

Teresa Vigil/Dana Echohawk Transcription
Transcriber: Hannah Wilson
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DANA: We're in the home of Theresa Vigil this morning, date is January 29th, 2011 and Theresa, I'd like you to introduce yourself.

TERESA: My name is, my real baptismal name, since we're doing a cultural thing, is Teresa de Jesus Berlinda. I was Gallardo and now I'm a Vigil. So Theresa Vigil.

DANA: Okay we're going to ask you to talk about your life in San Luis, some of the culture and some of the traditions. Tell us what you remember about being a young child here.

TERESA: These were my happy days. I lived in San Francisco California, very cosmopolitan, but summers here were like a free spirit when I came to Grandma's house. I am living now in my grandmother's house and I inherited this house actually. And I loved it here and my childhood was very innocent. It was spent out doors a lot although I had little chores to do, my grandparents believed in discipline. I was also geared into my religion quite a bit. I loved going to mass in the morning, it was something I grew up with and I still do it. And what I loved about being here was the natural way of things. We ate off the land. My grandfather was a farmer and he grew a garden here and so we tended to the garden and we helped the neighbor that they shared the crops with for canning. We had certain chores to do like when they would fish, we'd have to go outside to the old pump there and clean all the fish. Sometimes they'd bring as many as a hundred fish and can them. That was a way of preserving food. When they butchered a pig outside or a lamb, we ate a lot of lamb because my grandpa had sheep, and a lot of times we had to help with cutting up the meat for *carne cecina* or dried meat. And it was a way of preserving. My grandmother also would take us kind of out to blocks from here, there was a big lettuce field. And as a result of the farming we had also wild *telitas* or lamb's quarters. And we would have to pick them and then she would wash them and put them upstairs on a clean sheet and cover them and they would be dried for the winter. I did spend the winter here when I was in

the sixth grade so that was like a real treat. I did the snow thing and the ice-skating on the river, although we didn't have ice skates. At recess we'd go out and just slide thinking we were real ice skaters.

(3:32)

DANA: And what river is that?

TERESA: I can't remember. It's right down on Main Street by the shrine.

DANA: Would that be the Culebra?

TERESA: Probably the Culebra.

DANA: And ...

TERESA: You know I was young and we had certain things we had to do like I never liked cleaning the entrails. You had to take them out and they would make sausage with them. That was one of our chores. But the dried meat, I would watch how they did it but we didn't have to employ ourselves too much in that. They'd cut it very thin and it depended, some liked to put chili and garlic and different things on it but my grandmother usually made it kind of plain. She wasn't very spicy in her cooking.

DANA: And when you talk about the entrails and making sausage, I'm not sure kids today understand what all of that is about. Do you want to tell us?

(4:41)

TERESA: Okay we call it *tripe*, okay, intestines. And of course we had a ball with this, we'd go out to the old pump, which is still there, and you would put the entrails kind of over and pump water into it to clean it out. And then what I remember is the wood stove she had out there on the porch and you could smell. Now there is where the spices were. I remember smelling oregano, chili and garlic. And they would take the blood; the blood was like fried and made into like a sausage like *chorizo*, what we call *chorizo*. And then they had a little gadget that they would sort or pipe it into the entrails and make *chorizo*. But I

remember them doing that and making headcheese where they'd take all the different parts, nothing was wasted. Nothing was wasted. Everything was chopped up and made into what we call headcheese now. And it was delicious, it really was. It was made thick and it would gel and then they would cut it up and it was like a delicacy.

DANA: And how would you prepare it? How would you cook the headcheese?

(6:06)

TERESA: What I watched them do, they put everything in a big kennel and cook it and then I think part of what gels it, I think is the feet of the animal, they boil it and it makes like a gel. And that would be put into that and then once it was poured into a pan it sort of gelled. But different cooks had different recipes, you might say.

DANA: What other foods did you...?

(6:44)

TERESA: *Biscochitos* for sure, and that's our traditional cookie. And it was especially when they killed the hog, they had really white lard. And lard was the best way to use it and anise was one of the spices, anise. And the very closet behind you is where grandma kept the *biscochitos*. And they would have these great big fifty-pound lard cans.

DANA: You were telling us about *biscochitos*...

(7:34)

TERESA: Okay they were traditionally made for holidays, especially Christmas. And brandy, in those days people could get to Mexico a lot and they would bring good brandy. And for some reason I always remembered apricot brandy. So after the cookies were made, they were stored, I remember my grandmother putting clean towels in the bucket and sprinkle it with the brandy. And then the cookies would be stored in there and kept for a long time. And they absorbed the flavor. And they were real soft when you bit into

them. They were real soft, very good. And a lot of them would do cinnamon also; they would dip them in sugar and cinnamon. And again, all cooks have their own little method of *biscochito*.

(8:39)

DANA: A little bit more about the farming, the lettuce farming, what were some of the other ways of making a living in the valley during those years?

TERESA: During the war it was booming. They needed vegetables and I remember there were lettuce fields and peas. And my own grandfather grew peas and beans, were the product he sold a lot of. And he had eighteen acres three miles from here. And that's what my *colcha* embroidery is about. And so that was his way of making a living. And he also had a few animals. He didn't really raise cattle but in the backyard here we had a pen with a pig, a cow, and chickens. And what I remember my grandmother made everything kind of fresh. I started school right across the street from here; it was called Primmer, kind of kindergarten. And I remember running home at lunchtime and she'd say go to the chicken coop and bring me some fresh eggs and she'd make a certain pudding, a real good pudding, kind of custard pudding with the fresh eggs. And so the chickens were always there. And when they had Sunday dinner, this was very common; they killed one of the chickens for Sunday dinner. And we didn't have that very often. But we ate a lot of beans because my grandfather grew them. And in the summertime they grew corn and made *chicos*. *Chicos* was something you could dry. And also I don't remember if they made hominy or *posole*. I think he traded for that or something. But they canned all the vegetables; there was no way to freeze. We didn't have freezers. Everything was canned or dried. Fruit jellies were made out of the wild, which I do with chokecherry, which is *capulin*. And because of the work I do, I actually extend knowledge about chokecherries as medicine also. But I do rosehips, which are *champas*. Rosehip is a wild rose and that was a delicacy. They did *conserva*, what they call *conserva*. They made it kind of thick. Quesos were cheese made from the goat milk, a lot of times and cow's milk. They were very popular it was a desert. And the *champas* jelly **(11:44)** would go over the cheese and it was very European actually when you think about it. But when you talk to anybody about a *queso*, they really relish doing that, you know. And

in those days you had fresh milk but I know a lot of people who make it out of powdered milk and fresh milk.

DANA: You'll have to tell me again how to pronounce the embroidery.

(12:13)

TERESA: Oh, col-cha. The *colcha* embroidery.

DANA: And could we take that off the wall and have you tell us about it?

TERESA: Sure. Okay *colcha* is an embroidery that is done with wool. In the old days, women wanted to beautify their beds or sometimes even curtains and a *colcha* is a bedspread. So they would have a sheet or a piece of muslin that they could work with and they didn't get a lot of yarn or anything from the old world so when they carded the sheep, they would make the wool. And then they would dye the wool with natural stains. And that's all they had to use, so they would make great big embroideries and they had certain stitches, a split stitch, they had all different kinds of stitches depending on the woman, what she had learned probably from her mother, her grandmother, her aunt. And so it was a way of beautifying their home. Later, it was more New Mexican actually. I don't think they have found but one in Spain that I know of. So it must have been something they had to invent for their own looks in their home. Later it became a way of maybe honoring a story in your family. And that's what this one is. And I call mine *Recuerdo de los Abuelos con, Teresa* **(14:09)** which means A Memory of My Grandparents with Me, Teresa. And in the picture my brother is fishing and my grandmother, she dressed like that all the time with the black *tapalo*.

DANA: So you're grandmother is...

TERESA: ...Is the one in black. And she took us up to the farm that day and Donald was fishing and I was picking *quelites* or the wild spinach, the lamb's quarters. And grandma was cooking a pot of beans for lunch. And we would have lunch there and my brother and I would run through the fields all day through the beans and the peas, eating peas. So that's a memory. And I think

this is the Culebra River running through you know Hope's property? Hope, her dad owned that property. Diego Gallegos.

DANA: You're referring to Hope Gallegos, your cousin?

(15.14)

TERESA: Right who does the genealogy? And so *colcha* about ten years ago, it became a revived art and thanks to a grant that they got here in Costilla County, several women took classes for about a year in learning the *colcha* stitch. When I took it, there was a lady that came from South America and she had a week class and I joined the class. Unfortunately I was not as good stitcher as some of the others. But it was memorable. So that's the *colcha* embroidery.

DANA: The mountains in the back, are those the...

(15:57)

TERESA: Yeah, you've got to remember this is a childhood memory and maybe exaggerated a little. The colors are exaggerated but that was all part of me.

DANA: Before I get to asking you about what you do, I would like to ask you about traditions. And in know Christmas has just passed and I believe you still celebrate the *Posada*, if you have details.

TERESA: Absolutely. I wouldn't miss one. I remember one year I had a foot operation and I couldn't go and it was just so sad. Thanks to Father Pat Valdez, he started the tradition again and we had super fun.

DANA: Tell us how to pronounce it so we know.

(16.58)

TERESA: *Posada*. *Posada* means a place where you go to rest, okay. And we're talking about Mary and Joseph looking for a place for the end, so to speak. So

it's a reenactment of everything that happened on the nativity. And the beautiful part the birth of Jesus and it's Mary and Joseph going from place to place looking for posada or a place for her to rest because she's going to have a baby. So the way we reenact this, we have a certain music that we do. And there are two parts that are played: the innkeeper and usually our priest or someone who would support him in that were the innkeepers and we the people come and we sing in different stages like *sings in Spanish*--- and it goes on, it sounds almost like a little operetta. And then they say no, you can't come in so they give us a bad time until we get to the fourth house. And at the fourth house, and usually it's so freezing we're welcomed in the house and we're happy to get it or we go on to the church where they do the food thing. And during that time everybody gains weight because there's cookies and *posole* and *posole* is hominy with meat, very traditional here. Or you might have tamales, which are tortillas wrapped with cheese and onions and meat sometimes or chicken, whatever. You might have chili con carne, just chili, a good bowl of chili with meat, tortillas, *sopapillas* which are bread. And everybody, I think they try to outdo each other for giving the Posada if you're picked. And then we go back to the church and we do the novena. And a novena is like a nine-day prayer for a specific thing. And that's done. And we do it from the 15th until Christmas Eve.

DANA: The *Novena* is done in the church?

(19.45)

TERESA: Yes. And we have a lady here, Juanita Dominguez, and her husband, he's passed away, but they were very much a part of it for many years and she still goes in the freezing cold with her little accordion and we always have a lot of fun because it looks like you're breathing in ice sometimes and it's cold but it's fun. And sometimes the weather is real beautiful, you know, the stars are out. It's quite an experience. I love posada.

DANA: Do the children still take part in *Posada* or are they kind of becoming distant?

(20.27)

TERESA: Well we would like them to be more involved. Actually we pick a little young woman and a young man to be Mary and Joseph and she rides a real donkey. The donkey isn't always wanting to behave and we have a problem with that sometimes but we actually used a real donkey. And they're Mary and Joseph so they play the part. In San Francisco they go all out, they have a bunch of little kids that are angels and they're all part of coming in the procession. We process from one spot to the other. And finally on Christmas Eve it's when they let you in. And there's a beautiful song that is sung all in Spanish, everything is in Spanish. And the kids learn it I think after hearing it so much.

DANA: And would you sing the song for us?

(21.27)

TERESA: I'd have to look at the words but it's like *sings in Spanish*—Come on in and it goes on and on and on.

DANA: When you mention San Francisco, you don't mean California.

TERESA: No, we had nine villages here. One of them is in San Francisco. And they also call it El Rito. It's very funny when I first moved here I get very confused because I'd say I'm in El Rito and it's San Francisco or in San Pablo or San Pedro, it's the same thing. But I think that goes back to some colonial situation that happened. And the names change, they used to call it Viejo San Acacio, Old San Acacio, and there were all these little ways of describing something and if you weren't from here, it could be kind of confusing.

DANA: It could an now there's a New San Acacio

(22.35)

TERESA: Yeah, the New San Acacio, although it's been there a long time. Because there was a railroad there when I was a kid and I remember they shipped peas and everything out and lettuce or that kind of thing.

DANA: That was the Southern San Luis Valley. Do you remember anything you could tell us about that little railroad?

TERESA: Well you know in those days we didn't have a car. My grandmother and grandfather didn't have a vehicle. We had a horse and a wagon that he would take to the ranch but while I lived here, they never had a vehicle. We didn't even have a radio in this house. When I moved to this house there were those lights that hung and you pull... and there was no bathroom, there was an outhouse. So it was cultural shock for our children at first but we came a long way.

DANA: So at night did you go out to the outhouse?

(23.35)

TERESA: To the outhouse, it was not fun. And one learns to be brave I guess, so you know. But it actually, I could say I lived that primitive life and so maybe that's what was so interesting to me, it was like being in third world. Grandma would send us out with the bucket and we had to pump all the water to bring to where I have my sink now, there was a bench like this and the buckets would be put there to use for all day. We filled the *calentador* which was part of the wood stove that heated water. And then the teakettles, you had to keep them full and if you wanted a drink of water you got the dipper and that's where you drank water. So in the winter, the winter I spent here, I learned to go with the teakettle to prime it because it would freeze. It would freeze and then once you primed it with hot water you pumped and pumped until the water came out. And then came out real, it's what do you call the well?

DANA: Artesian?

TERESA: Yeah.

DANA: So the artesian well runs all through the valley?

(24.55)

TERESA: Yeah and so the artesian well is still there. We haven't used it in years except for watering when we had the garden.

DANA: And what you do....

TERESA: Okay, well I'm the mother of seven children. I have 14 grown grandchildren and I told you 15 great grandchildren. And so in my later years, I was a traditional licensed vocational nurse in California for almost 40 years and when I moved here I became interested in alternative medicine and I started studying herbs and actually went through a university without walls at Regis taking herbal classes and I've done a lot of research on my own and I've developed different things I make out of the herbs and mostly what I do now, I teach. I've done colleges, I've done walks with groups, identifying, I have also contributed to a book the Hispanic Use of Herbs and a book written for nurses that I have.

(26.24)

DANA: Okay. What are your favorite uses and favorite herbs that you like to use?

TERESA: I actually have some in the basket back there I was going to show you. Because these are very, very traditional... this is like the number one called Osha. Everybody uses Osha. Osha is wild celery and we call it Porters lovage. It's also called Angelica, which was first discovered in Europe. So it might have come that way to us. It's used for everything; it's what I call Mexican penicillin. Because whatever ails you, do the Osha. You can take some of the root and grind it. You can boil it. And I actually tincture it in edible alcohol. So that's one of the things that I do with it. But if you ask anybody, this would be the number one *remedio* or remedy. And it grows here and our people traditionally use this faithfully.

DANA: And I hear that the Osha is good for keeping snakes away.

(27.48)

TERESA: Oh yeah. It's for everything. And then of course we have what we call the wild mint. This one's called *the Yerba Buena* or wild spearmint and I actually have a jar of jelly I make with the wild spearmint back there. And this one is called *Poleo* which is we have the wild peppermint and wild spearmint. So we use those both. And *Yerba de la Negrita* this is used for everything from ulcers to hair growth, skin conditions. It was actually boiled and when a baby had diaper rash, this is what they would wash the little situation with and it would heal it very good, the skin condition. *Yerba del Buey* this is gumweed and it's used also for a lot of different ailments especially asthmatics, lungs, it was drunk also in other situations. And this is rosemary, *Romero*. *Romero* it didn't grow wild, it was usually traded. When the ships came into Mexico and then they would come into Taos and a lot of times people went to trade for things. They'd wait for the cinnamon, the nutmeg, the things that came from the Old World. But this was like very good *remedio*, everybody wanted to have *Romero*. We use it a lot in cooking, like Italian cooking for instance. It just goes on and on. This little branch is *Capulin* or chokecherry. The bark was used as medicine and of course our delicacy would have been the chokecherry jelly, okay. And we also make out of the rosehips, and there's a jar of jelly there, these little rosehips were used for teas. You'd grind them up with *Manzanilla* or whatever and create different kind of teas, it was full of vitamin C. It's one of the ways you could get the best vitamin C. And we make soap out of it, we make jelly out of it, so it was used a lot. I actually clip the blossoms and I incorporate them in an herbal mix I make for bathing. And I use a lot of these wild herbs in it. But some of these are my own inventions. We also had, this was used a lot in different cooking, juniper berry. And you've probably heard of it being culinary and it's spicy- very, very spicy. And it was also used for a remedy like if I was coming down with a cold I'd chew on one of these and it's got like a very resin-y substance but it kind of helps when you have like chest colds you can make tea out of it and rosemary and this, you could use together but it would be very potent. These are just some of the things that I do.

DANA: So do people here in the valley use a lot of the natural, herbal remedies today?

(31.55)

TERESA: I think it's a very revived thing. I get a lot of students in the summertime, I've done classes with Colorado College, I've done it with Adams

States, with different groups, private colleges hear about it and they want to know and I take them on a nature walk. And we identify the plants and I'd teach them what they're for. And so I do a lot of that. Mostly I like the teaching. And then I show them what could be made out of it, you can get quite creative and it's all good for you, you know it's all natural. I can't say organic because I have a hard time with hearing organic because the air is not totally organic you know. But I call it controlled situation like my greenhouse. It's a controlled situation but I can't really say totally organic.

DANA: What do you remember about the remedies and things that she used....

(33.07)

TERESA: I had a very weird situation and this is why I became interested. I was seven and I was here and Grandmother bought me a pair of shoes. And the dye on the shoe got into my... They were too tight and I thought if I tell her they hurt, she's going to take them away and take them back to the store. I was little and I didn't know and I developed from the dye in the shoe, blood poisoning. It came up to my leg where I was so infected and it was winter. It was winter and I remember I got blood poisoning. And I was going to lose my leg. It was so big and there were no doctors at that time, you had to go to Alamosa. Although later a doctor did move here. And she went out and got this herb that was outside, it was called *Ponso* although people here call it *Plumahill* but it's *Ponso* which is pansy. It's a very strong herb and because Grandma had Guadalupe who was a Navajo that lived with the family, she had learned a lot from her. She made a poultice and put it on my leg and it brought the poison down to here. And as a result of that, I was taken to Alamosa where the doctor lanced it and drained it and I was crippled for about six months. I have a scar there but I have my leg. And remembering that situation, another incident that happened, I didn't want to go to school one day and I pretended to be sick so Grandma brewed some of that tea and it was so awful that I never did that again.

DANA: Do you know what was in the tea?

(35.22)

TERESA: *Ponso*. It was just *Ponso*, the pansy. It was so bitter, that cured me. I do use it but it's a very strong herb. You have to know what you're doing with the different herbs. That's what I try to teach because of my medical background. I worked in many hospitals in San Francisco. In between my seven children I continued my nursing. And so I'm careful about different things.

DANA: How do you spell that herb *Ponso*?

TERESA: P-o-n-s-o.

DANA: Okay. Tell us about the word which is a little different I believe than what you do, but *curandera*.

TERESA: If you look to the Latin of it, it means to cure. In my concept I see every mother as a *curandera*; she was always having to do everything to cure the child. And a *curandera* in colonial times was a gifted person, sometimes spiritual, very spiritual, and they healed with both things. There was a *curandero*, male, the same thing; they use the herbs and the wisdom that went along with it. Sometimes there were other types of *curanderos* which is what I really don't do, I call myself more of an herbalist, and I tell people about things and how to cure but I think a little of my medical background gets into it too. But there's also spiritual side because I worked seven years with mental health patients so I work too with the spirit of things. So *curandero*, these days are old time, like if you go into New Mexico in certain areas, they heal in different ways because they're very gifted people usually.

(38.00)

DANA: Okay. There's one other term, *bruja*. How does that relate?

TERESA: Okay, *bruja* is a witch. I can have some days like that. But anyway, I think because people, you've got to remember it was a very isolated area and there were very little stories and it happens here in San Luis, little stories start and it gets built and sort of out of context, you know. But the thing is, people thought that if somebody was different, especially a *curandera*, might be a witch. She has this power over you. And it was all in the psychic, working with the mental health, I heard some incredible stories. And what you try to do is balance it out and make

the person believe that this won't really happen to them and a lot of times it's all in your mind. But there were like in any place, evil people, which you could term as a *brujo* or a *bruja*. But there was a lot of fear that the *bruja* would turn into a poor owl. I remember one time going to Mass when someone had killed the owl in the tree, there were two of them and it was so sad because they probably thought it was a witch, you know. Still that belief goes on. Some people will, I don't know if they're kidding half the time, but they believe it.

(39.38)

DANA: Superstition.

TERESA: They believe it and that can make you believe it. So I don't believe that they turn into owls or coyotes or anything else but...

DANA: Do you have a short story you could tell us about San Luis or any story that might come to mind?

TERESA: I actually wrote a story for my grandchildren but it's ten minutes long. It's called *Los Gatos en la Cayo Costilla*. It's bilingual. I've never had it published or anything but it's a story about homeless cats. One year we had so many cats around here I was helping this girl that rescues them and we were catching cats all the time. And observing them, they reminded me of people so I wrote a story about a cat named *Valenton*. And the cat was a bully to the other cats. And all the cats have different names like *Pardo* and *Leche* and *Los Tres Ellos* were the triplet cats that lived across the street. They were actually real cats and *Valenton* at the end of the story becomes *Valiente*. But I don't want to tell you the whole story. But he changes. In other words, it had a moral about how we treat people that are different. It also talked about herbs. But what I was getting to, in catching the homeless cats that we took to the shelter to be taken care of in Alamosa, one morning my husband came in and says "come here come here, but don't get too close". And right at the side of the greenhouse where we had put this cage, there was a baby skunk. We caught a skunk. And I freaked out, I thought I don't know what to do about this skunk, you know. So I called the police station. And there was this young man, he was real nice, he said, "oh I'm so tired but I'll come over and show you what to do". So he comes over and he shows us how—so I learned something. If you get a skunk, if they don't see you, they won't spray. And so he

says, he took the sheet and threw it over the trap and I said, “put it on the truck first I don’t want to touch it”. So he put it on the truck and he said to take it clear to the end of town and let it loose. It was a little baby skunk it was so cute. But that was part of my cat story. But my other story is a long ten-minute story.

DANA: Okay, we’ll hear it sometime.

(42.49)

TERESA: Teresa t-e-r-e-s-a and then the word d-e Jesus, like Jesus, Berlinda b-e-r-l-i-n-d-a. And I’ll tell you what happened. I was in my fifties and I want to get a birth certificate. I had never had a birth certificate, I was going to get a passport, and what happened is they couldn’t find me. And so the lady said, are you sure, maybe you’re birthday is wrong? Could I look in another year? That would make me a year older. They found me, the right parents, the right place, but my name was Theresa Loretta t-h-e-r-e-s-a Loretta. And I was year older. So I celebrated my birthday on the wrong day, I celebrated all my life til my fifties, til the 29th of April and it was the 30th and I wasn’t born in ’33, I was born in ’32. And it was the right parent. But then I got the story. And what happened is I was born at home in Alamosa and when the census taker used to come around, they didn’t know names and I had a cousin who was born two months before me named Loretta and my dad got confused. So on the census, I was Teresa Loretta. My grandmother was my godmother, she lived here. She said (*Spanish----*). And that’s what happened. So I had two identities. So now, if I do any medical thing I hate writing Theresa Loretta but that’s what I gotta write to have my medical bills. So I have two identities but I’m still Theresa.

(44.55)

DANA: Okay. That’s interesting.

TERESA: I think in the schools, because of what I learned here and I was so grateful that I came here and I was grateful that I brought my children here because they learned, even though it was a little cultural shock, they learned a lot about who they are. And we continue looking who we really are and recently because of genealogy, I found out one of my grandmothers is a Comanche. I thought where did all this interest of mine come from? There it was. A cousin of mine that lives in

Las Vegas, her sister in law did genealogy through the Mormon Church and she was raised by the Mormons. And then when she married the grandfather, my dad's grandfather, she became a Catholic. But she was a Comanche and I have the papers now and so it was very enlightening. Why was I so into the earth? There must have been somebody in my background to have that interest. But I do have Comanche blood. We weren't marauding people.

DANA: That's interesting.

TERESA: We weren't marauding people.

DANA: One thing that did interest me, you mentioned that the Navajo women had given you the poultice and that she was living with your family. I know that there's a history of Navajo people that were taken as children.

TERESA: Exactly.

DANA: Could you tell us a little about...

TERESA: Yeah. That was a reality. Unfortunately when Kit Carson brought all those Navajos and everything, a lot of the children were displaced and sometimes the Mormons probably took them in and it would have been when Juan Vaca that had Guadalupe and they brought us a child and my grandma told us about her and my oldest sister who's eighty five was babysat by her. She described her she used to babysit them right in this house. Because mother lived in Alamosa and they would come in the summer to can and Guadalupe was a big woman. It was real funny the way she describes her. She looked like a *pinacate*. You know what a *pinacate* is? It's a June bug, they're black and she wore black because that was traditional. You know, Grandma was from that era and that's how they wore, she always dresses that were more dark and maybe little flowers or something like that but she always wore the *tapalo*. My cousin has the *tapalo*. It's all lace and it hangs down to here.

TERESA: So there were a lot of those and there's a house right next to the convent that Juan Vaca gave her. Guadalupe had her own house. And my Uncle Louie who lived here was raised, because during that time Grandma was very sick after

birthing, and Guadalupe raised little Louis. And Uncle Louis/Luis is dead now, but he is the one that told me all the stories that connect to Guadalupe too.

DANA: Did she ever go back to try and find her own people?

TERESA: They didn't but there are stories. Someday I'm going to write a story about Juan. I had one of my aunts that was my grandmother's daughter was a nun. She was a Sister of Mercy for seventy-five years and she died a few years ago. And she used to tell me stories Guadalupe told them. And there are some stories.

DANA: Well, I want to thank you for this wonderful conversation and having us in your home.