

The Sacramento Movimiento Chicano and Mexican American Education Oral History Project

Clara Cid

Oral History Memoir

Interviewed by Cristina Mora

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California State University, Sacramento Library

[00:00:16]

Mora Hi, Clara. I'm Christine [inaudible] and I'm going to be giving you an introduction. And thank you for coming and thank you for agreeing to do this interview for us. It will be a moment in history that's now being recorded and archived. So the interview will be video audio recorded and will form part of the Sacramento Movimiento Chicano and Mexican American Education Project oral history which is archived at Donald and Beverly Gerth's special collections and university archives at California State University, Sacramento. Do you agree to this recording?

[00:00:52]

Clara Cid Yes. I do.

[00:00:53]

Mora Date of interview is July 24, 19 -- oh. 19. 2023. Time of the interview is 9:30. Location of interview is Sacramento, California. Please state your name and spell it including accents. And please provide your birthday and where you were born.

[00:01:17]

Cid My name is Clara Cid Favela [assumed spelling]. I was born here in Sacramento. My birth date. April 7, 1953.

[00:01:28]

Mora Okay. And your early life. Were you -- you were raised here in Sacramento? What did your parents do for a living?

[00:01:35]

Cid My father was a construction worker and worked in the Sacramento railroad and my mother worked in the cannery and was a housewife.

[00:01:46]

Mora How many brothers and sisters do you have?

[00:01:51]

Cid There were six of us. Four brothers and a sister.

[00:01:54]

Mora Okay. What was the primary language growing up?

[00:01:59]

Cid My dad spoke to us in English and my mother spoke to us in Spanish.

[00:02:03]

Mora Please describe your experiences as a child in the family and neighborhood.

[00:02:08]

Cid I went to American Legion Elementary School. And just like a bunch of kids running around in the neighborhood from the people down the street.

[00:02:21]

Mora Was that Americanos, Latinos?

[00:02:24]

Cid They were Asian. The Wongs. They lived down a few blocks away from the house. And there was the Garcias before they moved. They lived up just half a block away from the house. And the rest were all – were not -- they didn't have kids.

[00:02:41]

Mora Okay. Did you or your family experience any discrimination growing up?

[00:02:50]

Cid I don't know. Maybe they did, but I – they never told me their stories. My dad worked, was in World War II, and he had a difficult time working with the military.

[00:03:00]

Mora And you never experienced any discrimination?

[00:03:04]

Cid No. None I know of.

[00:03:05]

Mora Okay. Earliest members of the Movimiento Chicano. Well, what are your earliest memories of events that attracted you to Movimiento?

[00:03:16]

Cid My parents are part of a group called [foreign language spoken] and they would have these monthly dances where they're called centro Mexicano right across the street from the south

side park. There's a little building and they had a big [inaudible] soldier in the parking lot. And they were -- every month they'd have a dance or sometimes a mother would cook for the events and the people would pay a nominal fee.

[00:03:44]

Mora Okay. We would do those same things. How did other Mexican American Latinos react to your term Chicano, Chicana?

[00:03:55]

Cid It was part of everyday life, part of the conversation of who we were.

[00:04:01]

Mora Okay. How -- had you heard of the civil rights movement at that time? So what were your thoughts about it? Could you identify any connections to Movimiento?

[00:04:14]

Cid There's one time in high school I was in 11th grade and they called us for -- they had us play -- Sac High was -- they called it the little theater and all the [inaudible] that came in, I followed them into the room. And there was two speakers. The one's Max Garcia and one's Ricardo Favela. They were talking to us about chicanismo. And I felt myself feeling lifting up -- uplifted. And that's when I heard them talk. And I'm, you know, in a theater. Kids above me. And I felt -- I can't think of the word. But it was very uplifting to hear them tell the story.

[00:04:57]

Mora What did they say?

[00:04:59]

Cid About everyday life and how to get an education and that kind of thing. That's all I remember thinking. I was an epitome of sitting there. I felt myself lifted on the chair and hearing these two guys talk and I'm looking around at the other students. And I didn't see the same reaction I had.

[00:05:20]

Mora Were you in the Mexican American education project?

[00:05:25]

Cid No. I wasn't.

[00:05:28]

Mora Were you ever involved with anything with the Mexican American project?

[00:05:33]

Cid No. Except Ricardo.

[00:05:36]

Mora And he was in that?

[00:05:37]

Cid Yes. He was.

[00:05:38]

Mora That was your husband.

[00:05:39]

Cid Yes.

[00:05:39]

Mora Okay. Did you feel there was effectiveness of the Mexican American project through Ricardo?

[00:05:47]

Cid Yes. I think so. It made him go into -- for his education.

[00:05:52]

Mora Educational and/or cultural influences. Did your knowledge of cultural issues influence your involvement and participation in the Movimiento?

[00:06:06]

Cid I think so. But the -- my parents and going to Mexico and visiting family and that -- or they come up north to visit us.

[00:06:17]

Mora What were some of those cultural issues do you recall?

[00:06:21]

Cid It was a lot of cooking. Yeah. A lot of cooking. And they gather in baptismos and weddings and all those kinds of cultural things. And then the dances would be at the centro Mexicano. Would be [inaudible] like and all weddings running around. That was us.

[00:06:40]

Mora Yeah. Did you help your mom with cooking or --

[00:06:46]

Cid Oh yes. That as I grew up. And also with the Guadalupes from the Church of Our Lady of Guadalupe. My mother would help there and sometimes she would send me to help. You know, little things like moving pots. Nothing real big.

[00:07:06]

Mora I know your family really cooks well. I know going to your parties and eating all the food. Did your involvement in the Movimiento change you personally?

[00:07:18]

Cid It was an acceptance. I think so.

[00:07:21]

Mora And what exactly do you think you changed in yourself?

[00:07:25]

Cid Joining the MEChA club in high school and -- not high school, but it was called my club back in the day. And then at the city college level there was a MEChA club. And we'd have fundraisers there doing cooking all for events.

[00:07:42]

Mora Did you do any like art displays and those types? Did you get involved with the art?

[00:07:47]

Cid Not until later.

[00:07:49]

Mora Okay. Role and/or contribution to the Movimiento. What did you do -- what did you personally initiate or help initiate in the Movimiento? What were some of the organizations with which you were involved? How did those organizations or activities contribute to the Movimiento? You talked about being a my and a MEChA club. And you were at the --

[00:08:13]

Cid There was the program with the center of the [inaudible] called cultural affairs. I was part of it. So we did organized events and events. One of the [foreign language spoken] and other Christmas programs. And I would help, you know, gather food and that kind of thing to give out to the neighbors.

[00:08:32]

Mora Now did that evolve into anything bigger here in Sacramento? Did you -- the things that you did -- like I know the secretary of state, they have a Dia De Los Muertos and it's based on Armando and Richard and them had done stuff over there. You were involved with that?

[00:08:51]

Cid No. No. Just local things that we did with the marching through the cemetery. There was a big movement there.

[00:09:02]

Mora You were part of that.

[00:09:04]

Cid Yes. I think so. Yeah.

[00:09:06]

Mora Great. Changes in your thinking and actions as a result of your involvement in the Movimiento. Did the Movimiento raise your consciousness regarding social, cultural, political issues?

[00:09:19]

Cid Yes. For a while there I worked with the UFW here in Sacramento in the legal department, and I was always -- that's always been part of my life. It's a long term commitment. Commitment. With the kids too. And they participated in a lot of things as my son does. I think he's in a group called the [inaudible]. They do a lot of community events.

[00:09:43]

Mora And do you help with those too?

[00:09:46]

Cid No. I just come for a couple of [foreign language spoken] with them, and that's about it.

[00:09:52]

Mora How did these changes affect your personal relationships with family, peers, and significant others?

[00:09:59]

Cid It was a daily -- it's a daily existence for my -- my being a Chicana.

[00:10:08]

Mora And you married one of the --

[00:10:11]

Cid Yes. Ricardo Favela. Big influence. We had -- we have four kids and three -- I have six grand kids.

[00:10:23]

Mora Oh. Nice. Yeah.

[00:10:26]

[Background chatter]

[00:10:43]

Mora So how did you meet Richard and did he -- Ricardo. And did he --

[00:10:48]

Cid My brother brought him to the house one time and I met him there and he goes, "I didn't know you had a sister." And he never told him. We saw -- at events. That's where I met Ricardo.

[00:11:05]

Mora Okay.

[00:11:05]

Cid And I had a big blow up between the family and him for a long time.

[00:11:16]

Mora My dad had the same thing. Married my mom. Recognition of Movimiento activists who have passed on. Many Movimiento activists have passed on. Identify an individual or individuals who had an impact on the Movimiento and please explain their significance.

[00:11:35]

Cid One of them I would -- somehow I was thinking of Max Garcia was one of those speakers that I knew at Sacramento High. And later was Ricardo Favela also passed on. And Jose Montoya has gone. Esteban Villa has gone. Quite a few people. I can't think of anybody else. And [inaudible] he was a poet. He was for many years in the movement also. And Cesar Chavez. [Inaudible] he's gone too. All the biggies, as I call them.

[00:12:09]

Mora Yeah. And your brother Armando.

[00:12:10]

Cid My brother Armando too. You know, he passed.

[00:12:12]

Mora Can you please explain their significance in the movement.

[00:12:18]

Cid Part of the UFW working to make posters and to announce events and things where you go and get food drives also. It was part of it. Taking loads to I think it was called -- one was called taking things over to [foreign language spoken]. And the 40 acres that -- for the Filipinos. I remember taking food over there. Sacks of beans and things for them. And during one of the boycotts that we had to go into the fields to get people to make sure they come and vote for -- they had NLRB. National Labor Relations Board would be created. And they needed people to vote.

[00:13:14]

Mora And did you help sign some of those people up?

[00:13:17]

Cid Yes. I did.

[00:13:18]

Mora Feed them and then help them sign up.

[00:13:19]

Cid Yeah. A little bit of everything there in [inaudible].

[00:13:21]

Mora So you knew all like Dolores Huerta.

[00:13:25]

Cid Yes. I worked with Dolores when she was in Sacramento. She would go back and forth from Sacramento to her home in Delano at that time she lived in there. I don't remember what exactly town she lived in.

[00:13:41]

Mora Did you take your parents to -- did they ever go and help you and get involved also?

[00:13:46]

Cid No. They didn't. No. Just cheered me on.

[00:13:50]

Mora Very good. Existing challenges for the Chicano movement.

[00:13:56]

Cid There are other artists just like his name was Danny DeSiga, a very famous artist. He lived in Washington and knew him for many years. He lived in Sacramento for just a time. He was out of Fresno.

[00:14:11]

Mora And he was an artist.

[00:14:15]

Cid Yes. He is. Yes. He ran prints and everything.

[00:14:19]

Mora Oh. Nice. Looking back at your experiences in the Movimiento, are there any issues that were left unresolved? What do you see as current or future challenges for our community? Do you see yourself as staying involved and meeting these challenges? If so, how?

[00:14:35]

Cid I hope to, but I couldn't tell you exactly where -- when things come up and they need a volunteer, I'll go raise my hand. That's about what I can do to help in things that come up. And then during the pandemic in San Diego they had people lined up to take the COVID test and we

had to stand in line and help the people fill out their forms so they could get the immunizations. They had them at their Chicano park and there was a big long line wrapped around the block.

[00:15:06]

Mora And you helped?

[00:15:07]

Cid Yeah.

[00:15:08]

Mora Because Josie --

[00:15:09]

Cid Yeah. My sister in law was there.

[00:15:11]

Mora Yeah. Oh. And she grabbed you and --

[00:15:14]

Cid Yeah. If I would be -- if I'd volunteer. Of course.

[00:15:19]

Mora So do you see any issues that have been unresolved with the Chicano community overall? You know, anything that you see that we still need to accomplish to continue fighting? Or something that we need to address that's new.

[00:15:37]

Cid I think we need more cultural centers that we had back in the day that would have a combination of different things to -- my mind is blank. I'm sure there's many things. I can't think of it.

[00:15:53]

Mora What kind of a cultural center would you like to see in Sacramento?

[00:15:58]

Cid One with the arts. And there's been different shoot offs have happened and I know Ricardo tried to get one going and it didn't happen, but all about funding. Unfortunately.

[00:16:11]

Mora What do you see as current challenges for us? Young Chicanos, the Latinos or Latinx.

[00:16:27]

Cid Yeah. Exposure to the arts and events and the politicalness. The kids need to be more aware of what's going on.

[00:16:36]

Mora Would you be able to -- do you talk to your kids, your grandchildren, about that?

[00:16:42]

Cid Yes. I do. And sometimes on YouTube there's some -- they did some stories and interviews of Ricardo and I've shown it to my grand kids. There's your dad -- your grandpa. You missed him. He would always go like this. He was ready to carry them. But he never got to see any of his grand kids. God took him too soon.

[00:17:04]

Mora Yeah. Do you -- the new term Latinx, is that something that you know, what do you feel about that?

[00:17:12]

Cid Everybody can call themselves whatever they want to. That's not part of my thing.

[00:17:18]

Mora Okay. You said you do see yourself staying involved when people call you. You're there to answer the call.

[00:17:26]

Cid Yeah.

[00:17:27]

Mora I'm going to call you. Okay. Well, that concludes the interview. Do you have anything else that you want to add or you know I -- did you think of something else that you may want to share with us? Maybe an experience that you --

[00:17:43]

Cid Folsom Boulevard. It's now a shopping center for sandwich places. We all took six vans and went to Las Vegas and I got to go on the -- when they had the centro on Folsom Boulevard. And there was six vans and we all drove to Las Vegas and we -- they had platicas there with all the guys and [inaudible] Montoya. And Juanita was in there. And six vans of raza going to you know pulled into town. And we got to stay at a really nice place and we got to see Wayne Newton's ranch. Really pretty place. And we got -- and we were treated really nice. We got to go to the high school and the university there. And I don't know how it happened, but when going down there we landed in San Diego for the Chicano park day. We were there that day. And I remember seeing castle up on the hill with a big giant mirror up on the hill flashing this mirror to everybody. It was awesome.

[00:18:48]

Mora What was the purpose of going to Las Vegas? Just to --

[00:18:52]

Cid They did a -- they were hired to go down there for that -- there was five vans, VW vans, and we all went down there.

[00:19:03]

Mora Display the art.

[00:19:05]

Cid No. To talk. And they played music. But before we were there we wound up in La Paz with Cesar Chavez. There's a couple of films there and you see the picture of Juanita and a few of the -- right there. And it's called -- and YouTube called viewfinder. And they got a little short play about RCAF on that one. And there's a couple of pictures of when we went down. And it was -- it was different for me.

[00:19:36]

Mora Is this Juanita Montoya?

[00:19:39]

Cid Juanita Ontiveros.

[00:19:40]

Mora Okay. Okay. Oh yeah. So what else did you -- any other things that you did? Did you do the walk out at Sac High?

[00:19:50]

Cid No. I didn't. I was -- I was sick that day. I didn't go. I wasn't part of the group. Yeah. I stayed home on that one. I didn't -- I realized it was a walk out. I remember being there and talking about it afterwards, but it was -- I -- day late and a dollar short. I didn't make it.

[00:20:11]

Mora Did your parents find -- your sister was at school at that time. She's a year younger than you. Was she involved in --

[00:20:18]

Cid I can't -- I don't know if she did that.

[00:20:21]

Mora Did your parents say anything about it?

[00:20:23]

Cid No. No. They didn't. But I remember seeing a little short clip on the news about it. And I said, "Dang. I missed -- how did I miss that one?"

[00:20:31]

Mora Is there any other activity that you did at the -- for example, were you involved with the breakfast for ninos?

[00:20:42]

Cid No. I wasn't. That was the program with Rosemary Rasul and Jennie Baca. She was one of the ones back in the day. Jennie Baca. Really good friend. And it was -- they were all, you know, much older than me when I hung out with them.

[00:20:59]

Mora Yeah.

[00:21:00]

Cid We had a lot of fun. A lot of good times. It was a lot of fun. A lot of things like for Dia De La Madre we had a few of those programs with Washington high -- Washington elementary and we had other programs like with Dia De Los Muertos that we had the march. I had my mother and she liked with other Guadalupanas and they were singing their chorus religious songs when we did the march.

[00:21:30]

Mora Nice.

[00:21:31]

Cid It was really nice.

[00:21:32]

Mora So you did get your parents involved somewhat.

[00:21:36]

Cid Yeah. And they show up at the events that they'd have with the centro when they'd have things at the Washington neighborhood center. My parents and a lot of older people were part of the group, would show up and help.

[00:21:51]

Mora Yeah. We used to go to the Mexican center.

[00:21:54]

Cid Centro Mexicano right there? That was --

[00:21:59]

Mora All that. All those good things. So yeah.

[00:22:03]

Cid Those were some good times.

[00:22:04]

Mora I remember. Do you remember anything about your dad working with the railroad? Working for the railroad?

[00:22:12]

Cid Yeah. After the war. He was a World War II veteran and he worked at the railroad. And then he got laid off and he wound up working for construction and then he wound up working as a park maintenance person until he retired and he was forced to retire. He got ill. He got hurt.

[00:22:35]

Mora Well, are there any other stories that you want to share with us?

[00:22:38]

Cid I can't think of. I'll probably have a [inaudible] when it passes a few --

[00:22:43]

Mora Three o'clock in the morning.

[00:22:44]

Cid Yeah. I can't think of anything else right now.

[00:22:48]

Mora Okay.

[00:22:48]

Cid I'm drawing a blank.

[00:22:50]

Mora Well, gracias.

[00:22:51]

Cid Thank you so much.