students, and then there was undergraduates who were also working with us. In my case, I was a graduate student trying to develop and teach these courses, and I also worked as a counselor. I was back working in the student services center. So we were trying to do all things, and that is to work at all of those levels because it was needed, it was necessary. I say at times, it didn't occur to us that we couldn't or shouldn't. On the contrary, there was every reason to do it, to do whatever it was we were doing.

01-01:09:04

Holmes:

Talk a little bit about the state of Chicana and Chicano studies at this time. The field is really, as you were just discussing, in its development. What really strikes you from these early years, maybe some of the early works, the pioneering works that help a little bit set the foundation, and other developments that really strike you going on during this time?

01-01:09:36

Castañeda:

So I haven't thought about this for a long time, Todd, so it's hard to sort of figure out where to focus. What really struck me?

01-01:09:47

Holmes:

Well maybe we'll start with: are there any of the early works that really stand out in your memory of helping shape the discipline?

01-01:10:03

Castañeda:

So, well obviously, Rudy Acuña, and those early works were Rivera, Feliciano Rivera, and particularly for me, one of the major works, but I think for the field in general, was the work of Ernesto Galarza, for starters, and the work of Rudy Acuña. I'm trying to think: Feliciano Rivera and Matt Meier. This is also a period then when Tomás and Joe and I are working on the anthology, *Literatura Chicana: Texto y Contexto*, and we work on that, because of our work in the Spanish department, and Joe said, "Well, we were trying to teach literature without really many sources." And then we decided, okay, well, we need to do a book, and so we did this anthology. The thinking at that time, at least for us, was we know that the Chicano movement had different sectors and different aspects and different dimensions, and so the orientation that we took was much more of a kind of internationalist approach.

And so the book, *Literatura Chicana*, tries to do an overview historically of literature, and so we drew on Mexico and Latin America and other parts of the

Spanish-speaking world to frame the work, to frame Chicano literature within this broader hemispheric context because we are part of the hemisphere, and because it matters to make those connections. And so the work that we did was a work of recovery, a work of compilation. At that point, there were few, mostly the books that I mentioned—trying to find a way to understand and to conceptualize and interpret this field that we're trying to develop that is interdisciplinary, and in which there are few sources that we can find. And so, it was on the one hand very different, on the other hand, very exciting, very thrilling.

01-01:13:33

Holmes:

I wanted to ask, when you're at the University of Washington and you're starting to put together the first classes in Chicana and Chicano history, as you mentioned, this was starting to percolate already down in California. And in 1969 there was the *El Plan de Santa Bárbara*—did you hear about these developments that were happening in California?

01-01:14:01

Castañeda:

Yeah, we did, of course we did. This is the era of the Chicano movement, so we hear about it all, and as I said, there were the newspapers, and there was the youth conference in 1969, and so I went to the youth conference. How I got there, I have no idea. I just remember being on a bus, riding back to the state of Washington. I went to Colorado. And so yes, of course we were aware, and in 1968, so as part of our effort to develop Chicano studies at the University of Washington, we got funding, and so Roberto Maestas, Tomás Ybarra, Joe Summers, and myself took a *jira*, a trip, a journey to mecca, to LA to gather material, and to meet with people, whoever we could.

And so at that point, we call and we meet with this very young professor who's an assistant professor—I don't even know whether he finished his dissertation by then—Juan Gómez-Quíñones, who was at UCLA, maybe his first year, and bless him. I can't imagine the pressures that he was under, but he took time and he met with us, and he gave us the names of all kinds of people and we followed up. We were in Berkeley, San Francisco, and we were in Los Angeles on this *jira*, on this journey, to collect material, and so we did. Also, we wound up quite inadvertently in Fresno, at Luis Valdez's wedding, and we danced, had a good time, kind of crashed the wedding, but it was in an open space, so nobody said we couldn't.

So yeah, it was a whole other kind of environment, and I think that it was a very rich and exciting period of generation of all studies, and I can imagine that in African American studies and Native American studies, and we were very linked to those other studies and to those other struggles, and not just domestically, but globally. And so we were very aware, and tried very much to be linked with, not always very deeply, but at least to engage and to see the Chicano movement, and the development of Chicano studies in the academy, as related to these larger political and intellectual struggles and developments.

01-01:16:57

Holmes:

I wanted to ask—because it's during this time we see the intellectual space of the field beginning to take form, and a lot of this is through journals, to spread new essays on the material, to let other scholars in the field know what others may be thinking of whatever they found. We see this in 1967 at UC Berkeley, *El Grito* is published; in 1970, *Aztlán: the Chicano Journal*, of course, of *Social Science and the Arts* out of UCLA; but also even at UC Santa Barbara, the *Journal of Mexican American History*. Maybe talk a little bit about your exposure to these publications and your experience of reading up on, during these early parts of the field.

01-01:18:00

Castañeda:

Okay. Well, we can't talk about the journals, for example, without talking about or referencing the development of NACCS [National Association of Chicano and Chicana Studies], for example, and I want to talk about it in this way. So the existing fields—history, political science, sociology, anthropology—generally, academic fields were not interested in Mexican American, Chicano studies, and so, young scholars and professors in departments could not get their panels accepted to these various professional conferences. They weren't interested.

And so, out of that lack of interest and lack of intellectual base within the academy, particularly within the US, comes then the development of the journals and of NACCS, and NACCS is developed initially by folks in political science—Mario Barrera and Carlos Muñoz—Juan Gómez-Quíñones in history, and so they go hand in hand, and because we can't get our proposals accepted in the conferences of professional organizations, the annual conferences, or into the journals of these fields. So it's out of that, that then we see the development of these Chicano studies journals, specifically history, and unfortunately, the one at Santa Barbara didn't survive. *Aztlán* has, thankfully, and *El Grito* did for a period of years, and *El Grito* starts out as a social science and literary journal, principally. In all cases, well except for *El Grito*, because Octavio Romano's at the center of it, and he's a professor of anthropology, but these are all graduate students, all of them. They come out of the work of graduate students who develop NACCS. By then, Barrera and Muñoz and Gómez-Quíñones are professors, but still, who becomes the membership are, by and large, graduate students.

01-01:21:06

Holmes:

And would you say these developments to you, as a young Chicano scholar, did this begin to give the field legitimacy, in your eyes, and maybe not just legitimacy but also a space now that is yours, that you can go and—

01-01:21:19

Castañeda:

Okay, so, how can I explain this? Because the word "legitimacy" doesn't kind of make sense to me—well, maybe that's not quite accurate. It wasn't about legitimacy in the standard way that we think about legitimacy. It was about presence and action. So, yeah, legitimacy does not become an issue for me in

the way that we think about legitimacy, because no matter what, we're not legitimate, *punto*. We're still not legitimate, and I don't know when we ever will be, and frankly, that isn't an issue for me—

01-01:22:33

Holmes: I think that's nicely put.

01-01:22:34

Castañeda: Well, I don't know that it's nicely put. Yeah, it hasn't been about that, so I don't know how to answer.

01-01:22:43

Holmes: No, that's okay. Well let's talk a little bit about the Chicano movement, and then I'd like to move into your graduate years at Stanford. The movement obviously played a very important role in the rise and development of the field. How do you see the facets of social activism blending in with the field, and how did this also affect you both personally, but also as a scholar?

01-01:23:14

Castañeda: So the Chicano movement was the base for me, at least, and I think for my generation or most of us, was a generative force to engage and enact the issues that we lived, and that's in every sense: politically, intellectually, socially, culturally, you name it. So for me, I can't speak for anybody else but for me, that's what the Chicano movement provided. It provided a base to be able to address and to enact, to take apart, to pull together, the history that I've laid out, and the tensions of that history, and the tensions of that history are on the one hand my history, but it's the history of this country. Yeah, it's my history, it's the history of my community, it's a history of this country. And so the Chicano movement, for me, was a base then to be able to hold up the mirror, and to do it intellectually, politically, socially, culturally; to do it and to say, "Yeah, this is not only who we are; this is who this country is also, and you may not like it, you may not want it, but we aren't going away."

So, yeah, that, for me, offered the base, and we Mexican Americans, and as I'm laying this out, understand that we are living this and it's not just us. It's Native Americans, African Americans. It's all the other racial ethnic groups that we also work with and that we engage with, but each group has its own particularities, its own history. So we worked. I feel like we worked as much as we could in every aspect of the Chicano movement. We worked to develop the intellectual resources, the intellectual capital of the Mexican American community, and we did that as "scholars," but it wasn't just us. I've referenced Arturo Madrid, who directs the Ford Foundation Fellowship for Mexican Americans, Native Americans, and Puerto Ricans, and that program really is instrumental in helping to develop the intellectual capital, because it provides a funding for us to go on to graduate schools.

So, we can't just talk about the intellectual formation of Chicano/Chicana studies or its scholarly dimensions without understanding this whole range of

elements, that all these elements are part and parcel. Without them, we wouldn't have been able to develop the field. And so for me, *a través del tiempo*, and thinking about it and all, the Chicano movement was very problematic. Like most organizations and groups and movements in the era, it was sexist, at times misogynist, certainly homophobic, and didn't deal with racial issues very well.

So all of those elements remained across time and changed—so problematic, it was; contradictory, certainly. We all lived multiple contradictions and still do—that's the human condition—but at the time, it was the lifeline, and for me, it was the lifeline to be able to finally put together my experiences that I've talked about, the tensions, and to be able to address those tensions, and to be able to address them in ways that at times were probably not very productive, because I was surely angry. It was the rage that I finally was able to articulate, but by and large, I hope to have taken that energy and to be able to have used it productively to create something that could be sustained intellectually, politically, socially, culturally, all the above. So yes, the Chicano movement was incredibly important, and its people and its struggles were and are a major part of our development.

01-01:28:49

Holmes:

Well, tell us a little bit about heading to Stanford for graduate school, and maybe the best way to start off is, here you grow up in Washington, first of your family to go to college, certainly first of your family to go and get a master's degree, and then now you're talking about PhD. So, tell us a little bit about that experience, and then we can move into your time at Stanford.

01-01:29:17

Castañeda:

Okay. So, by now, it is 1971-72, something like that, and you talked about *El Grito*, and *Aztlán*, and *Journal of Mexican American History*. So I worked for *El Grito* for a year. Part of my formation that matters, but also more importantly that is part of the experience of Mexican American studies, Chicano studies. So in 1970, at Stanford, there is John J. Johnson, who is the professor of Latin American history, and I don't know whether he's the head of Bolivar House at the time or not. At any rate, by then at Stanford there is an office called the Office of Advisor to the President for Mexican American Affairs. And so in concert with Latin American studies, and this Office of Advisor to the President of Mexican American Affairs, they develop a summer program, which is the first program on Chicano history, Mexican American studies. It's at Stanford, and I apply and am accepted. And so, I go there for the summer for six weeks I think, and so we have presentations by, at that point, the major figures in the development of Chicano studies: Octavio Romano, Nick Vaca, at that point, Arturo Madrid. I can't remember whether Juan Gómez-Quíñones came or not.

Anyway, so there is a series of speakers, and that again develops a core, a base, an intellectual ferment. I think that's the only summer program that they

did, and it was at Stanford. And so out of that program, I stay in the Bay Area for a year, and I worked for *El Grito* as everything: a clerk, a secretary, a *barrendera*, a sweeper, whatever needed to be done. Octavio Romano kindly listed me as one of the editors, but I don't really think I did much editorial work. I don't think I knew very much about doing editorial work, but anyway. But I read a lot; I read all the manuscripts that came in. So, what we see here then is the development of projects and programs. There's this program at Stanford. There is and there may have been others in other parts of California I'm not aware of, but then there's also, out of the group of scholars, Juan Gómez-Quíñones, Jesús Chavarria, Arturo Madrid, a whole group of people who then create this summer program. It's a three-year summer program in Mexico City with El Colegio de México, and it's again, the first program in Mexican American studies. It's called Mexican American and Bilingual Studies, Chicano and Bilingual Studies, and it is at the Colegio de México where we are housed. We go. It's a big program, and we have sessions, seminars with Mexican scholars. It was an effort to link Mexico and the US in terms of Chicano studies. So again, these are programs that matter to the development of this field. I go for one summer.

By the time I apply and am accepted at Stanford, I have these things, these experiences, and I've worked with *El Grito* and seen the work of Octavio Romano and Nick Vaca and the other folks that are related to *El Grito*. Again, *El Grito* is established by graduate students: Juan Carrillo, Nick Vaca, and Ron de la Cruz, other folks. Well first, I tried to do a PhD in history at the University of Washington, and I'm accepted into the program, but it doesn't exactly work, so I'm only there for a semester or two, and then I think, "Okay, so what am I going to do?" I still want to do a degree, and it wasn't so much about doing a degree. It was about the Chicano movement needed historians, we needed historians, and that was real clear, and I, by that time, was divorced. I didn't have any familial responsibilities, so I could apply, and I did.

So, I didn't know what Stanford was, even though I'd been there. Yeah, what can I say? It sounds sort of silly, "I didn't know what Stanford was," but I really didn't. I really did not know that Stanford was this elite institution. I applied to three places for PhD programs. I was accepted at all three, and I needed funding, so one said, "You're accepted without funding." So, okay. I can't go to that one. Another one said, "Well, yeah, we funded you but inadvertently, for some reason or other, your funding went to somebody else." So, I went to Stanford. And so, I'm thirty-one, and I go to Stanford. I'm living in Palo Alto with a Native American woman, a Hupa woman, who's in the education department, *Española*, from Sacramento, they both went to Sac State, and studied with Joe [Joseph Pitti], and then I brought my sister, my younger sister who needed some help at the time.

So, I'm at Stanford, and it's my first year, and I meet with my first advisor, and he says, "So Miss Castañeda, what field of history are you interested in?" And

I say, "Well, I'm here because I want to do Chicano history," and he says, "Well, you can't, and you can't do Chicano history because there is no such thing as Chicano history. There are no collections. There are no documents. It doesn't exist, so you can't do that, and even if it did exist, you shouldn't do it, because you would be too emotional." So that is what this professor said to me, and I thought, well, okay.

So I went off and did the best I could under the circumstances. I was interested in labor history, Chicano labor history. I loved Ernesto Galarza, who had been incredibly kind to us when we did our *jira* through southern California, but eventually I did nineteenth century because when I was ready to do the required seminars, Stanford didn't have at that time a labor historian, and it really didn't have anybody who did the West. So, I did nineteenth century. Carl Degler was teaching a course, a seminar in nineteenth century, and so I did a course in nineteenth-century history, and it was that seminar and the seminar paper that I did on nineteenth-century California history that was the basis for what becomes later the dissertation, and of course, a focus on women.

01-01:38:23
Holmes:

Tell us a little bit about the California environment and connect that to the environment at Stanford for a Chicana scholar. When does Al Camarillo show up for you?

01-01:38:36
Castañeda:

So, it's my first semester at Stanford, and Stanford has a position in Chicano, Chicana, Mexican American history—well, it wasn't a position in Mexican American history per se, necessarily, but they had been trying to hire a Mexican American historian, and they had had at least a couple of rounds of applications, but nobody was good enough, and so then they were going to have another round. It's my first semester, and so I get put on the search committee for that position, and I don't have a clue of what one does on a search committee. I'm sitting there with these folks, several professors who are on the search committee, and me, and I'm there representing graduate students.

It's a situation of entering spaces where you don't have any experience and nobody to teach you or help you understand. It was a very difficult, very contentious period and process, and it wound up at one point, to put it this way: I literally spilled my guts out, and it was very debilitating. Yet I felt like I had to say something, and I didn't have the *modales*. What's *modales*, models, I didn't know how one was supposed to do it. Also the situation was such that I thought, if I don't say something, this is going to go by the wayside. And so, I said what I said the only way I knew how to say it, and I don't think it was very well said. It certainly wasn't elegant, so the only way that I can think of describing it is what it felt like. It felt like I spilt my guts out.

Stanford was a very difficult place for me, and I kept dropping out. It took me seventeen years to finish, from start to finish, because I kept dropping out. Well, first I dropped out because my mother got very ill and I went to take care of her, and so that was in '77, but I got there in '73, and had various kinds of other responsibilities that I had to attend to. So my sole responsibility was not just being a graduate student. I may not have been married, I didn't have those kinds of responsibilities, but I had other responsibilities, and so, it was very, very difficult, and I didn't know how to write a paper for a graduate course. I didn't know how to study for a graduate course. So it was the space, the environment itself was problematic, but also, what can I say? I was not prepared. The bottom line is, I was not prepared, and so my bravado about, "Yeah, well nobody"—it never occurred to me that we couldn't do this. Well, I think I kind of learned there that maybe I couldn't, and because it was just really, really difficult.

01-01:42:50

Holmes: Well, you eventually, you did finish.

01-01:42:53

Castañeda: I did finish.

01-01:42:54

Holmes: Talk a little bit about that. In other conversations, I've heard about building your own networks. You were the first Chicana graduate student in history at Stanford.

01-01:43:07

Castañeda: I was.

01-01:43:08

Holmes: Vicki Ruiz comes a year or two later right after you, so there's two of you. Talk about that process of support as well as building your own networks, to support and help you study the type of history that you wanted to study.

01-01:43:32

Castañeda: Well, it was, building our own. The network that I relied on most especially was a network that we built at Stanford and that was built also out of the movement, out of the Chicano movement. There were a few of us, graduate students at Stanford, most of the graduate students were in the education department, and so the networks that are built were graduate students in other universities, at UC Berkeley, for example. I had taught part time at Davis. So just like NACCS was started, then the Chicanas started MALCS, Mujeres Activas en Letras y Cambio Social, and we started MALCS because Chicanos in NACCS.

And so, Chicanos were not interested in gender and sexuality, Chicano scholars at the time, and Euro American women were not interested in race except in terms of non-African Americans. At that point, the binary terms of race were black and white, and that's what the US women's studies scholars

were looking at. If they were looking at race at all, they looked at African Americans, they weren't interested in Chicanas, and so, we felt like we were again between a rock and a hard place. Our male colleagues and scholars and friends, and mentors were not necessarily interested, and our Euro American feminist colleagues and friends were at that time not interested. So, my networks were out of those folks doing Chicano studies, Mexican American studies, in other schools and universities. And I had been at different locations. I'd been at [CSU] Sacramento, I'd been at [UC] Davis, and also, at Sacramento I'd worked in public history. I'd worked with Joe Pitti and Carlos Cortes in developing *Five Views*. So my networks were not at Stanford, really. My networks were outside, and yeah, and the networks were both academic and non, for me.

01-01:46:39

Holmes:

I wanted to talk a little bit about your time in Sacramento and your experience at UC Davis here in our next session. But before we get to that, I want to finish up your time at Stanford. There was what they used to call a "California-Texas axis" within the development of the field, largely between UCLA, UT Austin, but these broader networks of getting scholars together, particularly as the field was in its early years of formation. Juan Gómez is key in this, I believe, and you mentioned that in 1982, he develops a conference, which is exactly what Juan did year after year for a variety of sectors of the field. Talk a little bit about this conference and its importance, particularly for you as a Chicana scholar.

01-01:47:45

Castañeda:

So, yeah, in 1982, Juan Gómez-Quinones and Adelaida Del Castillo then organized this conference called—do you have the name there? It's Mexican American Chicano History—

01-01:47:57

Holmes:

Chicana and Mexicana History Conference—

01-01:48:01

Castañeda:

Yes, Chicana and Mexicana History Conference, and so they brought together Mexican scholars and Mexican American, Chicana/Chicano scholars, both men and women, to a conference in LA which was very important, and out of that came the publication, the title of which escapes me.

01-01:48:19

Holmes:

Yeah, it escapes me too. I didn't put it in my notes.¹

01-01:48:22

Castañeda:

Yeah, me too, I should have it on the top of my head. So, it's a very important conference for lots of reasons but beginning because it does make the connection of women and women's history, women's studies, between Mexico and the United States, Mexico and Mexican Americans, Mexicanas and

¹ Adelaida R. Del Castillo, ed., *Between Borders: Essays on Mexicana/Chicana History* (Encino, CA, 1990).

Chicanas. And so that's one of the first conferences where the focus is on gender, and there's both men and women and their scholarship addressing questions of gender: Ramón Gutiérrez, Deena González, Emma Pérez, myself. Another—I am trying to remember [Magdalena]. She is deceased, a very important young historian. She didn't get to finish her degree before she died of cancer. And so, it was very important for engaging us, and providing the space, and then the publication, which took a while to come out. I taught it, I used it, and it connected us to some degree with people we didn't know. I have to say, for the most part, unfortunately, I don't feel like it necessarily strengthened the connection between Mexicanas and Chicanas. Maybe it did in California or in other spaces that I wasn't a part of. I mean, I thought it was a very important conference that we all got a lot out of it, and there was a publication, but I don't feel like those relationships continued to any great extent.

01-01:50:47

Holmes:

Did it help strengthen and put you in contact with other Chicana scholars?

01-01:50:53

Castañeda:

Este, not really. The bottom line is, we all knew each other. There were so few of us that we all knew each other, and we all knew where each other was. So no, it didn't serve that purpose. Now maybe if there had been scholars from the Midwest or the East Coast or something, but that wasn't who came to this conference. At least in terms of the West, Southwest, we all knew each other, and we were in contact with each other in one form or another. Some were in contact with each other in different ways, so yeah. It's interesting, and this is not necessarily the space to address it because we've got other things that we need to focus on, but in thinking about it, for me, there's a parallel development, but not necessarily a lot of intersection. Probably the person who crosses that most is Vicki [Ruiz]. I felt like there was a parallel process between women's history, women's studies, and Chicana studies, and Chicana history, and Vicki is one pivotal bridge because of her work. I'm not sure that this is accurate, so I maybe could get edited out, but in thinking about Vicki and myself who were both at Stanford, and I'm there before she is, I feel like Vicki's work has been more in women's studies, and mine has been more in Chicano studies, if that makes any sense. I don't know that it makes any sense, and I don't know what Vicki would say—I've never talked to her about this—but that's just my sense from our process and our experience.

01-01:52:56

Holmes:

No, that's important.

01-01:52:58

Castañeda:

At some point, I would like to talk with Vicki about it, yeah.

01-01:53:05

Holmes:

Well let's talk a little bit about your early scholarship before we take a break here. You mentioned in 1972, *Chicano Literature: Text and Context*, the

edited volume you put together. In other sectors, that is considered a really foundational book, particularly the broad range of literature from the Americas, and I think that's a word that's used often on this work. You told us a little bit how that came together, but maybe talk a little bit about its aims and contributions of what you saw, particularly, at this early time. If we think 1972, there's not a lot of work. This is one of those works, too, for those teaching the early classes in the field, which really comes out in most of these interviews, the sentiment "We had nothing to pull from, there was so little". So this is also why this collection was, and is still looked at, as a big contribution in that respect.

01-01:54:10

Castañeda:

Thank you. In the late sixties, early seventies, as I've commented, on the one hand, the Spanish departments weren't necessarily very welcoming or very friendly, but then neither were the English departments. So, the development of the field of Chicano studies, including Chicano history, from my perspective, is really rooted in the work, the scholarship, the interest, and the initiative of Mexican American professors, Chicano professors, who are scholars of Latin American history, or Latin American studies and Spanish departments. Why I say that, remember: The English departments didn't want us. Certainly, history departments, US history departments or fields, the field of US history did not want us. We didn't exist, so the area of study of Chicano history in their frame not only didn't exist, but was not to exist. It was not important; why would it be?

So, the historians come out of Latin American history: Juan Gómez-Quíñones, Mexicanist; Jesús Chavarria; Carlos Cortes; Joe Pitti. You name it, all of these folks. Louise Año Nuevo Kerr, Raquel Rubio Goldsmith, Shirlene Soto, they're all Latin Americanists. If they're historians, they study Latin American history; if they're literature folks, they study, by and large, Latin American literature and Mexican literature; or sometimes, as in the case of Arturo Madrid, Peninsular literature. They're the core of the group that develops Chicano studies and Chicano history.

So it's out of the work, on the one hand, the sector of the Chicano movement that's more internationalist, and as well as who it is that we're working with for that book. We're working with Joe Summers, and we're working out of the Spanish department, or the department of romance languages and literature, department of Spanish and Portuguese, out of the University of Washington. Tomás and I are graduate students, MA students in this department, and our professor is Joe Summers. So, it's within that frame of the specifics of the three of us, but also the larger frame of where we are in terms of Chicano studies and its development and knowing who the people are that are developing Chicano studies. So that's the base.

01-01:57:34

Holmes:

Let's talk a little bit about your dissertation. You want to write about the experience of Chicana women, and you are one of the path breakers in really helping develop that path for many other scholars to follow behind you. In other interviews and other writings, you've talked about the difficulty of doing that, of having to look at sources and read across the grain, in many respects. Talk a little bit about that method, and some of the sources you were using for your study of Spanish and Mexican women in Alta California.

01-01:58:13

Castañeda:

Sure. Okay, so for starters, I go to my new advisor. It's time for my dissertation. I'm finally back, time for my dissertation, and advisor says, "So, Antonia, what are you interested in? What do you want to do? You've done this seminar work, seminar paper on Alta California and nineteenth-century California, so what are you interested in?" "Well, I'm interested in Chicanas and women, and I want to do colonial history." "Well, you can't." "What do you mean, I can't?" "Well, you can't because that period that you're interested in, looking at women, gender, and mestizas, is not Chicano history. Chicano history begins in 1848, and so, that's colonial Spanish history, or Mexican colonial history, or California colonial history. It is not Chicano history." So I said, "Oh, okay," and just went ahead and did what I wanted to do. Let me put it this way: What I learned along the way is, *no pedir permiso*, you don't ask for permission; you just do. Okay? So I went, I followed the process, I met with the advisors, "Yes, thank you," and then you just do what you need to do because you need to do it and because it matters. If it didn't matter, you wouldn't do it.

So, I want to underscore that, for me—but the bottom line is, I think for most people—I learned, at least I determined, I decided that for myself, in terms of US history, when they kept telling us, "You can't, you can't, you can't," I just catapulted myself back to that first advisor who said, "You would be too emotional," and I keep wishing, fifty, sixty years later, that I had said to him, "And yes, and so the US history that you all write, that's not emotional? That's not about yourselves?"

What I mean then, to bring it down back to your question is, I wanted to understand the experience of women in colonial California, because I wanted to understand my own experience, and that was one important way that I thought I could understand the experience, and the experience that I wanted to understand more than anything else was why. I wanted to understand gender and sexuality in the sense that, why my experience as a young girl had been so traumatic in terms of prohibitions, of gender inequalities that, at the time, I didn't have the language for. We all worked in the fields. *Todos trabajábamos parejo*. We all did the same work, and yet I couldn't do things that my brothers could do only because they were boys and I was a girl, and that made absolutely no sense to me. I was as strong as they were. I could do everything that they could do, and some things, I could do better.

So that gender inequality, even though I didn't have the language for it, was at issue, and always had been at issue, and what I learned also early on is that gender inequality, or what I came later to understand was gender inequality, was also rooted in issues of sexuality. "You can't do that because you're a girl." "You can't do that because you're fifteen or sixteen or seventeen." So that was the base of it, and I wasn't thinking about Chicano history per se, and its legitimacy or anything of that sort. I think that this was for me to be able to understand this larger experience, my own in the larger experience, and I came to that because in the documents that I was reading for the seminar paper that I was doing for Carl Degler, I found all these references to women.

And so when my advisor said, "Well you can't do that because women didn't leave documents, there are no collections," the same thing that the other guy had told me about Chicanos in general, I thought, 'Well, but they were present, and people wrote about them, and they were there, and so, I can read documents, and I can figure out what they were doing, who they were, where they were, what they did, how they did it.' And so it was. Yes, there weren't that many documents penned by women, although there were some, particularly in court cases, so I could figure out, I could read and I could interpret, and so that's what I did. And the other thing that was part of it, and I didn't think about it at the time is that, when this advisor told me, "Well Chicano history begins in 1848," it took me a while to understand that that construct was that history and the discipline of history, at Stanford and everywhere else, is defined by nation states. So you're an Americanist, which, the US has appropriated the term "American," but okay, that's neither here nor there at the moment. You're an Americanist. You're a Europeanist, and if you're a Europeanist, you're a medievalist or you're a whatever. You're an Africanist. You're a Latin Americanist.

So, I understood very early on, as a Chicana—this is during the Chicano movement—we do not have a nation, and we're US citizens, okay, but we don't have the rights and privileges of US citizens, so that citizenship is not applicable. We don't have those rights and privileges. We're not treated as US citizens, and no matter what we do or how we do it or whatever, we're still "foreigners." So, the notion of a nation state did not make sense—I mean, *no cabe, no cuaja*. And so, yeah, I could break out of that because it wasn't applicable. So I'd like to think that the work that I've done then helped us break out of those antiquated, problematic notions, concepts, frames that have defined us, and that have defined history in general and US history in particular.

So yeah, and in the process, I had a lot of help. I think of the people that helped me, that I stayed with while I was doing the research, that fed me, that nourished me, that took care of me. Yeah, I think of all of the people. There is a very personal kind of dimension to this: So seventeen years later, I'm able to go back to Stanford and to finish the degree, the dissertation, because of Cecilia Burciaga. She helped me. The department wanted to make me take

courses over again, because it had been so long, and Cecilia found a way. I don't know how she found a way. So, I owe the dissertation and the finishing to Cecilia, on the one hand.

On the other hand, I owe the other part of it and to being able to do it economically to Arturo [Madrid], who said to me, "You know, I really can support us both," and I'm telling this story because I love him dearly and because he helped me immensely, intellectually and otherwise, but also for the economics of it. I said, "Arturo, I've never not worked. I don't know how to not work, and so it's very hard for me to think of you supporting me or anybody supporting me, and of not working, because I've worked since I was seven, and I've always earned a wage, and so I don't know how to not work." But I managed. I managed to not work, to not work for wages, and I managed to finish, and so I did, seventeen years later. Al [Albert Camarillo] and other people were really helpful. Estelle [Freedman] read the dissertation, and so did—oh golly, I can't think of the third reader, who was like a Chinese historian, I think, a wonderful fellow. So yeah, there was help along the way, in spite all my feistiness with the world.

01-02:08:59

Holmes:

Well, Antonia, I think this is a great place to stop and we can pick this up in our next session.

01-02:09:04

Castañeda:

Okay, sure.

01-02:09:05

Holmes:

Thank you so much.

Interview 2: October 22, 2018

02-00:00:01

Holmes:

All right, this is Todd Holmes with the Oral History Center at UC Berkeley. Today's date is October 22, 2018, and this is my second session with Antonia Castañeda for the Chicana/o Studies Oral History Project. We are joined by Steve Pitti and four graduate students from Yale University: Lucero Estrella, Sandra Sanchez, Mario Jose Plascencia, and Hector Peralta. Antonia, thanks again for spending the time, and thanks to Steve Pitti for treating us all to lunch at a wonderful restaurant.

02-00:00:47

Castañeda:

Thank you both.

02-00:00:48

Holmes:

Yes. We left off discussing your time at Stanford and your graduate school experience, and I wanted to kind of shift here to a number of the opportunities that followed, particularly lectureships and other appointments which I think offer a great vantage point to discuss Chicana and Chicano studies at different universities, as well as different academic and public history realms in which you worked. maybe a good place to start is, again, 1981, '82, I believe, with your lectureship at UC Davis.

02-00:01:33

Castañeda:

Thank you. Yes, so at UC Davis, and for me, in all of these spaces and places, the opportunities were most especially to engage with other Chicanas and Chicanos, and Chicana/Chicano communities. So, at Davis, who is there, in particular—and this is just the really solid development of Chicano studies at Davis—is Adaljiza Sosa-Riddell, who is a political scientist, and Adaljiza Sosa-Riddell is one of the very, very, very, few and early Chicana political scientists, and she did her doctoral work at UC Berkeley, and the first Chicana hired at UC Davis. Ultimately, she does not get tenure, but she stays as a lecturer and she becomes the person who develops Mexican American, Chicano studies. And so, I'm there also as a lecturer, but not in a permanent position. She had a permanent position. I was just there for a semester or two. I teach the introductory courses, and the students are from all of California, but especially there's students from the Sacramento area, and from the general, more local community, and that area, of course, is an agrarian, agriculture area, although Sacramento, of course, is the capital of California and it's a city, but at that time it's still not a huge city.

And so, the students were very familiar in terms of their agrarian kind of orientation, which was mine also. What happens with Ada is not only do we try to strengthen Chicano studies, but this is the early eighties; this is *Mujeres en Marcha* at Berkeley, and *La Colectiva* and the women also at Stanford that I'm still a part of. And so, it's out of those relationships and the need to strengthen our scholarly interest and our intellectual interest and our political interest in Chicana studies that we form MALCS, *Mujeres Activas en Letras y*

Cambio Social. And so, Ada and I then organized a call, and sent out a call, and so we had the first meeting at Davis in 1982, and that was the basis of MALCS, which is still in existence and continues to grow and thrive, and just had our most recent conference in El Paso in August of this year.

So, Davis offers me the opportunity to teach Chicano studies, and to engage with this broader, feminist community of Chicanas, and to begin to establish what becomes an institution, to institutionalize Chicana studies, in ways, obviously, that we hadn't before. For me, that's what the experience at Davis offers me.

02-00:05:10

Holmes: Tell us a little bit about your experience of teaching Chicana and Chicano history at Davis.

02-00:05:17

Castañeda: At that point, I wasn't in the history department. I was in Chicano studies, so that's different from being in the history department.

02-00:05:31

Holmes: Discuss that experience, if you will, because I know that was one of the aspects that at times was a little frustrating at Stanford, the stifling, in a sense, which other scholars have experienced in a history department. So this was your first real experience in a Chicana/o studies department. Discuss your experience.

02-00:05:57

Castañeda: So, this is ten years, twelve years from our struggles to establish Chicano studies in Washington, so in a sense, yes, this is my first experience in teaching in a Chicano studies program. I think at that point, it wasn't a department yet, but we're still scrambling. And so, there are some publications that we are able to draw on and use, certainly the ones that I've already mentioned, but still not that many, and so we're still scrambling. And now, not only are we scrambling to continue to teach Chicano studies, but we're scrambling then to teach Chicana studies and to develop that, and so it's in 1982, '83, '84—that is major developments in terms of Chicana studies.

So there's a NACCS conference in Tempe, Arizona, where there is a panel of Chicana graduate students. This is still Deena González, Teresa Córdova, Denise Segura, Beatriz Pesquera, Adela de la Torre. I think all that I mentioned are at UC Berkeley, at the time. There is a group called Mujeres en Marcha. And so then, we form MALCS, and there is then this panel at NACCS at Tempe, and then in '83 or '84, I didn't go to that conference. There was a conference at UT Austin that the whole conference and theme is Chicana studies, and there they do another panel titled "Unsettled Issues," and it's out of that panel that the publication *Unsettled Issues*, that addresses the range of issues that are major significance to Chicana scholarship and the development of Chicana studies.

And so, to get back to your question about Davis, for me, its importance, besides Chicano studies in general and continuing to struggle to locate sources and to construct classes and to develop classes, is the opportunity that it afforded me to be in the groundbreaking dimension, in California at least, of the development of Chicana studies, and to be able to talk with other people, other women, interested in issues and ideas, and interpretations and analysis of the experience of Chicanas.

02-00:09:08

Holmes:

I wanted to ask too, because shortly after your lectureship at Davis, you stay in Sacramento, and actually work for quite a few years as the associate director of the Student Affirmative Action Program at California State University, Sacramento. Discuss how this opportunity arose, but also, what kind of a new venue it gave you as a scholar to operate within the realm of public history and other aspects.

02-00:09:39

Castañeda:

So you're asking about Sacramento State?

02-00:09:45

Holmes:

Yes.

02-00:09:46

Castañeda:

Okay, that was student affirmative action, and in that regard, I wasn't teaching. I was a low-level administrator, associate director of the Office of Student Affirmative Action, and that was at the time when I was not actively engaged with trying to finish a dissertation. I had commented that I had left. My mother became ill. I went to take care of her. She passed in 1977 in October. At the end of that year, I went to Sacramento, and at that point, I looked for other work, and so, I did all kinds of things. I worked. I taught at the community college—I don't think that's part of my resume. I worked at Sac State in student affirmative action. Now before that, I actually worked for the Office of Historic Preservation. I was a researcher for the project that Joe Pitti and Carlos Cortes had organized, had put together.

So I did a variety of jobs, and including the one at Sac State for student affirmative action. Our concern was retention of students, because Sac State had been one of the major programs and one of the major colleges in California that had developed ethnic studies, including Chicano studies, and it was still iffy in terms of student's process. We could recruit students, but keeping them, having them proceed through from recruitment through the process to graduation, was a major concern, and so this Office of Student Affirmative Action was concerned with providing services to students, and working with departments, and working with different parts of the university, other sectors of the university, to retain ethnic students. So we worked. The Office of Student Affirmative Action was concerned not just with Chicanos but with students in general, with racial, ethnic students as well as with

working-class, lower-income white students, so we had a variety of students. So in that era, I was not engaged in scholarly pursuits to any extent, yeah.

02-00:12:56

Holmes: By 1989, you then move down to Southern California and take a lectureship at Pomona College.

02-00:13:05

Castañeda: Yeah, I do, and I'll talk about that, but I'd like to shift back, if you don't mind, to talk a little bit about my work with the *Five Views*.

02-00:13:19

Holmes: I was going to ask and have you talk about that in just a minute, but please do, go right ahead, because I think that's really important and we were about to head there anyway.

02-00:13:23

Castañeda: It is, so thank you for letting me come back to that. So before I go to student affirmative action which is a full-time job, I'm earning a full-time salary. Before that then, after my mom's passing, I come to California, come to Sacramento, and so, at some point I mentioned working at Sacramento City College doing some courses there and patching it, so I did that, and I worked for the history center at Sacramento, the State History Center, the City History Center. So, one of my jobs with the history center is to write with Edith Pitti and Bob Docken. We coauthored a history of the Natomas Water Company. And so it was a company history, and we all talked about, "Well do we really want to do a company history?" But it was an interesting—because the Natomas Water Company was the first water company to sell water to the miners in the goldfields in California, Northern California.

And so I worked for the history center, and with Edith and Bob. We finished the project and then, from working with Edith I went to working with Joe Pitti who had, with Carlos Cortes, gotten funding from the State Office of Historic Preservation for a project that they were announcing, which was to identify sites that were of historical and/or cultural significance to five racial ethnic communities in California, and Joe and Carlos submitted the proposal for Mexican Americans and they needed to hire. They were both full-time professors and so they needed somebody to do the research, to travel throughout California, and so I was hired to do that. And that was a critically important project for me, personally, but also it was a critically important project for California, although, California doesn't really know that until twenty-plus years later, when they discover it sitting on a shelf, finally, and began then to draw upon it.

So that project was to identify, locate, map, research, write narrative on, and photograph, at that point, a hundred sites for Mexican American slash Puerto Ricans, and then there was an African American component, Native American—Asian American was both Japanese and Chinese—and we did the

Mexican American part. So doing that project took me across the length and breadth of California, identifying sites. I did a lot of the legwork, but Carlos and Joe did the rest of it, and other research. So we identified and did all of this for a hundred sites throughout California, and for me, it took me across the length and breadth of California and gave me a sense of the depth of the eighteenth-, nineteenth-, and twentieth-century history of California. So it was very specific, intense, and practical, but I also had to do a lot of research and a lot of reading, and try to understand then the Mexican American, and as much as I could, Puerto Rican history in California, and so that added, I think, a whole other unexpected dimension. It added unexpected dimensions to my preparation that I wouldn't have had otherwise had Joe and Carlos not offered this opportunity.

And so, that experience and that project, over time and looking back then, the state did that because it got federal money, but again, they weren't committed to it. So, they did it, they paid for it, they published it, but basically it sat unused as far as we could tell, for years, for a couple of decades in the state offices. And it wasn't until the early part of the twenty-first century that then different offices of the state and local offices of historic preservation began to get interested and it is pulled off the shelf. And I think that that cuts across not just for Mexican Americans, but I think for others, and then subsequently, in 2010 or 2011 when Secretary of the Interior Salazar creates this panel that Steve and I are on, that the importance of that work for California in particular, and for public history also, has a life, and comes back to life. For me, it was a major shaping of the second part of my development in terms of saying, "Okay, I need to somehow finish this degree."

02-00:19:32

Holmes:

Well they're both very important works, and I've used the Natomas one—

02-00:19:36

Castañeda:

Oh, you have? Really?

02-00:19:39

Holmes:

I have, yeah.

02-00:19:40

Castañeda:

Wow.

02-00:19:41

Holmes:

I wrote a chapter in an anthology on the environmental history of Sacramento, and so I used that to talk about the history of the Natomas Company and its role in the levees and dams of the region, so your work was invaluable there, as well as your great collaborators.

02-00:19:57

Castañeda:

I've never known anybody—I mean, wow! [laughter]

02-00:20:01

Holmes: That was so well put, and I'm glad we were able to get that in. I want to talk a little bit about the decision, because as you were saying, this motivated you to finish. So by 1989, here you are finishing, and you also have a lectureship at Pomona, which is a much different environment than Sacramento. Talk a little bit about that, and your experience there.

02-00:20:32

Castañeda: Okay. So can we take a moment? Because I just saw Arturo walk in.

02-00:20:39

Holmes: Yes, yes, of course! Here, let's go ahead and pause it.

[break in audio]

02-00:20:44

Holmes: Okay, go right ahead.

02-00:20:44

Castañeda: Yeah, but I forgot what you asked. Oh, Pomona! Pomona, so—

02-00:20:49

Holmes: Yes, the opportunity in Pomona.

02-00:20:51

Castañeda: Okay. So, wow, the opportunity to teach at Pomona. I'm trying to remember, when did I teach at Pomona?

02-00:21:02

Holmes: 1989 to 1990.

02-00:21:04

Castañeda: Okay, all right, so yes. So, I am teaching at Pomona because we have moved. We married in '86 and we moved to Southern California in '87, and we are in Upland, and Arturo is president of the Tomás Rivera Center, the first Latino policy center, and Deena González, who is a professor at Pomona, has a sabbatical or has a leave, and so then I am hired to teach while she is on leave, and that was very enjoyable. The students at Pomona are incredibly well prepared, and so it offered me the opportunity to teach students unlike others I had taught. The students at Davis were good and they were fine, but they weren't as well prepared, and certainly at San Antonio City College, the students that I taught were not prepared, by any stretch, in the way that the Pomona students were prepared. And besides that, in the case at Sacramento City College, I was not teaching history per se. I was teaching more kind of, oh, I don't want to say remedial studies, but almost.

The other part that was different at Pomona is that I was in the history department, because that's where the position was, and it also gave me an opportunity to engage with and meet other faculty, other people-of-color faculty, especially Sid Lemelle, Africanist, and Miguel Tinker Salas, Latin

Americanist. So I was able to engage with, and to continue, I think, to the broader scope in terms of history and Chicana history in particular, but I was only there one semester. The main thing in my recollection about that is how good the students were, and because I was just part time—it's not a full-time lectureship—I didn't have any responsibilities, so I didn't have to attend meetings or anything like that. So, I was able to teach and to engage with other faculty and get to know them and just enjoy.

Also, I'd taught Chicano studies in all of my other experiences, other than at San Antonio City College, so this was in the history department, so I had to teach borderlands, and one of Deena's classes was Latina studies more generally. So that expanded me that way, because I had to do all this reading that I hadn't had to do before, and my work in borderlands was the work that I had done earlier on the dissertation. It was oppositional work, in terms of fighting against [John Francis] Bannon and [Hubert H.] Bancroft and all these guys, and so now I had to think about borderlands in other ways, and in ways that were part of the framing of the courses that Deena was teaching.

02-00:25:05

Holmes:

Well also during this time, you're finishing the dissertation.

02-00:25:09

Castañeda:

Yes, also during this time, I'm finishing the dissertation.

02-00:25:13

Holmes:

And then, I believe, you got hired afterwards at UC Santa Barbara, invited to join their Chicana and Chicano studies department as well as the women's studies program. Discuss that experience. Particularly, when we think of the handful of universities that played such a large role in the development of the field, Santa Barbara usually is discussed. There's a lot of tradition there, particularly by this time, so discuss your experience in that in its environment.

02-00:25:47

Castañeda:

Okay, so, I did get hired, but first I applied for and received a UC President's Fellowship, which was a two-year fellowship. I took only one year because in the process, I also got the job at Santa Barbara, and Santa Barbara would let me defer for one year but not for two. And so, I took the one-year fellowship, Arturo took a leave from the Tomás Rivera Center, and we went to San Diego, and the fellowship requires a mentor, and so Ramón Gutiérrez was at San Diego and agreed, very kindly, to be my mentor. And so it's during that period that year in which I wrote "Women of Color and the Rewriting of Western History."

The job at Santa Barbara was contentious in many respects. So Santa Barbara is a very important place in terms of Chicano/a studies, and Chicano history in particular. It's the home of the *Plan de Santa Bárbara*, and of course we know, reexamining that plan, we can see its fault lines and we can see its gendered issues, and inequalities, and absence. And so, when I'm being

invited to apply, those issues are still present, in the ways that I'm going to explain.

So, the job is actually a job in women's studies. Women's studies is looking for a historian. They have a position. Women's studies at Santa Barbara at that point is all Euro American. There are no women of color in that department, or in that program. It's a program. And so, people at Santa Barbara, at that point—especially, I think, Denise Segura—are pushing the program to hire a Chicana, and so my name comes up and I'm invited to apply, and I apply, and so I say, "Well, I am interested only if I can have a joint appointment with Chicano studies." Women's studies says yes, and so we work it out so there's a joint appointment with Chicano studies, but in Chicano studies at this same time, the women in the department are struggling to get a woman named chair of Chicano studies. The current chair is stepping down. I think he's moving on to another university, and basically, the next person is already designated and is not a woman. And so the women in the department organize, and so before I'm hired, I'm getting calls strategizing about how we get a woman appointed chair of Chicano studies.

So the entrance into UC Santa Barbara is an entrance into a space that one has to negotiate, and that one has to struggle for, and so that continued, and so yes, women's studies was willing to do this, but it was still not easy and it was still entering into spaces where we'd not been. So I was the first woman of color hired in that department, or in a program. It was a program, and people were welcoming. They were lovely. They were kind and all that, but my point is, the structures are in place, and you're entering into these spaces where the structures do not facilitate—you have to struggle against it—and then in Chicano studies, yes, it's ours, but now we're struggling in terms of gender, and women. And so we're struggling and there's resistance and eventually, yes, one of the women is appointed. We struggle, we get her appointed, but it's a struggle not only within Chicano studies; it's also a struggle with the department.

So my entrance into the space, into a full-time teaching position at a prestigious UC campus, is still within this whole contentiousness, and so part of what I'm trying to say is, I don't know that it was ever the case for anybody, but it certainly was not the case for Chicanas and Chicanos in general, and in my experience, certainly not for this Chicana, that you can move into a new job, a new position—if not easily, at least smoothly—and that you don't have to struggle each step of the way. So I wasn't so immediately concerned with the intellectual legitimacy of it. I was concerned [laughs] with just who am I going to have to struggle with today, and around what, and how, and what strategy am I going to put in place, and how am I going to do this, and who's going to help us?

02-00:32:18

Holmes: It's a whole other set of concerns that a lot of people in the academy didn't have to go through.

02-00:32:23

Castañeda: Yeah, that's a point. That's a point. A lot of people in the academy, including Chicanos. That's not to say that our brothers didn't struggle, but they had male privilege whether they knew it or accepted it, they had it. And what we found in this struggle with naming a woman as chair of Chicano studies, we found that the institution supported male privilege, because they finally did appoint a woman, but after a lot of struggle and then some.

02-00:33:01

Holmes: I wanted to get your observations on the development of the field, but first I'd like you to maybe discuss a little bit about your experience of having a joint position. So, in these interviews I found that a lot of Chicana and Chicano scholars were really among the first who had to share joint positions. This was something that was really new in the academy, so if they were in history but also Chicano studies, or vice versa. So, discuss your experience a little bit. Was it a hard balance between women's studies and Chicano studies?

02-00:33:42

Castañeda: Well, I don't know whether Chicano studies were among the first—certainly, I think there were people in African American studies, and I don't know about other studies, but I know in African American studies there were people, and I think, at the time, I was the only one in women's studies. Later, perhaps, I think an African American historian was in both African American and women's studies. So, somebody else, one of the people in African American studies, said it powerfully, and so I'll quote them, "Having a joint appointment is like working on two plantations." I know that for me, I did it for strategic reasons, and because it was important. It mattered that, if I was going to be in women's studies, that I also be in Chicano studies, and so, it was easier at times—women's studies didn't make a lot of demands, and women's studies was not contentious in the way that Chicano studies was for me.

That doesn't mean it wasn't contentious. The difficulties were more subtle. No matter what, getting a field of study, especially a field of study that's been beleaguered as women's studies or even Chicano studies—getting either or both to change was difficult. It wasn't even that they weren't interested or weren't willing to. Perhaps they didn't know how and you're trying to protect your turf. Anyway, women's studies was not as immediately visibly contentious, but that doesn't mean to say it was easy. Chicano studies was, particularly around gender and sexuality, gender, yeah.

02-00:36:14

Holmes: Well I'd like to get your thoughts on the development of the field, and you also have an amazing vantage point of being there at the very beginning, and then coming to Santa Barbara in 1990. In many respects, you've been

interacting with the field for almost twenty years, as part of the first generation of Chicana historians, but also studying with the first generation of Chicano historians who were trained, and so you had that vantage point. By 1990, a lot of works have been produced, that first wave of works. What really strikes you about some of these early works?

02-00:37:10

Castañeda:

The gendered nature of the work, and therefore the incompleteness of the work. And that gendered nature of the work was evident not only in the studies, but again, what I keep trying to underscore, and I don't know that I'm doing it very well, Todd, is that you can't think about one dimension without thinking of the others.

So, it's NACCS. It's the late '80s, maybe even 1990. There's a panel on MALCS, and its development and history, and so one of the historians, a Chicana historian is discussing MALCS, and so then Deena González gets up and she says, "You have just erased us, 'us' being lesbians, and you have just erased the issue of sexuality." And so this is a Chicana historian who has struggled around gender, and is writing about gender, and Chicanas, and then Deena González says, "You've just erased us." So my point then is, in 1990, a lot of work, the gendered nature of it and the absence of whether it's gender in terms of women, but also sexuality. So, it is the lesbian historians, and specifically Deena and Emma [Pérez], who challenge us all and keep reminding us, and challenging us publicly, and frequently. So, the development of the field occurs, in terms of race and class, in this first wave of male historians, and in the next wave of historians, women historians in this case. Gender is included, but not sexuality.

And so it's the lesbian historians that then raise and push us, and the lesbian historians push us not only in terms of gender, sexuality, lesbianism, in terms of femaleness, but also in terms of sexuality in general. And so they, in the public spaces, in our organizations, in like NACCS and MALCS but specifically NACCS now—I'm jumping back and forth between MALCS and NACCS—is, they push the issue. So there is a NACCS conference in which there is a round table, and it is all women, and we have made it a women-only space because we wanted to create a space where women could talk about whatever they wanted to talk about and not feel hampered by male presence. And so, males in NACCS, our Chicano brothers, some of them, not all, took great exception, and started then berating, and threatening to push their way in. So there's Yolanda Retter—an archivist at UCLA—and me, holding the door. Now, she's got strength. I'm just there to support. I don't think I could have done anything. But anyway, I don't know whether these guys would have tried to push their way in or not. They threatened to.

And so, the difficulties of that, dealing then not just with pushback from men, but we're also dealing with pushback from women. This is a time where another colleague, a Chicana scholar, calls Deena, Emma—doesn't name them

specifically but says, "Well, here we are having to deal with lesbian terrorists." So, that's very, very, problematic. So here we're dealing then with internalized everything: racism, homophobia, *y todo lo demás*, sexism, misogyny. And again, I talk about this and I say this not because I want to damn us or condemn us, or talk about how terrible we all are, but these are the realities.

And so change, the process of change, the process of trying to change the history of patriarchy, and all of its dimensions, and the history of racism and all the things that we know, is not easy and it takes its toll. It affects all of us, and these are some of the ways that it has manifested itself, and some of the realities that we have lived, and this is not just my experience. I mean, I'm not Deena or Emma. They dealt with it even more viscerally and more than I did. And so it happened at a MALCS conference in LA, where our bylaws, at least we thought in our bylaws, said that Euro American women and men were welcome to attend the sessions, but that the space was for Chicanas, Latinas, to present. And so, at some point then, one of the organizers of the LA conference either didn't read the bylaws or what, but anyway, she accepted a paper by a white woman, and so then that created a whole other issue. It was not the Euro American woman's fault that her paper got accepted, but there it was, and so then we had to address that, not easily. Yeah, it was very, very, difficult, lots of explosions, lots of tears, lots of charges and countercharges, and more lesbian terrorism charges.

So, my point is that these changes—as we know, and I'm not telling you anything you don't know—they come at prices, and there are bodies strung along this road for the development of Chicana, Latino ethnic studies, all of the above, and this is only part of the story. And so, it's about change. It's about structural and other kind of change. Students were asking me what my advice would be, and I would say, "Change, structural change." I'm relating these stories that I haven't talked about forever. I don't know that I ever have talked about it to any great extent, but you're asking, and this is part of the history, and to not have it be part of the documentation, I would be remiss, I think.

02-00:45:29

Holmes:

I appreciate that. Well I wanted to talk about other changes you were involved in, and this is on the scholarship side, because as this is going on, some of your first articles are also coming out as well as anthologies. "The Political Economy of Nineteenth Century Stereotypes of Californians." Discuss this work a little bit, because I know this is coming out of your dissertation research, but it's also, again, putting women, putting sexuality, and putting the body pretty much at the center of that historical lens, and asking the question, "If we do this, what else do we see?" So, talk a little bit about the genesis of this article that was, I think, published in the anthology, *Between Borders: Essays on Mexicana and Chicana History*.

02-00:46:14

Castañeda:

Okay, sure. Well, again, the work that I did and the work that I rooted my studies on when I was told, "Well women didn't leave any collections; Latina, Mexican American women did not, or Mexican women, mestizas, didn't. They were illiterate. They didn't leave any collections. They didn't leave any diaries. They didn't leave any correspondence, so, you can't write a history because you don't have anything to root it in." When I started then looking closely at the documents that were present, all the documents of historical California from the colonial period through the nineteenth century, and women appeared in every part of those documents in one form or another, and gender was clearly present, and so, I began to see patterns. That particular article is rooted in terms of the literature of nineteenth century Euro Americans, and documents, and what you see is the sexualization of Mexican women, but also of Native American women. What you see is the classification by ostensibly race, but really it's more in terms of class, because the daughters and family women, women in the families of the landed class, were Spanish and the others were Mexicans or Indians.

So all I did was pull it out and say, this is how we're discussed. These are the stereotypes, and this is how those stereotypes function. This is what those stereotypes are for. They're to affirm and justify dispossession, to affirm and justify genocide in one form or another, whether it's cultural or otherwise, or real, and they're to affirm in the literature, in US literature, US history and the documents, whether it's of Mexican women, Mexican American women, or Native American, or African American. In that framing, we're not women. We're instruments of labor, or we're this or that. We're slaves or we're peons, but we're not women. So, you dehumanize, and you degenderize. And so yeah, those stereotypes are present, and they were. I didn't make them up. I just pulled them out, and highlighted whoever it was that was writing, and then, the historians or would-be historians that were then writing a bit about these women, whether it was Bannon or somebody else, Bancroft.

02-00:49:46

Holmes:

I wanted to turn next to one of your first historiographical pieces, which become extremely important, particularly with this new focus of not just looking at historical documents, but as you were saying, seeing how, through the historiography, over the decades, we can see how these stereotypes and how these categorizations are propelled; and then you also bring in to light some of the dire consequences of that, like normalizing conquest, which is one of the aspects you talk about. So this was "Gender, Race, and Culture: Spanish-Speaking Women in the Historiography of Frontier California," but also in conjunction to that, "Women of Color and the Rewriting of Western History." Talk a little bit about what your aims were in those pieces, of trying to spotlight a historiography that perhaps many thought they knew but you're putting it in new light, in many respects.

02-00:51:17

Castañeda:

What was my purpose? Well, my purpose was to rewrite, was to reinterpret, was to change, was to hold up a mirror, was to fight back with everything I had. With any and whatever possible instrument I had, I wanted to fight back, because those concepts, those notions, those frames were what we were told about ourselves, and I was fortunate in all kinds of ways to be able to—I mean, I could do this, whereas the women that I grew up with, the girls that I grew up with in the labor camp, couldn't.

So I could, and so I did, and that's why. So did I have some major intellectual intent? Did I want to? No, I didn't. It was political. For me, it was, yeah, it was, not that I'm not interested in intellectual, in ideas, or in issues, but that wasn't what drove me, some intellectual framing: 'Well golly, gee, I got to think about this because I wonder what Bannon would say.' No, that wasn't the issue, and again, I've talked a little bit about prices, the prices that we all paid, and when I talk about prices, I'm really, really aware that it wasn't just women who paid prices. The process of the development of Chicano studies, as I said, there are bodies lying in the road, and those bodies are both male and female, and so, it wasn't just my own experience. It was the experience of a lot of people, and I managed to survive for a lot of reasons, mainly because I had a lot of help beginning with this gentleman sitting there who provided the funding for a lot of us, including myself.

But the effect of this: so, I finish one of those first pieces, the one about sexuality, about sex and violence, and I'm in Sacramento, and I finally finish this piece that is about violence, and I'm dealing with all of these documents that are showing me the violence against native women and Mexican women but especially native women. So when I finish, I'm in my kitchen in this little bungalow in Sacramento, and at this point I'm smoking like crazy and drinking coffee like crazy. And so I literally finish the piece, and I stand up, and then I collapse into sobbing, just uncontrollable sobbing, and the issue is that the impact of not so much of writing, but of trying to process that violence, and trying to process it and write about it.

02-00:55:02

Holmes:

That piece, correct me if I'm wrong, is that *Sexual Violence in the Politics and Policies of Conquest*?

02-00:55:08

Castañeda:

Mm-hmm.

02-00:55:09

Holmes:

About American Indian women and the Spanish Conquest of Alta California. That's a very, very important piece.

02-00:55:14

Castañeda:

Yeah, and we don't have opportunity or we don't make opportunity; we don't write about this. I've not written about what writing that was about, I haven't,

but, and again, to repeat: my experience is not unusual or different. We can talk to most African American historians or Native American historians or any of us. The experience, I would imagine, has not been very different, but again, there isn't really much space in the Western History Conference or any place else to talk about that. There's more work, yes, being done on affect, and I understand that and I've read some of it, so, but not really, not like this.

02-00:56:10

Holmes: This is one of my arguments where oral history comes in, that it does allow you to have that space.

02-00:56:14

Castañeda: Yeah, sure.

02-00:56:17

Holmes: I wanted to switch gears and talk about a new opportunity, a new transition in your career which was coming back to Texas, I believe in 1995, as an assistant professor at UT Austin. First of all, discuss how this opportunity arose, and what the experience was like of actually, after spending so many years on the West Coast, of coming back to your home state of Texas.

02-00:56:42

Castañeda: Yeah, well it is my home state and I've always considered myself a Tejana, but certainly wasn't raised here. Well, it was difficult, and it was difficult because at Davis, I'd not been in a history department, so this was a job in the history department, and again, I was well received. I think that certainly there were advocates, Chicano historians, and UT Austin was one of the places where there was more than one Chicano historian. So there was David Montejano, and *como se llama este*, *The White Scourge*, the book—

02-00:57:45

Holmes: Neil Foley.

02-00:57:45

Castañeda: Neil Foley. So there, the two of them.

02-00:57:49

Holmes: Ricardo Romo was also there.

02-00:57:56

Castañeda: And Ricardo Romo, thank you. I forgot Ricardo because Ricardo was, when I got there, he was not teaching in the history department, he was an administrator. So I forgot he was there.

02-00:58:07

Holmes: Yes, I believe he was vice provost.

02-00:58:08

Castañeda: He was vice provost, yeah. So, I think that they were absolutely instrumental, in creating the job and in making it, particularly for gender, for a woman

historian, and the department was welcoming and they gave me, I think, a semester off. I don't think I went till spring semester, but it's also the semester my father died.

So, that semester was a good semester. The students were good; they were engaged; they were interested; they were very good students. I had students of not just Mexican American. I taught an undergraduate class in Mexican American studies, Mexican American history, and then I taught a graduate course and the graduate course was terrific. I enjoyed it immensely, but I was only there one semester. It was a situation in, it was a research institution, so obviously, publish or perish, and I had had the semester the year of the fellowship, and I had a Ford Fellowship when I first came, but I kind of took a part-time job at the Institute of Texan Cultures, because I was trying to decide whether I wanted to, if not move out of academia, at least think about something else, and the Institute of Texan Cultures, at that point, at least I thought offered the possibility for bringing to bear the authority of the state on the development of Mexican American history. I thought it could, so I kind of took a job there for a little bit.

At UT Austin, I taught only for a semester, and then I took a couple of years, I thought, to write a book, but I was not able to do so, and this is not an easy admission, but nevertheless, it's true. The issue for me at the time—it tied me in knots, paralyzed me—was the issue of feminist theory, and so, I'm trying to transform this dissertation into a book, and I've not really ever had any feminist theory courses. I've tried to read as much as I could, but it was very difficult trying to frame, for me, this work within feminist theoretical frameworks, and I was caught by the work of other Chicana scholars, particularly Emma [Pérez] who has this vast body of knowledge of French feminist theory, and Deena [González] who had this vast body of knowledge, and Vicki [Ruiz], and all these other folks, and I just could not manage to pull it together. So I didn't.

So, I took a couple of years off, and then the job at St. Mary's came up, and I applied for it, and so I was hired, and I left UT, and people were very angry with me for doing so. They thought or felt that they had struggled to get me hired, and then I up and left, so, I got some repercussion from that, but yeah, so that's the reality. It was very tough. It was very tough, and part of it, my reality has been because of where I fit or don't fit within this whole process, so, the expectation of me across time, because of my age and circumstances, have been that I know, Antonia knows, but the bottom line is, Antonia doesn't know or she doesn't always know. So I was caught. It was a tough time.

02-01:03:00
Holmes:

Well talk about this transition to St. Mary's and your time there. You received tenure again, like you were offered tenure at UC Santa Barbara before you left.

02-01:03:10

Castañeda: I was. It was an effort to retain me, and I appreciated it.

02-01:03:14

Holmes: You spent the next ten years teaching in St. Mary's. Discuss that environment, and your opportunities there.

02-01:03:25

Castañeda: So St. Mary's was good. On one hand, it's a Catholic institution. I certainly never intended to be teaching at a Catholic institution, but it was the job that was available, and I wanted to not be commuting. Arturo and I had already been commuting when we were in LA, and I was in Santa Barbara and he was in Upland, and Claremont. Living in Austin was interesting but it was difficult, and trying to drive back. I wasn't driving back and forth every day, but I think I got three tickets between here [San Antonio] and Austin in one month.

So, St. Mary's offered one location, San Antonio, but it also offered the possibility, a place to teach that was largely Mexican American. St. Mary's, by the time I left, was like 68 percent Mexican American, and most of the students were largely from San Antonio and the general environs, a large contingent from El Paso, for some reason or other, but a lot mainly from San Antonio, mainly from the area. And, St. Mary's is a teaching institution. The Marianist Order is a teaching order, and so the teaching is brutal because their people teach four classes. I managed to talk them into teaching where I had a three-three load instead of four-four, for which I was eternally grateful. Even three was really hard. So you don't have much time for much of anything but teaching, if you're trying to do a good job. Again, I was in a history department. I would have preferred not to be, but there was no Mexican American studies. There were some courses.

One of the other parts that attracted me to St. Mary's at the time was that Jerry Poyo, who's a Cuban American historian, had started one of the first MA programs in Latino and Mexican American history. And the university had the program and all in the history department, but they didn't fund it, and so we had students and we had applicants, but we couldn't offer them any money, so, the program just eventually died on the vine because there was no possibility, which was too bad, because it was really one of the first, and it was a good program.

I've had this various range of students and the students at St. Mary's were hardworking students but had not a lot of time to work on their academics because, for the most part, they were working if not full time, almost full time, sometimes two or three jobs. So, it was hard to keep them engaged and keep them working, on their course, on the reading, and so consequently, I wound up increasingly requiring less and less reading, and doing other kinds of projects. One of the major accomplishments, I think, of my years at St. Mary's was, I had the O'Connor chair for a couple of years, and one of those years I

organized a conference. I got NEH funding and organized the Gender on the Borderlands Conference and got also funding from the university. So not just the NEH, the NEH and the dean at that time, Janet Dizinno, was very, very helpful and got me additional funding.

So we had a solid conference. It was one of the first conferences, had major speakers—Deena and Emma, Evelyn Hu-DeHart, Native American Inés Hernández-Ávila—lots of panels. Out of that came the publication, the journal, *Frontiers*, and it's a work that I'm really proud of, because it included not just scholarly articles by professors as well as graduate students, but also it included articles from community folks. So it had Amy Kastely's essay article on the *Esperanza* suit against the City of San Antonio, which it won. It had Maria Antoinetta's rosary for Emma Tenayuca, in which Maria Antoinetta recited, but as opposed to the "traditional mysteries of the rosary," she reconfigured each of those, focused on Emma's life, and so it had that. It had Graciela Sanchez's essay on growing up in San Antonio. It had Gabriela Gonzalez's first essay she ever published. It had Vicki Grise, who's a Chicana playwright who won the Yale Drama Award in 2010, I believe, writes about her family and being Asian and being Chinese and being Mexican. So, it's a, I think, beautiful compilation, and so I'm very pleased with that.

So St. Mary's, on the one hand, never gave me any grief about not being Catholic enough or not being Catholic, actually. St. Mary's, on the one hand was good to me. It was very good to me, personally, but it was not interested in or attentive to the kinds of concerns that I had, that I tried to do more broadly with and for the institution culturally and otherwise, and so they kind of kept me at arm's length. But the students, I worked very hard with students and they with me, and I hear from them periodically. But when I left St. Mary's after ten years, it was really time. At that point, there was a new pope who was re-catholicizing the Catholic institutions, more specifically than had been the case, and so it was that and health issues, then I turned sixty-five. I thought, it's time to exit left, and one of the most important things for me as a person, I think, is to know when to exit left.

02-01:11:10

Holmes:

Well, and in a lot of respects too, if we think about your earliest teaching like at the University of Washington, it's, in some ways, you've come full circle of dealing with a lot of those students that needed a close teacher like that.

02-01:11:26

Castañeda:

Yes, so I ended my teaching career at St. Mary's.

02-01:11:33

Holmes:

Well, we were just talking about the field. I'd like to get your thoughts on its maturation, and particularly by the time your articles are coming out, Emma and Deena's articles and work are really coming out. This, in a lot of way, does represent the maturation of the field because in comparison to the early histories that had gendered problems, the work of Chicana historians began to

somewhat balance that out and also open up new doors. Discuss again your thoughts on the influence and impact of Chicana scholars within the field of Chicana/o studies.

02-01:12:21

Castañeda:

So we see transformations across time and I think that certainly, we're in the throes of a whole other transformation in terms of Latino, Latinx studies. If you're asking me more specifically about Chicana/Chicano studies and my thoughts on that process, so, I end my teaching career at St. Mary's in 2007 and continued, to some degree, until 2012, 2013 as the co-editor with Deena González of the Chicana Matters series. And so for me, that's more the maturation rather than just history or historians, because what Deena and I did when we decided to do the series—and Deena will obviously speak for herself as only Deena can and does, about why she decided to do this and what, for her, this means—for me what it meant was that Deena and I wanted to make sure that this subfield survived, and that it grew and thrived.

And so we then established this co-edited series, Chicana Matters series, which we were able to do because of the invaluable help, work of Theresa May, who was an executive editor at UT Press, who said, "Okay, yes, let's do this series." And so what we did then: we published twenty books. Of those, eighteen are academic studies, two are novels, and by doing that, we wanted to make sure that the field survived and that the studies are, except one, are all of probationary professors, assistant professors, and so we wanted to provide the publication by which these professors would get tenure, and that the publications upon which they got tenure then were really solid, well-edited, well-designed, well-published books, so that tenure and promotion committees could not say, "Oh, well it's a sloppy job," or, "It's a press; it doesn't matter," or, "Your editing is lousy." So, we made sure, or we wanted to make sure. And so that, for me, is the maturation of the field, and that's history and that's literature and that's cultural studies, and that's others.

02-01:15:27

Holmes:

The broad, multidisciplinary aspects of the field.

02-01:15:31

Castañeda:

Yes, the multidisciplinary aspects, queer studies, certainly.

02-01:15:36

Holmes:

I'd like to talk a little bit about that, because that is also one of the biggest changes what we see, what started out as Chicano studies, and then Chicana and Chicano studies, and then now, to where it's largely referred to as Chicana, right? Discuss that transformation, particularly as one who was involved in say, the lesbian caucus at NACCS, and its support. MALCS also was very much on the forefront of again, promoting not just gender but also sexuality. We also see this in your writing as well, that the field needs to be inclusive. Discuss your observations on that, because that was another struggle in a sense as well, of diversifying the field, if you will.

02-01:16:36

Castañeda:

Oh, on further diversification. I don't know that I have much to add, really, because I think that the field is changing and should. There's new populations, there's new areas of study that are developing and should develop. As I said earlier at lunch, I haven't kept up with it. So, the various thrusts I'm not real clear on, so I don't know that I can really help, other than to say that, continuity and change, there's both, always, and so things do change. They should change. Certainly, in the last twenty-five, thirty years, there's new population shifts, and new immigrations, and new histories, or histories, connected histories that we need to further strengthen and develop, and particularly if we're talking hemispherically, and transnationally and globally, I think that there are new avenues, new realms, new areas. I just can't speak specifically to them because as I said earlier, I'm just not up to date on it.

02-01:18:10

Holmes:

Well Antonia, so much of your work has spotlighted reading those old documents in new ways to put gender, as well as sexuality, at the center. And I wanted to ask you about two of those before getting some of your final reflections on the field. One of them is, "Engendering the History of Alta California." Here, it's not just gender that you want to look at, but it's also sexuality and the family, of looking at that kind of patriarchy. Will you discuss that a little bit, what you saw as the aims and contributions of what you were trying to do in that work?

02-01:19:02

Castañeda:

I think more than anything else, I was trying to signal areas that we needed to further develop. So for example, in my own, and particularly the dissertation, I didn't so much address issues of religion, other than at the missions, but religion within the community, within the population, within the families, within the community writ large. I didn't extensively address issues of sexuality, was beginning to in that article. So more than anything, I think I was trying to signal these are areas that we need to further explore, that are there to be explored, that there's sources that we can draw upon. However indirect they might be, they exist.

And so I think more than anything, that's what I was trying to do, because I didn't delve into that. It's been a critique, I know, that has existed of my work, that I didn't address the relationships between Native American women, between indigenous women and mestizas, and that's certainly there to be addressed. There's dimensions that I didn't address that need to be addressed that are there, and some, in that case, for example, that's been a critique. In other cases, I touched upon something or other, like sexuality or within the family and issues, but didn't develop.

So yeah, almost any area, any dimension that you can think of, one needs to address. Most recently there is this young historian that's working on patriarchy and the UFW, or farm labor. That surely is there to be addressed. We haven't, and I don't know whether out of the Me Too movement or not, we

haven't addressed the issue of sexual violence to any degree internally within communities and within families. We haven't addressed the issue of incest, as hard as that is. We haven't. So, there is lots, and all of this is part of the social, historical, cultural reality. This is all there. We can't ignore it and shouldn't and won't, but the presses, the field of Chicano/a studies and its many transformations is what, fifty years old?

02-01:22:19

Holmes: Yes.

02-01:22:21

Castañeda: So, we haven't even touched on the myriad of areas that need to be addressed, that are there to be addressed, that we can have sources for if we look for them. So let me just say, I get really impatient when people say, "Well, you haven't done, well you haven't"—I don't mean me, I mean in terms of the field. Well, no, of course we haven't. We're only fifty years old!

02-01:22:51

Holmes: That's very well said, yes.

02-01:22:52

Castañeda: So, give us time. Give us time.

02-01:22:57

Holmes: The last piece I wanted to ask you about: Now this was written in 2014, and it's focused actually at the field of Chicano studies itself, and it's talking about ending that kind of patriarchal institutional violence within Chicano studies. Can you discuss what the genesis of this piece was about?

02-01:23:21

Castañeda: Yes. So, when Chicana Matters published Maylei's book, *¡Chicana Power!* Anybody remember? 2014, no, 2012.

02-01:23:47

Holmes: 2012 perhaps?

02-01:23:47

Castañeda: Maybe 2012. Okay, so there is a NACCS conference, and Maylei has a session at the NACCS conference, and some of the women that she interviews, particularly Anna Nieto-Gómez and a couple of the other women who were students at Long Beach, at Cal State University, Long Beach, when Anna Nieto-Gómez established *Las Hijas de Cuauhtémoc*, the newspaper, and also when Anna Nieto-Gómez was denied tenure. She was denied tenure shortly thereafter. And so in 2012, there is this session at NACCS where Maylei is launching her book, and she has these people come and these Chicanas. And so what happens at that session then is the issue of violence in Chicano studies. That's what surfaces, because the resistance to Anna Nieto-Gómez and the resistance to feminism and feminist orientations in Chicano studies are fierce and shut down in the 1970s. And one of the ways they're shut down, or one of the major ways they're shut down is violence—the

violence towards Anna Nieto-Gómez at CSU Long Beach is brutal. She is hung in effigy and buried. There was this *acto* with the coffin, *y todo lo demás*.

And so, the trauma of that experience is articulated in this gathering, and that's maybe in 2012, and so then, NACCS is in the spring, and then MALCS is in the summer, and there is another roundtable with some of the same women in the discussion, and at MALCS then, we, a group of us, say, "Well, we've got to do something," and so then we formed this group, this ad-hoc committee that we called the Ad-Hoc Committee on Heteropatriarchal Institutional Violence. And so our effort has been to address the issue of heteropatriarchy structures and violence in Chicana/Chicano studies, yeah, in our institutions, understanding that we exist in institutions, that Chicana/Chicano studies exist in institutions that are already *a priori* heteropatriarchal, and violent, in terms of its structures, violence that is allowed and permitted against women in all kinds of ways.

So, it's out of that that we formed this committee, and we meet at NACCS, we meet at MALCS, and we finally are able to get NACCS to establish a similar committee, and to begin to address, we hope, the issue of heteropatriarchal institutional violence, and to rethink NACCS, because the violence keeps being reproduced. And so what surfaced in 2010 was, a small group also at Cal State Long Beach formed a group called Consencia Femenil (ConFem). At any rate, it's, let's say, a follow-up organization from way back in the '70s. And so a feminist organization, now feminist, dealing with gender and sexuality, so several of the young women are also *lesbianas*, and again, the pushback that they got was equally violent to the extent, now on the Internet and on Facebook, instructions on how to kill them. One that they should be killed and then instructions on how to kill them, very violent statements in the student newspaper, anonymous or otherwise that are sent to the student newspaper. And when the young women of ConFem sought to get help from Chicano studies, from the director, the chair and faculty, from the student newspaper, from the dean, from the institution: "Well, we can't. It's free speech, so we can't shut them down," and Chicano studies would not do anything on the contrary.

So, the issue is that: when and where and how? If we don't begin to confront it now, when and how? And we understand that the violence isn't just in Chicano studies. It is the institutional framing of the institution, and we insist, in these departments within institutions that are already structured in such a way as to not be concerned with or attentive to this range of issues. But, being in those institutions then, we need to be really conscious of not reproducing, and so what does that mean in terms of Chicano studies? So, that's where. So then, we were able to get this particular issue of the MALCS journal focused on the work of that committee and on the essays that were generated out of that committee.

02-01:30:23

Holmes:

Well Antonia, we've actually reached towards the end of this session, but I wanted to give the students a chance to ask some questions. But before we get there, I just wanted to ask a few reflective questions. The field of Chicana and Chicano studies has evolved a lot since your early days at Western Washington State, or even doing your master's at the University of Washington. In your view, what have been some of the major developments in the field that strike you, over those fifty years?

02-01:31:04

Castañeda:

Well, for starters, the establishment of Chicano studies, Chicana/Chicano studies initially, in institutions of higher education, obviously in public institutions. Certainly they exist in private institutions and that's good, absolutely, but the majority of students go to public institutions. So for me, as a public school person all the way except for my ten years at St. Mary's, it matters that they're especially present in public institutions. The other dimension, of course, is the transformation still in process of gender and sexuality, and then, finally, I think probably then this next phase that I'm not a part of, but that I can look forward to reading about, yeah, which is very different, as it should be, yeah.

02-01:32:20

Holmes:

Lastly, what are some of your hopes for the field going forward?

02-01:32:27

Castañeda:

Well, that it will one, grow and thrive and change, and most especially, obviously, that it continues, because from this conversation with Professor Camarillo at Stanford, which was at one point a major institution that was committed, at least we thought, to the field, right now, he doesn't think he's going to be replaced. He doesn't see a replacement in the offing, and again this is an institution and this is a professor who has made major, more than major contributions to the field—he produced twenty-five graduate students. He produced twenty-five professors, or for the most part, they're professors, and he's not being replaced? And he was the only Chicano historian Stanford ever hired, although there were efforts and intentions, allegedly, to hire at least one more but never did? So that's very distressing.

02-01:33:37

Holmes:

And it's a bit of a paradox, too, if we think of the success that before, when there was very few Chicana and Chicano professors on a campus, to where someone like Al Camarillo or Vicki Ruiz would hold the president positions of national organizations, someone like Ricardo Romo would actually become a university president, and then so, before hearing the news about Al, that was one of those things where I thought we are making such progress. And then it's like, two steps forward, one step back perhaps.

Lastly, we all stand on the shoulders of others, and in doing these interviews, I always want to give a chance for the interviewees to recognize some of the

scholars who have passed, before this project was initiated, that played an important role, or had some kind of influence to them. Are there any of those you would like to mention?

02-01:34:42

Castañeda:

Oh, obviously Ernesto Galarza, for starters. How could I not mention Don Ernesto, and Ernesto is vitally important for his activism as much as for his scholarship, yeah. Other people who have passed: Shirlene Soto, and Louise Año Nuevo Kerr, those two in particular were also foundational in terms of Chicana studies. They did some of the first studies. So, Shirlene Soto then writes about *soldaderas, esta*; Louise Año Nuevo Kerr writes about Mexicanas, Mexican American women in the Midwest, in Chicago area. So their work is foundational and also their particular struggles are—we don't know as much about them. My document will be part of this oral history but theirs won't, which is too bad, so, then for those of us who are still here, then it behooves us to not just remember, but to write and to document them also.

02-01:36:20

Holmes:

Well I'd like to give the students a few minutes to ask some questions. My mic should be able to pick you up, but I'm going to set it this way, so it can. Why don't you start with your name first, so that way the transcriber knows who exactly is speaking, and ask away.

02-01:36:41

Peralta:

Okay, hi, my name is Hector Peralta. I'm a second-year PhD student in the American studies department at Yale. Thank you to Todd and thank you to Dr. Castañeda for this opportunity. So, we started to discuss at lunch, but I wanted to go back to your time in the Chicano movement, your time at the Bilingual, Transnational, Chicano Studies Program in Colegio de México. My question would be, what are some lessons, and challenges you learned from those two summers that you spent, specifically, in the way that students in Mexico were connecting or not connecting with Chicanos of the US and vice versa?

02-01:37:16

Castañeda:

So, that was very early on, and as I've mentioned earlier, in terms of Chicana and Chicano studies, there was a movement, so there was a sector of the movement that was certainly transnational and international in its orientation, and that program was very much a part of that, and the effort was to engage the scholarship of both Mexico, in that case Mexican scholars, and US scholars. This is just my perspective, and Arturo was part of the conceptualization of that program, but part of it, from my perspective, develops precisely because the people who founded Chicano studies come from those fields. They come from the field of Latin American history, Latin American studies, Spanish departments, Spanish and Portuguese who are already obviously rooted in an international frame and perspective. And so it was an effort, as in, what I experienced as a participant was an effort to

strengthen the intellectual as well as the historical and cultural dimensions of Chicano studies in Mexico, as well as in the United States.

02-01:38:55

Sanchez:

Hi, thank you so much. My name is Sandra Sanchez. My question is, earlier you talked a bit about the struggles for intersectionality between women's studies and Chicano studies, but I'm wondering if you can talk at all about the so-called ethnic fields of Native studies, Asian American studies, et cetera, in the 1970s and '80s, and how the work in those fields, how that fit into your role in the development of Chicano studies.

02-01:39:24

Castañeda:

For me, my involvement with Chicano studies and its development, is a result of the Chicano movement, as I commented earlier, and as part of the Chicano movement, we were connected with all of those other struggles. Some of us were at Wounded Knee. Some of us were at Alcatraz. Some of us, we supported the struggles in Africa and Asia. We were antiwar. So for me, the development of the field then is rooted in those earlier struggles, which are political struggles, and so the process of Chicano studies then links us to the process occurring in colleges and universities for ethnic studies programs.

And so for example, at Sacramento, at Sac State, as a matter of fact, out of the work of the faculty, the scholars at Sac and in the Bay Area—gee, I'm trying to remember the date and I can't right now. It's in the late '70s, maybe early '80s. We organized a Third-World writers, scholars, and thinkers symposium. And so, there were representatives from all of the groups, and it wasn't just, "Well gee, we have to get a representative from here; we have to get a representative from there." It was, there were representatives from all of the groups because we were all involved. There were all these connections and people knew each other and knew each other's work, and some of it was scholarship, but a lot were creative writers, thinkers, scholars—so it was writers; it was poets; it was novelists. So, that was very present.

It feels like some of that has slipped, and I don't get the sense that those connections seem to be as strong as I felt they were at the time, but that was a long time ago, and each field has developed consistent with its own needs, its own realities, and its own struggles, and those struggles have been long-lived. Everybody struggled. Nobody had an easy process of establishing its own Ethnic Study field in the colleges and universities. And so, yes, I would like to see that come back. I would like to see those connections be made strong again.

02-01:42:26

Estrella:

Hi, my name is Lucero Estrella. I'm a first-year in the American studies at Yale, and my question is, what are your thoughts on the inclusion of Mexican American studies and Latino studies in K-12? So, there have been like legal battles, by opposition of Mexican American studies in Texas a couple of years

ago—the production of a textbook that was like poorly written, and the fight to get this book rewritten, which is like, what are your thoughts on?

02-01:42:57

Castañeda:

So, there is a critically important and sustained effort on the part of Chicano, Latino educators certainly in Texas to establish Mexican American, Chicana/o, but let's just say Mexican American studies, in the schools, in public education in particular, in high schools as well as in the middle schools, and in elementary schools. But it's a long, engaged struggle and so most recently, as you know, there was a struggle around a high school textbook which wasn't just a poorly written, bad textbook. It was politically motivated, and it was intended to subvert the effort to establish a Mexican American studies in the public education system.

So, there are educators, scholars in the field of education, who teach in colleges and in departments of education, who are really engaged. As much as I support it, it is not a particular struggle that I've been personally engaged in. I'll support it, I provide funds, I go to meetings, but it's Mexican American studies and it's comprised of representatives from colleges and universities that have Mexican American studies programs, and they're working to establish Mexican American studies in the schools. And so they're doing a terrific job, but it is a pitched struggle, because the boards of education have to approve the curriculum, and boards of education, like the state board, is appointed by a Republican governor who appoints Republicans who are not interested and on the contrary. So it's an ongoing struggle.

02-01:45:08

Plascencia:

Thank you so much for your time. My name is Maria Jose Plascencia. I'm a first-year PhD student in American studies. We talked a lot today about how young the field of Chicano studies is: fifty years old. You mentioned that there's a lot of work to be done, so I'm just curious what this new generation of scholars should be prioritizing, not necessarily in terms of scholarship, but in terms of structural change, efforts in public history, collecting archives, and so on.

02-01:45:39

Castañeda:

Well, I think what you should be prioritizing first and foremost is your area of study, and your work, whatever it is that you're most passionate engaged with and that you want to study. So that, first and foremost, and then the other, in addition to your own work, as I said when we were in the car, I think one, establishing community, wherever you are, whatever institution you're in, but also establishing community outside of the institution. So both, and they're not mutually exclusive, on the contrary. And then finally, if this is a field that you are committed to, then working to ensure that that field grows and thrives, and is sustained not only in terms of your academic work, that, certainly, but also in terms of the institution. So we've just talked about the fact that, as far as we can tell at Stanford, Dr. Camarillo will not immediately be replaced, so will that position be kept open? What happens to that position?

And so, at this point, that may not be a struggle that you are able to wage, because right now your focus needs to be your studies, but certainly as you move through your process and you move on to your professorships and work, if you're interested in Latino/Latinx studies and that's the field that you want to work in, then unless there are departments and positions, the field will cease to exist. And so then, how do we best ensure that the field continues? So, and I am so pleased to meet you. It's incredibly inspiring to see you and to meet you here in this space and to listen to your questions, and to hear you engage with each other and with your professor. You give me incredible hope and inspiration, so it'll inspire me to go out and do something else with what we know, and to further develop the areas that we don't know.

02-01:48:07

Holmes:

I think we have one last question.

02-01:48:08

Pitti:

Well actually, I have two.

02-01:48:11

Holmes:

Oh, there you go again, raising the bar Steve! [laughs]

02-01:48:13

Pitti:

This is Stephen Pitti, professor of history at Yale, and I have a specific question for you, and then I have a general question for you, if you don't mind. The specific question is, I'd like you to talk about two people who have passed whom I know you knew well and who were important to you, from the 1970s forward, and I'm thinking about people that I also knew in Sacramento, Isabel and Joe, and this is just a way to kind of bring you back to a relationship that you had with the two of them over the course of a number of years, and we'd just love to hear you reflect, for at least a minute or two, about who was Isabel, who was Joe? They were, of course, people who were in the university very much, but also outside of it, and I have a sense that they were important to you personally and professionally at one moment. Would you mind talking about that for a minute?

02-01:49:07

Castañeda:

Not at all. So, Joe Serna and Isabel Hernandez-Serna are two dear friends from Sacramento, but in addition to being dear friends and colleagues, Joe came from a farm-working family, in Lodi, in California, and grew up as a farm worker, and interested in political science; becomes a political scientist and teaches at California State University, Sacramento. Both he and Isabel, like us, are part of the generation that struggled for Chicano studies and that developed Chicano studies.

Isabel Hernandez-Serna comes to the United States from Spain, from Southern Spain, Uleila del Campo in the province of Almería, when she is ten and so this is in the early 1950s—1950, '51—and she and her family, there is a community of people from Spain that come to the Sacramento area, actually

to Vacaville, and work in the onion and garlic and other plants. Isabel goes to Sac State, becomes involved with the Chicano movement, as an *Española*. *España*, I mean, Spain, is a contentious area and issue, but she casts her lot with Chicanos and Chicano movement, and so is very much a part of the Chicano struggle at Sac State and in Sacramento, as well as with Native Americans and Asian Americans, African American struggles.

Eventually they marry and Joe becomes the first Mexican American mayor of Sacramento, and is incredibly effective. He's a Democrat, very progressive, and Isabel, who was my roommate at Stanford, along with Lois Risling, a Hupa woman from Northern California, and she becomes the director of the Student Affirmative Action program, and is my boss at Sac State. These two folks are pivotal to the development of Chicano studies in California at Sacramento State University, but they're also pivotal to the development of a Chicano presence politically and socially and culturally. Both Joe and Isabel are integrally related to what is known as the RCAF, the acronym stands for the Rebel Chicano Art Front, but the group used to tease—it's a group of artists—used to tease and say that they were the Royal Chicano Air Force, and that they flew adobe airplanes. They were incredibly comical. They used satire. They were very satirical, but they were artists. Most were visual artists, and they were a group that was integrally involved and related to the United Farm Workers.

And so there's all of this whole range of relationships and connections that are inseparable, and all of this was part of the development of Chicano studies, at Sac State, and what we see there at Sac State with these folks that I've identified and mentioned, we see elsewhere, whether it's Malaquias Montoya in the development of Chicano studies at UC Berkeley, as a matter of fact, and so on. So, I don't know whether that—

02-01:53:20

Pitti: Absolutely. I was thinking of them when you were talking about folks who were no longer with us.

02-01:53:25

Castañeda: Yes, no, absolutely, and it was very sad. They both became ill with cancer, and passed one following the other, so yeah, and they were dear, dear friends.

02-01:53:42

Pitti: Thank you for your reflections, and in some ways, the two of them modeled leadership, in very clear ways, as have you.

02-01:53:48

Castañeda: Yes, absolutely, thank you.

02-01:53:49

Pitti: You've been an amazing scholar, and a teacher to so many for so many decades, but you've also been an incredible leader over that time, though I think it's fair to say that the nature of your leadership has some continuities,

but it's also changed, naturally enough, over the course of your career working in and around these fields.

I think it's true that one of the things that's characterized your leadership, especially in the last fifteen years, let's say, has been an engagement with public history. This is something that you can trace back to your work in the '60s and '70s, of course, but I think your commitment and the time you've spent with public-facing scholarship has increased significantly, especially since your retirement, it might be fair to say, and I'd love to hear you talk about that a little bit, about your thoughts on public history, your commitments to public history, perhaps some of what you've done in public history, particularly since we're sitting here on the Westside, in the site of what will be soon the Westside Museum, in a particular building that's of importance to you, certainly in a neighborhood that's important to you.

02-01:55:07

Castañeda:

Well thank you. Golly, where to start? That's a whole other session.

02-01:55:14

Holmes:

Session three! Go. [laughter]

02-01:55:17

Castañeda:

So, public history, as I've commented, my work with public history actually rests on the work that I did with Steve's dad and Carlos Cortes on *Five Views* in the 1980s, and since then, the issue has become very clear to me that we have to have a presence in all realms. So the first part of my life has been, I hope, helping to establish that presence in an academic realm. I hope that my teaching has had some effect, and that students will have continued that. But the other, that is very, very clear to me, particularly now in the political climate that we're living in, is that if we don't ensure to have a presence in all other realms, but most particularly in the public sphere, then we will continue to not exist, we will continue to be considered as nonexistent. And what concerns me a lot is, in terms of the importance of new populations that, if we don't begin to incorporate and engage those new Latinx populations in this whole process, including in the public sphere and public presence, then that erasure will just continue and will reproduce itself.

And so, after I retired in 2007 and kind of took a rest for a while, I then got engaged in 2009 with, because of the La Gloria, as Graciela mentioned, we established, we created, we founded the Westside Preservation Alliance, the WPA, although we called it something else at the time, and began challenging other organizations but most particularly the city, and the Office of Historic Preservation, so, institutions: local, county, state, and national institutions with the absence, and that absence is fundamentally the erasure of Mexican Americans, Latinos, all of the above. And as I mentioned while we were having lunch, I have found myself in some ways repeating the process of struggle that we waged in academic institutions in the late 1960s and '70s for Chicano studies, and continue that struggle within the institutions and within

Chicano studies, now, we find ourselves—organizations, whether it's at the national level with the scholars panel or at the local level with the WPA and the Esperanza—waging that struggle to change the structures of exclusion, the structures of oppression, the structures of violence.

Here, thankfully, when Arturo and I moved to San Antonio, one of the first people that we met were Graciela Sánchez and her then-partner Gloria Ramírez, and the Esperanza. The Esperanza is now thirty years old. We've been here almost twenty-five years. So, we became engaged with the work of the Esperanza and continue to be engaged with it and support it. Graciela, the executive director, whose background is in history and sociology from Yale, then is an historian, and so she understood, at the core, from her own experience in her own life and her own family and her own being, but also intellectually and socially and politically, the meaning of the history of these communities—the Westside and it's working-class communities. There's not just one community; there's multiple communities. It's a very large area, and we're in the near Westside, what we call the Historic Westside, but she understood that unless we began to organize around it, the erasure would be ever more complete, and like most inner cities in the United States, we are faced with gentrification, and displacement of working-class communities, beginning with the Alazan Apache Courts.

02-02:00:52

Holmes:

Well Antonia, this has been wonderful, thank you so much.

02-02:00:54

Castañeda:

Well, thank you. Thank you. [applause] *Gracias, gracias.*

[End of Interview]