

Sarah Garcia

Part 1

Did it change him the acidant

Sarah: A lot of depression... it was hard for for a for a us there was they didn't have social security at that time but uh some of his friends started putting some money together so that my mama could get some kind of income because there was no social security

Yeah.. so was For friends and family helped you guys

Sarah: My uncles the ones that live there bc there were 4 garceasu 3 last name g one--- my cousin albert --- --- --- of my family i lost my train of thought

You were saying your uncles helped out

Sarah: Oh yes 2 of my uncles used to work at a bakery used called rainbow bakery used to right her of 5th street and 4th, forth avenue and 5th street 2 of my uncles used to work there and almost every day the used to bring my grandma some fresh bread and my other uncles would bring her my grandma during the week a piece of roast or chicken you no because unease was there and my grandma used to make a lot of tortillas and my cousins that used to play right there at the --- park they knew that they could come to grandmas and she would have some --- tortillas and a big --- of water it was nice cold water i love my grandma

Can you tell us a bit about your grandma and what you remember

Sarah: She was very kind well i think that i you see me you can see my grandma because i think that our family had very high standards like well i don't know much about the others but my daddy used to well i dont know weather dragged before the accident ot dated drinking after the accident and about 4 times he tried to commit suicide and at the end he did

What year was that

Sarah: 1962 they found my dad laying on the cement floor right next to a gas main that had been closed they had used it during the winter months but this was during the summer time and her son friends came to visit my little sister and they are the ones that found my dad so they went across the street and told my cousin fred-- fred --- he was a he had a shop a body shop hey girls told told my cousin that they could smell a lot of gas and that anything could blow up the house they closed the bell the gas main and that's it i was already married and had 6 children of my own just like i letter her and i had taken my mama home with me and my little sister to my house because my dad had been acting up he had said he had told her tht that he

was going to burn the house down i think it was more desperation than anything and mama was scared to death bc he dad had died when her house burned down years before she was scared but another thing he had done he got a hold of a revolver or a hand gungun and he had had it strapped to a little square of 3 or 5 ply so that he could point it with his left arm and pull the trigger with they or it was the other way around he could hold it with his right arm and put the ringer with the little piece of finger in his left arm so he used to say he was going to kill mama but it will all desperation but he did finally and that was it

And were you living in tucson at that time

Sarah: Yes i got married in 1962 and this was in 1962

And do you have other brothers and sisters you say you have a little sister

Sarah: Yes yes she is 1 younger than myself she lives in covington georgia she picture is in houses newspapers and 2 of my children are in the picture paula and becka

What other story i wanted to make sure you were telling me is when we were walking in you were a little girl in school and the gas truck fire can you tell me that story

Sarah: Yess

Can you tell me that story

Sarah: Oh my goddess the train was passing and it there was the gas trunk and the train came together right at the rain road track right there

Can you tell is the streets

Sarah: yes on anita street no main street actually oracal coming towards downtown it main street and the rain road tracks the train collided with the gas and the fire started running down the street in balls balls of fire and there was a of those 5 five houses going towards main street right in front of the school there was a one gas station on each side and my aunt was living she was the third one in the road and the rest of the house and gas stations burnt up except my aunt's house i don't know what happened but it was saved

And then so as the fire was coming closer to the school what was happening

Sarah: they told us we had to go south north we had to go north because the fire was coming down saint marys right here going west

You were a little girl were you scared

Sarah: well all the kids started running towards the back ut what happened was the keeper of the gate had left it locked so all the kids got scratches

What did they have to do climb the fence

Sarah: we had to jump the fence i was one of them and my little brother but that was very significant in my

In the end did any kids get hurt

Sarah: as far as i know they were okay

How old were you

Sarah: i figure i must have been 10 ten years old

Let me see last couple questions im just curious if you can just talk a little about maybe how the neighborhood has changed from when you were a little girl to these day what are some of the biggest changed you've seen

Sarah: we had a stockyard on speedway i had the map on speedway it was east of the freeway stock yard because stock used to be carried on the rain by train the rail running north south and right here on congress there was a --- restaurant it's a beautiful building with columns my daddy used to tell me that was a railroad station and further north towards 22nd street was a round house where the trains would turn around

Yeah yeah you remember those stockyards and the catal

Sarah: i remember the stockyard but i don't remember i think my daddy was the one to tell me about the that place is a mexican restaurant on congress he told me about that

You said those offices on speedway were next to the free way so the north end of ari park than anything else that has changed alot since you were little

Sarah: the free way came in when i was a little girl i remember when they started to tell us about the world war i was playing jack behind my daddys shop and it was a terrible thing because we had 2 uncles that were japanese and they took some of my -- folks to the concentration camps just because they were $\frac{1}{4}$ japanese american citizens born in the united states they went into there house and confused there guns hunting guns and whatever they had that could be used but that's what happened during the war

Wow that was here in tucson

Sarah: this was in north of tucson in haden arizona

will you when you are thinking of your neighborhood --- even to this day what do you like best about it

Sarah: i like the peace and quiet of there's not much traffic not much trouble that i could say we hardly hear of anything let me see what else is new the free way a lot of restaurants we are very peaceful i dont i don't go to peoples houses lumen is who gets most of my visits he wasn't to know most of what's happening in otu district he keeps me up on what's going on we do everything by car i'm still driving and i'm 86 years i don't like to go out of town where there's traffic by myself becseu if i get in a jam i don't want to find out i'm by myself like an accident so i'm very cousus but

Did you is that irrigation canal still around

Sarah: yes and grandma used to since my uncle works for the gas company were the gas meters came from my uncle used to make them into little benches by talking 2 of the slabs on on esi and they would make really good benches she would talk on of these benches and sit right next to the irrigation -- she would keep an eye on us to make sure we were safe because she had been a swimmer in las angeles so she knew about swimming and my dad was the first lifeguard of oridl park and when i was having my house built in 1995 i was still going to that pool and something i would see some of the working from my house and say hey hey do you know me i love it i still i go to therapy pool aboti u3 times a week i like you do lap and stretch my leg and arms and i do i have gone to severe exercise classes that are real and i am pretty

You are in pretty good shape i was you walkihn up

Sarah: i did a no no i was not supposed to come in through the back but i didn't want to go to the right and the left i said i'm just going to do it here

Everyone had forgiven you last thing did you ever know --- the priest

Sarah: yes

How did you feel about him i know he had a big present here

Sarah: ohh yes yes he had a big presents

Can you start with telling us who he was and his role or position

Sarah: asd i far as i know as i can remember the elder -- used to have a little truck where he sell vegetables down the streets and that show my family knew him and later on since my dad taught my brother carpentry and painting he would go to the priest who was --- and he would get a job painting the -- adn one time my brother was supposed to be painting and h dropped the

paint gun on the floor and what my father he didn't care too much about the kid getting hurt he wanted to know if his paint was in tact and since he liked to drink sometimes he would tell the priest why don't you go and find us some of that wine that you well here was a comoratory between them --- was a little older than yourself i knew them i knew then we respected them but we didn't go to the church we didn't bu we were god neighbors absolutely we always know they were there and we were there and kinda checked us out to see that we were alright like the rest of the neighbors

And he was the priest that basically he was from -- the church that took care of people's needs

Sarah: also i wanted to tell you that right here in this neighborhood there were 3 chinese grocery stores right here the closest to me was --- the second one was -- right on the corner in that purple house and than right here it's not there but there used to be a chinese store on main and 5th street or 6th street i can't remember because they turned these streets his name was -- so we had really really nice neighbors chinese and black american presuses people that wear my daddy's friend for life my daddy new the nobles that was a black family that lives on speedway and consent so i never saw any presijust

Realy

Sarah: really a lot of respect alto for respect

I get that since the chinese and black and mexicans and mexican americans

Sarah Garcia
pt2

Did it affect him in a lot of ways not having his hands? Did it change him the accident?

A lot of depression... it was hard for us...they didn't have social security at the time but uh some of his friends started putting some money together so that my mama could get some kind of income because there was no social security.

It was friends and family that helped you guys that you were able to get by?

Mmhm my uncles the ones that lived there, because there was four Garcia's, three that were last named Garcia one was Valenzuela there was my cousin Albert Garcia and Freddie Valenzuela of my family.... i lost my train of thought.

Its okay. You were saying that your uncles helped out.

Oh yes, two of my uncles used to work for the bakery, it used to be called Rainbow Bakery right here on 5th Street and 4th, 4th Avenue and 5th Street. Two of my uncles used to work there and almost everyday they used to bring my grandma some fresh bread and my other uncles would bring her, would bring grandma ,during the week maybe a piece of roast or chicken or whatever you know, because the need was there and grandma used to make a lot of tortillas. And my cousins that used to play right there at the aury park, they knew that they could come to grandmas. She would have some *frijolitos* and *tortillas* and a big *olla* of water, some nice cold water. I love my grandma.

Can you tell us a little bit about your grandma. What you remember of her

She was very kind. Well I think that if you see me you can see my grandma, because I think that our family had very high standards, like, well, I don't know much about the others but my daddy used to, well I don't know if he drank before the accident, it must have been he started drinking after the accident, and about 4 times he tried to commit suicide and at the end he did, he did.

What year was that?

1962, yea uhm, they found my dad laying on the cement floor right next to a gas maine that had been closed because they used it during the winter months but this was in the summer time, he uh, some friends came to visit my little sister, and they're the ones that found my dad so they went across the street and told my cousin Fred Valenzuela. He had a shop, a body shop and the girls told my cousin that they could smell a lot of gas and that anything could blow up the house. So they closed the gas maine and that was it. I was married already and had 6 children of my own just like a letter. And uh I had taken my mama home with me and my little sister to my house because my dad had been acting up, he had said, he told her that he was going to

burn the house down. I think it was more desperation than anything and mama was scared to death because her dad had died when they're house burned years before, she was scared but another thing he had done he got a hold of a revolver or a handgun and he had it strapped to a little square of triply so that he could point it with his left arm and pull the trigger with, or it was the other way around he could hold it with his right arm and pull the trigger with the little piece of finger that he had on his left arm so he used to say that he was going to kill mama but it was all desperation but he did finally and that was it.

Where you living in tucson at the time? You said you left for a while.

Yes i got married in 1952 and this was in 1962.

Uhm do you have other brothers and sisters? You said you had a little sister and any other siblings.

Yes she is 11 years younger than myself she lives in Covington, Georgia her picture is in those newspapers and two of my children are in that picture, Paula and Rebecca.

What other story I wanted to make sure you were telling me as we were walking in, about when you were here a little girl at school, the gas truck fire. Can you tell me that story again?

Yes, oh my goodness the train was passing in and the gas truck and the train came together right at the railroad tracks, right there.

Can you tell us around the streets?

Yes, around Anita Street, no no, on Main Street its actually Oracle coming towards downtown ,its Main Street and the railroad tracks, the train collided with the gas and the fire started running down the street in balls of fire, balls of fire. Of those five houses that were going towards Main street right in front of the school, there was one gas station on each side and my auntie was living, she was the third one in the road and all the rest of the houses and the gas stations burned up except my aunts house I don't know what happened but it was saved.

As the fire was coming closer to the school what was happening here?

They told us we had to go south, no, north we had to go north, because the fire was coming down St.Marys right here, going west.

I mean you were a little girl were you scared? Was it scary or?

Well all the kids started running towards the back but what happened was that the keep of the gate had left it locked so all the kids got scratches.

Did they climb the fence or what happened?

We had to jump the fence I was one of them and my little brother but that was very significant in my, my record.

So in the end did kids get hurt? Was everyone okay?

As far as I know they were okay.

How old were you? You were little.

I figured I must have been maybe ten, ten years old.

Uhm let me see last couple of questions I'm just curious if you could talk a little about maybe about how the neighborhood has changed from when you were a little girl to these day what have been the biggest changes you've seen?

We had stockyard on Speedway, uhm I need the map. On Speedway it was east of freeway, stockyard! Because stock used to be carried on the train, there was a railroad running north to south and right here on Congress there's Garcia's restaurant it's a beautiful building with columns. My daddy used to tell me, that was a railroad station and further north towards 22nd Street was the roundhouse were the trains would turn around.

Yeah switch yeah yeah.

Do you remember the stockyard and the cattles?

I remember the stockyard but I don't remember about the, I think my daddy's the one that told me about that place that is Mexican restaurant on Congress, he told me about that.

So those were off of Speedway, east to the freeway, so kind of were the north head of Oury Park. Anything that else that has changed since you were little?

The freeway came in, uh when I was a little girl. I remember when they started telling us about the World War. I was playing jacks behind my daddys shop and it was a terrible thing because we had two uncles that were Japanese and they took some of my kin folks to the concentration camps just because they were one-quarter Japanese, American citizens born in the United States. They went into their houses confiscated their guns, hunting guns whatever they had that could be used but thats what happened during the war.

That was here in Tucson?

That was north of Tucson, in Hayden, Arizona.

What do you... when you think of your neighborhood, Barrio Anita even to this day, what do you like best about it?

I like the peace and quiet, there's not much traffic uh there's no trouble that I could say, we hardly hear of anything uh Let me see what else is new, yeah the freeway, a lot of restaurants uh very peaceful. I don't go to people's houses uhm Loui Mena he's the one that gets most of my visits because he wants to know about everything that's happening in our district. He keeps me at rest of what's going on and we do everything by car I'm still driving and I'm going to be 86 years I don't like to go out of town where there is a lot of traffic by myself because if I get in a jam I don't want to find out that I am by myself you know, like an accident or whatever happens so I'm very cautious.

Was that irrigation canal still active when you were young?

Yes and grandma used to, well since my uncle worked for the gas company where the gas meters came from, my uncle used to make them into little benches by taking two of the slabs on one side and they would make real good little benches. She would take one of those little benches right next to the irrigation sequoia and she would keep an eye on us to make sure that we were safe because she had been a swimmer in Los Angeles so she knew about swimming and my dad was the first lifeguard of Oury Park of the swimming pool in Oury Park and when I was having my house built in 1995, I was still going to that pool and sometimes I would see some of the workers coming to work on my house and I would say "Hey, hey do you know me?" I love it. I still, I go to therapy pool about three times a week and I like to do laps and stretch my legs and my arms and I do. I have gone to several uhm exercise classes at El Rio and well I'm pretty young.

You are in good shape I saw you walking up.

I did a no no. I was not supposed to come in through the back, I didn't want to go to right and then to the left and then I said I'm just gonna do it here.

Everyone's forgiving you. Last thing did you ever know a **Arsemio** Carrillo a priest can you tell me a little about him I know he had a big presence here.

Yes yes oh yes yes, uh he had a big presence.

Can you just start by telling us who he was and his role position?

As far as I know, as I can remember, the elder Carrillo used to have a little truck where he used to sell vegetables down the street that's how my family knew him. Later on since my dad taught my brother carpentry and panting he would go to the priest that was **Arsemio** and he would get a job painting the pews and one time my brother was supposed to be painting and he dropped the paint gun on the floor and what my father wanted to know, he didn't care too much about the

kid getting hurt he wanted know if his paint gun was intact and since he liked to drink sometimes he would tell the priest why don't you go find us some of that wine. Well there was a comradery between them **Arsemio** was a little older than myself but I knew them. We respected them but we didn't go to the church, we didn't but we were good neighbors, absolutely. We always knew that they were there and they knew that we were there and uh they kind of checked us out to see that we were alright like the rest of the neighbors.

And he was the priest, that basically, I mean he was from Barrio Anita and was the priest from the church and he just kind of took care of spiritual needs.

And also I wanted to tell you that right here in this neighborhood there was three Chinese grocery stores, right here, three of them. The closest to me was **onebeliene** the second was **winglee** right in that corner, purple house and right here, it's not there, there used to be a Chinese store on Main and 5th street or 6th street I can't remember because they turned those streets. His name was **Joicee** so we had really really nice neighbors Chinese, Black American, precious people that were my daddy's friends for life. My daddy knew the Nobles that was a Black family that lived on Speedway and Constant so I never saw any prejudice.

Really?

Really. A lot of respect, a lot of respect.

I get the sense with the Chinese, Blacks, Mexicans, Mexican Americans

Uh the last things... when you were talking about the different families and how everyone looked out for each other has that changed somewhat? Like as far as knowing who lives around you and those strong ties. Are there still families that you keep in touch with? Or has that died down?

No, our family moved out, I'm the only one. A lot of my cousins and all my uncles and aunts have passed on. As far as my neighbors, I only know my immediate neighbors. Which is that girl...

Thania?

Thania, I lover her, she's such a nice lady and her son he is so respectful. I know that he has good upbringing because he is very respectful to me and I know the guy that lives in back of her

and a family that lives directly north of Thania. But as far as I can tell, Loui Mena and only because we share, my granddaughter is his niece.

Why do you think that has changed like that many of the uh, when I talk to the elders that I've interviewed, families new each other and intermarried even, I was talking to Bobby Venten and he was talking about the Tellez family and the Felix family, and has a lot of brothers and sisters you know that have married each other from the two families, a lot of that has seemed to have gone away is it just because kids sort of grew up and sold houses?

Thats it, thats it, when I married, I married a Gastelum so all of my six kids are Gastelum and if you see the records, they're Garcia Gastelum and uh if somebody of my old neighbors knew me by Garcia they wouldn't know where Gastelum went. I left the barrio in 1952.

And you got married?

And I got married, yeah.

What made you come back and live here again?

Because when I retired after working, after serving twenty years time with AT&T, I had a son living in Colorado, a daughter in Santa Fe New Mexico, my sister was in Covington Georgia, I had several of my other kids here and some cousins and of course they wanted me to live were they were but then I started thinking I have to start thinking, first of all I have to retire so that I can make a living the rest of my life and then mama had left me that little lot and I said I'm going back to my roots, my roots! I believe that my grandpa both my grandfathers were Spaniards from Spain that's what I believe, I don't know I haven't seen anything else but my grandmothers were both Mexican Indian. The one that loved the teachers here the most, her name was Refugio Garcia and uhm she loved the teachers whenever she got a bouquet of flowers, right away she would divide them some for Mrs. Douglas some for Mrs. Vanvosusscerd, I can't remember, Mrs. Allerd and whoever gave her the flowers would get mad at her, but she would say Im glad your thinking about giving me flowers while I'm still alive but after you give them to me I can do what I please, so she would enjoy them for a little while and then she gave them away so somebody else would enjoy them.

Do you think one of your kids will continue to live on your lot after you pass on?

Yes! Yes, I have four sons and they, three of them are in their sixties, one of them is in 58, and the two girls one is still in 58 or 59 and the other one is in her 60s maybe 63, they're all very close and uhm Paul is the one that, he is a construction engineer, there is two building right now in downtown that's been done, he is the electrician for those buildings and there is one across the street from EL Rlo he is in charge of that one too. He's the one that made my house when I was going to retire I said please find me a nice motor home that I can put in my house and he said okay well go, but you know what he started telling me look mama touch hear, ama stand

overhear or look at the, right now I can't remember, *las bisagras* of the cabinets, look and see they are not the best. And I said ohh what am I going to do? So he said with what your going to spend on a motor home I will build you a house. So I said son you would do that for mama, you would? He said yes, I will, I will build you a house. So when you pass by my house, there is three of them right in front of the swimming pool, there is an orange one and then mine, and where Thania lives its blue a two story. You know what happened, I can't even believe how it happened, I got my social security my severance pay because we were closing the office and I got my twenty years retirement all at three so I had a bunch of money, so I said with six grown kids my money is going to go through my fingers if I know how I am with my kids, you know. You need a car, you need windows, you need whatever you know, downpayment or something but I said I'm going to, I'm going to build a home. So I did, Paul built it and he was hurt at that time, he had had an accident but he struggled and he built my home I payed for the materials and he is going to stay with it after I'm gone. He didn't ask for wages so we went to the window place, ...what time do you have to go?

I think we have to end it pretty soon because the kids are going to come.

Anyway, so, that's what I miss of the swimming pool, that's what I miss, the kids playing, I love that. Anyway I forgot where I'm going to end this.

You were talking about your son Paul and how he is going to keep the house, and how he built it, that's beautiful, thats great.

And my six kids will have 1/6th of my insurance if its still there, half of it went, my insurance that the company gave me so they're not going to have much but thats what Im going to leave them.

(My favorite two minutes)

Could you tell us, once we heard the story of your father, can you tell us about the mural, you can stay looking at us if possible, but could you describe...

That picture was his wedding picture because that's the only one I had.

Who is it in the mural? And what do we see?

Albert.

I mean...

That was my dad but the picture was his wedding picture, and the bomb is a round bomb with the world on it, you see the fuse with the fire at the end he made it a round bomb, like a round bomb but the bomb tore his hands and made him blind, he was, he was very good at geometry his numbers uhm he really stressed education.

Was it one of your friends that painted the mural? How did that come about?

Yes, Loui Mena, he's my friend, he's my buddy, he treats me like a mama.

Your father was very handsome.

I'm just sorry that he ended his life you know but that's the way it was, it was hard on us.

Well thank you very much senora Garcia, this was a great interview, you had so many stories, it's all very, it was really a gold mine talking to you, it's one of the best interviews we've had, I really appreciate it.

I'm glad because I know that two or three of my kids have seen the mural but not all of them, that first day that I did talk about the mural we had a little concert, oh I love those kids, with their violins and their *guitarras*. I'll tell you one thing I never learned to play the piano because when I was a little girl starting to learn how to play the piano for some reason I had iron deficiencies and I didn't have too much strength in my fingers I don't know if it was because mama didn't take care of us the way she should have, because she was taking care of my dad. She used to have to feed him with a spoon all the time, it was very very hard and uhm it's, too me, it's a legacy, I'm very proud, I'm not supposed to be proud but I take pride.

You should.

I take pride in what I am and uhm I had a poem I was going to bring but if I go through those papers maybe I'll find it maybe I won't but anyways I sure am glad I was here.

Yeah thank you so much. It's been an honor and you should be proud and I mean you have a family of heroes that also helped build the city, your son that literally helped build the city, that's huge.

And last time I came I walked up the stairs just to walk up there on the second floor, it was wonderful.

Well it's been great talking to you thank you much, I really appreciate it, I have a little check for \$50 for you.

Oh my goodness.

I just need it for our booking if you could just sign the receipt.

Did you want to keep her miked while we look at those papers and she can explain them?

Yea

Maybe we could just move off to this corner.

Yea that sounds good.

Maybe let me see if she has a pocket or something.