

# The Sacramento Movimiento Chicano and Mexican American Education

## Oral History Project

Name of Interviewee: Anita Ramos Barnes

Name of Interviewer: Violeta Meneses

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1 BEGIN TRANSCRIPTION

2 [00:00:00]

3 Violeta: Before we begin I like to tell you that if you need any breaks or water throughout the  
4 interview feel free to tell me like don't hesitate to ask--

5 Anita: Okay, thank you.

6 Violeta: Um so we'll start off with identification so can I please have state your full name?

7 Anita: My name is Anita Ramos Barnes.

8 Violeta: And can you please provide your birth date?

9 Anita: Uh six-one-nineteen, forty-nine.

10 Violeta: And can you provide your marital status?

11 Anita: Married.

12 Violeta: And do you have children?

13 Anita: No.

14 Violeta: So how many years have you been married?

15 Anita: It's gonna be thirty-seven in June.

16 Violeta: So now are we moving to your early life. Where were you born?

17 Anita Ramos Barnes: I was born in Woodland, California. Um, my parents uh my grandparents  
18 migrated from Spain to uh at that time they-- they to contract workers in Hawaii and they worked  
19 there for three years and they came over to mainland uhm and my dad was born in Loomis,  
20 California and they worked the farms around the area. My grandfather never really got adjusted  
21 to living here in America so he took the family back to Spain, when my dad was about ten years  
22 old. And things were not easy there either. And then when the War broke out with Franco uh my  
23 dad found himself in prison for a while. And then when he got out from prison uh he migrated uh  
24 back to America and trying to find a better life and at that time there was quota system, so uh my  
25 mom had to wait five years to join him here. Uh and then I don't know how they settled in  
26 Vacaville and it could've been because um cause there was a little-- a little...the-- the  
27 neighborhood there, it was called The Village and it was all the families that had migrated from  
28 Spain, but at that time Vacaville was rich and ranches that were around in the Winters area,  
29 Dixon area, so I think that was probably the draw so they worked um mainly in the ranches and  
30 then after a while the developers were coming in and buying the land for expansion and then  
31 Basic came into Vacaville, which is a vegetable processing plant uhm that processed onions and  
32 garlies and so my dad and the a lot of the individuals that were losing their jobs working on the  
33 ranches were able to move in there my dad retired from there after 25 years.

34 [00:02:24]

35 Anita: Um going to school was an interesting experience because um did not speak English when  
36 I start the school and um we did not have bilingual education and when I think back I'm still not  
37 sure how we learned how to speak English. So um and especially when our school experience  
38 when we would be told by our teachers that we cannot speak Spanish on the playground and so  
39 then my friends and I we would kind of migrate to the outer edg--edges of the playground where  
40 we could feel comfortable to speak Spanish. Our parents were constantly getting notes being sent  
41 home uh being told, "Please learn English, you know, you can't help your child with their  
42 homework and so forth and so forth." So unfortunately, um the message, you know, wasn't overt  
43 but the message that I and many of my friends internalized was that there was something wrong  
44 with who we were. Because you know, we didn't speak English, our families did not fit into  
45 what uh the mold was-- was supposed to fit in and ah so that became pretty difficult. We didn't,  
46 was ashamed to bring friends over many times cause my parents did not speak Spanish [I think  
47 she meant English]. The neighborhood where we lived in we were, you know, did not have a lot  
48 of money. And that starts all those things are kind of insidious but they start to affect you after a  
49 while and then um also at that time it's not happening now thank God but, at least I hope not, but  
50 that time there was always uh I guess a push to Americanize everything so my dad was Diego  
51 but he became Jimmy. My brother was Diego and he became Richard and we were Ramos but  
52 we became Raymus.

53 [00:04:00]

54 Anita: And ah it wasn't until actually when I started going to school and-- and graduated from  
55 high school and went onto come right, I did two years, here at Sac City and then went on to Sac

56 State um [pause] and before that I mean we didn't even know have an idea of how to go to  
57 college. We were the first one on our families to go to college we do not have others around us  
58 and had ever gone to college so even trying to explore that was an experience. I remember going  
59 to my high school counselor and saying, you know, "What is thing about college? You know,  
60 can you talk to me about it?" and I guess they making some kind of an assumption about who I  
61 was and my name and where I came from, I guess? "Oh no! College is not for you, you know.  
62 Why don't you think about going into the business uh track? And that's great if that's what you  
63 wanna do." And that's what I would have wanted to do, but I really did want to know about  
64 college. So then I just put college away and just didn't think that that was something that was  
65 obtainable uh to me. And then um I had a friend who was four years older than I and that was a  
66 Isabel Hernández uhm she later-- later married uh Mayor Joe Serna [first Chicano Mayor of  
67 Sacramento] and uh she went on to become a VP [Vice President] at Sac State [University] uh  
68 working out with underrepresented students and uh but at the time that I moved when I graduated  
69 from Vacaville from high school and I moved to Sacramento and I was working I was taking  
70 some classes at Sac City just things of interests, never really thinking that I would take it any  
71 further. Isabel was at Sac State and uh and we connected and she started talking to me about, you  
72 know, going to college and I thought, "What do you mean going to college? I don't know if I can  
73 go to college?" And then she started talking to me about the EOP [Educational Opportunity  
74 Program] program at Sac State and uh and I was through the EOP that uh two years later I  
75 transferred over to Sac State. And then being on the campus at that time was really difficult  
76 really. I mean it was scary. I mean I didn't even have a clue of where I was going or what I was  
77 doing and could I even get the grades to be able, to be able to make it in college and with the

78 support of EOP [pause] that was really helpful for students like myself that were just coming in  
79 and needed that support system.

80 [00:06:21]

81 Anita: And in the first semester that I was there made the Dean's Honor Roll and I said, "Well,  
82 you know, I guess I can-- I can do this so. I can do it!" But-- but the interesting thing is and when  
83 I saw Dr. Pitti, cause he was one of my mentors at Sac State, was that I think when I was going  
84 to college and I was able to go to Sac State. It was really an exciting time because of everything  
85 that was happening around civil rights, around the EOP, around Ethnic Studies and trying to  
86 bring, you know, Chicano Studies, African American Studies, Asian Studies onto the campuses  
87 and everything that was happening. So, I'm really grateful that I was able to experience that so  
88 we went to class but at the same time we were working on campaigns or it was picketing the  
89 Safeway on a Saturday or-- or doing silk screens cause that time you made the poster silk screen  
90 you have to wait for one run to dry and then do another. So we really got a lot of community  
91 experience a lot of hands on life experience besides the learning that we were getting from the  
92 books. And taking a lot of classes like from Dr. Pitti, Frank Godina, at that time, uh Joe Serna  
93 and others. The uh Royal Chicano Air Force and the artist movement, really started to open my  
94 eyes and look at my experience when I was growing up. I said, "You know what? There's a form  
95 of discrimination in that. Even though people weren't openly being discriminated when there was  
96 jokes about spics about this about that, that was a form." You know, being told not to speak  
97 Spanish on the playground. Your parents being told, you know, not to speak Spanish at home  
98 cause they were hindering their children. And so that--then I kind of became very angry cause I  
99 became angry that I went through that. You know, I spoke Spanish but I never told anyone I

100 spoke Spanish you know, that-- that was not something that I ever shared because I didn't feel  
101 that that was okay and

102 [00:08:10]

103 Anita: And so then, I and with Isabel because Isabel of course was very involved with EOP  
104 always happening on the campus and uh and I also became very involved cause I wanted to um I  
105 wanted to learn more. I wanted to make a difference. I wanted to uh learn about this thing called  
106 *discrimination*. And how to have it go away or to help have it go away cause I knew what an  
107 impact it had on my life and on my parents' lives. [pause] And then from there uh I uh uhm  
108 became it like I said became involved in like politics became of-- of an interest to me so I  
109 became involved in a lots of the politics that were going on um at that time Professor Serna, who  
110 later Mayor Joe Serna, uh was my mentor and was my mentor even when I left Sac State. So I  
111 learned a lot from him. I learned a lot from um the professors that I took classes from, from the  
112 other students and the things that we were involved in, and just from the life around us. Um is  
113 going the way you wanted to go? [Asking the interviewer, Violeta] Oh, okay.

114 Anita: And then um-- um after I graduated from Sac State I remember one of um my professors.  
115 I remember Frank Godina told me, "As you graduate and you go out into the world try not to let  
116 the world swallow you up okay. Remember the community. Remember to give back to the  
117 community because they will take that away from you, okay. So don't let them co-op you." So I  
118 always remembered that. And um I took my first job, I always work through schools. I work at  
119 the EOP on work study and then I worked in Woolworth's Downtown on the weekends and um  
120 and then when I so my experiences always kind of tending me to go...I did wanna to do  
121 something in the community at least for part of my career.

122 [00:10:04]

123 Anita: So when I graduated from Sac State I applied for a job and it was then I don't know how  
124 many of you know, but at that time I was the Washington Neighborhood Center, on 16<sup>th</sup> Street  
125 and they apply-- applied for a grant uh through the Office of Criminal Justice Planning and it  
126 was called La Familia Counseling Center and uh Program. And so that program was funded; a  
127 director was um uh hired; and I went and I thought, "Well, let me see." You know, I had done  
128 stuff at the Washington Neighborhood Center with the Breakfast for Niños and some other things  
129 so I went ahead and I applied and I was hired. And at that time, I was hired to be a counselor and  
130 we were working with um families in the Alkali Flat area. Mainly uh um teens that were being  
131 referred they were on probation and we were working. At that time, the grant that we were  
132 funded for was called the Seed Grant so it diminished every year and at the...it ended at the end  
133 of three years with the idea of mind that if you worked well has a good program that county  
134 government would pick you up and they would continue the program. And uh I we were picked  
135 up by the County Department of Probation after 3 years and then uh we were able to expand the  
136 program from 30 to 60 families and uh and that was the birth of La Familia and I was only going  
137 to work there one year and my one year turned out to be 39 years [laugh] by the time I left so and  
138 uh we're at the uh Washington Neighborhood Center until 1975 when we were incorporated by a  
139 group of board members and then uh we were able to um get the small little 1,400 square foot  
140 Victorian on 28<sup>th</sup> Street and we were there until 1996 where from a grant from the California  
141 Youth Authority and um and private donations, we were able to purchase the land where the  
142 center is now on/in the Fruitridge/Franklin area. And people try to put us in other parts of town  
143 but um Mayor Serna wanted us in the Franklin area and we wanted to be in that area that was

144 where we felt um La Familia needed to be. There was a lot of, you know, uh in the heart of the  
145 Latino community at that time too, in that area.

146 [00:12:18]

147 Anita: So uh-- uh and I think the reason that I stayed, and I know the reason I stayed at La  
148 Familia for 39 years cause people kept telling me, “That’s so burn out! How did you last for so  
149 long? How did you do it?” And it was just my commitment and my passion to just work in the  
150 community and try to create and have La Familia evolve to where it did with the wonderful staff  
151 I had. And I had an incredible wonderful Board of Directors that created the foundation for La  
152 Familia to be able to evolve to where it is now which is a Family Resource Center, providing  
153 mental health programs, youth programs uh, early prevention wait, there’s a career center  
154 providing pre-employment and employment programs, karate, parent...parenting classes, and  
155 special uh cultural events and so forth. And it was real important, I think, that was for my earlier  
156 experiences to try to create something through La Familia where kids could come,  
157 undocumented kids could have a safe place to come, families could come. That it was culturally  
158 diverse so people also learned about each other. Instead of, “Oh it’s Latinos over here and  
159 African Americans over there.” It would be a place where kids would interact with other kids,  
160 from other cultures other backgrounds and start to learn about each other and start to celebrate  
161 everybody's culture. And that everybody’s unique and everybody...what everybody brings is  
162 unique and enriches the experience and enriches our experience living here in this country. So  
163 that's what we did with La Familia. And-- and we went and La Familia we started with two of us  
164 a budget of \$30,000 and when I retired last year a staff of 50 and 3.4 million dollars and the one  
165 thing that we always worked really hard to do was to make sure that all the services we provided  
166 were free cause I remember when I was growing up it was always like the kid looking in. You

167 couldn't participate. I mean I remember I tried Brownies [Girl Scouts] one year but I cou-- I  
168 couldn't last more than a year because I couldn't afford the-- the uniform I couldn't afford the  
169 things for the-- the badges and so a lot of times we just couldn't participate in things that we  
170 would have liked to.

171 [00:14:21]

172 Anita: So, hopefully with our experience at La Familia we open the door for kids and families  
173 just be able to do things and do it for free. So we were fortunate enough that we never had to uh  
174 charge for anything. And we also opened the center and expanded without any incurred debts so  
175 all that was done with support from the community and [pause], still though, involved like uh I  
176 kept real close with uh Juanita Ontiveros and her work through CRLA with the farm workers  
177 and-- and always you know, kind of. There was always like a underground thing where you  
178 could just pick up the phone no matter where we were all working, the capital, whatever just,  
179 "Hey the farm workers are coming or here this is happening. That's happened we need this we  
180 need that." And then everybody just came together to help or someone needed a place to stay. Oh  
181 my gosh we have um, "I have this young man whose undocumented or young girl is there any  
182 resources?" And everybody would just pull together and try to help as much as possible.  
183 Undocumented became a real passion of mine because I just really think that's so important that  
184 we solve that problem. I hope I do not leave this earth without that being solved! It just seems  
185 like we just nickel and dime we do a little bit here "You can have your driver's license, but you  
186 can't be here. You can go to school, but you can't be here." And we work this so many kids. And  
187 I was just-- just so amazing cause their spirit and you know, it's funny because you get to be you  
188 get to go to high school and then when you're 16 "Oh now I can't drive and I can't get a job and I  
189 can't do this and I can't do that." And it really just, I think, hits about that time that it's just the

190 resources and then the resources aren't there, you know? So um but it's always wonderful when  
191 someone was able to make it you know, uh with resources and go to school. And I had one  
192 young man who not too long ago, uh graduated with his engineering degree and I know that it  
193 was very difficult for him to get there. So, uh to just hope that before I leave this earth that we're  
194 able to figure that one out it's just so silly, to me, anyway.

195 [00:16:18]

196 Violeta: So were you a Fellow or Felito during the Mexican-American Education Program?

197 Anita: No, that I wasn't.

198 Violeta: Okay, so um [pause] your earliest memories of the Chicano movement. What are the  
199 earliest memories of events that attracted you to the *movimiento* [movement] Chicano?

200 Anita: That was, you know, like I said, you know, being on the campus at that time when I mean  
201 there was all that activity about you know, EOP, Ethnic Studies, um the group starting like  
202 MEChA and all that and that just attract me like I said because of my prior experience and I  
203 could relate to it. Even though, you know, my family came, you know, from Spain. I could relate  
204 to, I could relate to you know, um-- [pause] um the issues of language, with being told you're not  
205 good enough you know. You're not American enough or whatever that means, you know? And  
206 what that felt like and so I saw that and then I was also the time of you know, Martin Luther  
207 King, civil rights, you know, the-- the Vietnam War and being involved with demonstrations  
208 against the War. It just opened up all that and politics, working for candidates. But um so it just  
209 made sense to me I felt, you know, I could relate to what was happening and I wanted to be a  
210 part of what was happening and trying to open the doors for others that would come after us.

211 Violeta: So how did or how do you think of other Mexicans, Mexican Americans, or Latinos  
212 react to the term “Chicano” and the “movimiento Chicano”?

213 Anita: uh [indistinct], you know, that time there was Brown Berets too, but...I think, you know,  
214 it had its negatives because, you know, if you were you know, cause I all got kind of what  
215 Mexican American or “No, I'm just American right?” or “I'm Mexican-American” what that  
216 means. So, I think it was seen sometimes as a negative. It-- it was a movement that was, you  
217 know, um maybe trying to start trouble or trying to...of course buck the system things, like that.  
218 So, I think there was a generational issues, you know, with-- with uh the young students rather  
219 the movement you know, versus the parents that were here and trying to understand what all of  
220 that meant.

221 [00:18:20]

222 Anita: But I think there was also a lot of understanding that what um was happening in the  
223 Chicano movement in through the RCAF in the artist movement that those other thing that the  
224 time had come and that what they were address ...addressing were true issues that needed to be  
225 addressed, you know. And um and, of course, was César and Martin Luther King you know, that  
226 violence did not play in to that that there was ways to do things, you know, that that not have to  
227 be violent and so I think that resonated being able to keep it as much as possible that way.

228 Violeta: So how did your involvement in the *movimiento* Chicano change you personally?

229 Anita: It open up a whole new world to me of-- of understanding the world, of looking at how  
230 people are treated in the world of uh you know, looking at politics and-- and having to work in  
231 that world. We all, you know, didn't want to deal with politics but you have to work within the

232 system too. You have to learn how to do that. How to work within the system to make changes.  
233 And um you don't do it by just saying, "Okay I'm going to turn my back. I don't want to be part  
234 of the system." You have to in some way. So how to be part of the system as an advocate. How  
235 to be part of the system to uh-- uh bring about change in a positive way. Um [pause] and changed  
236 me as a person, you know, I-- when I used to work Downtown at that uh-- uh it was  
237 Woolworth's Downtown, as a matter fact, I never let them know that I spoke Spanish. And so  
238 when people came in and spoke Spanish and needed help at the desk I never went forward. But  
239 after a year the manager was real surprised when I-- I went up and said, "I speak Spanish. So,  
240 you know, I will gladly interpret for those folks." So, you know, so it changed my whole life and  
241 how I felt about who I was.

242 [00:20:08]

243 Violeta: What roll do you believe that Chicanas played in the movimiento?

244 Anita: I think it is they were just as important a role as um anybody in the movement because  
245 they um they were right there before every-- every issue whether it was politics, the arts. I can't  
246 think of any issue the Chicanas were not there, you know. It was like once I was in a meeting on  
247 campus and I was asked by a feminist she said, "Well, what do you feel about the feminist  
248 movement?" and stuff, you know. I said, "Well you know, you know our moms always worked  
249 so it's not like this is something new. And also if you're talking about the feminist movement in  
250 the Chicano movement also including Chicano men because they're just as discriminated against  
251 as-as women are, then I think that has to...we have to include that, right?" Oh they got really  
252 upset, you know. So well sorry but you know, I think you know, until end of discrimination for  
253 both Chicanas and for-- and for uh by Chicano men also and I truly believe that it had to be both

254 going forward. But I think um, I mean you know, Chicana, the women were there just as much as  
255 the guys were. They were there silk screening. They were there doing everything. I didn't see  
256 anything being done less by, you know, Chicano men and women it was all very equal and  
257 working toward one cause and I think that's what kept it all-- all together.

258 Violeta: You did mention of La Familia earlier. Are there any other organizations you help  
259 initiate or that you personally initiated in the *movimiento* Chicano?

260 Anita: La Familia kept my hands full. So I mainly worked with that and then uh uh\m just..no,  
261 that was probably the main one, you know. I would help out with other things or be involved, but  
262 La Familia was the main, my main project.

263 [00:22:01]

264 Violeta: Who in La Familia were your co-founders or who were your main people around to help  
265 you?

266 Anita: There and I-- I go back I wouldn't be sitting here today, doing this interview if it wasn't  
267 for my mentors of Sac State. If it wasn't for my..for professors like Frank Godina-- Frank  
268 Godina, Professor Pitti, that just I uh was here just here a-- a few moments ago. Uh-- uh at that  
269 time Professor Joe Serna who had a major impact in my life. Dr. Isabel Hernández-Serna um  
270 [pause] Estella [Serrano] who taught poetry, in the Poetry [Spanish] Department uh-- uh Elena  
271 Carro who was took a very active role of with EOP on campus. So all of those individuals  
272 im...the RCAF that the-- the-- the Chicano artist movement all of that impacted who I was. And  
273 I drew on that even in my work at La Familia and uh drew on-- on uh advice and uh looking

274 back with Isabel with uh Joe uh individuals like that they were always part of my support system  
275 and I drew on them um very much to keep me rooted too and in what I was doing.

276 Violeta: So, you mentioned these professors and what were the courses you were studying with  
277 them?

278 Anita: What was uh Dr. Pitti with a lot of classes in uh-- uh Chicano history. Uh with uh Mayor  
279 Serna it was like "Politics 101" and with Mayor Serna is a lot of being in the classroom, but it  
280 was also okay, "I need a crew of you guys to go to be at the capitol or do this or that." So we got  
281 a lot of kind of hands-on community or picketing the Safeway store on 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Um uh  
282 helping with some of the uh marches with the farm workers, things like that. So, they were  
283 extremely instrumental and uh and then took some classes just on basic Chicano Studies, but I  
284 really uh really love history learning about the history and uh-- and uh taking the political classes  
285 really like those.

286 [00:24:03]

287 Violeta: So were there other organizations you were involved in? I know you said you were busy  
288 but is there any?

289 Anita: On the campus was mainly through MEChA and EOP and there was a group and I was  
290 trying think of it when I was driving over, where it was uh. Maybe you remember Senon? One of  
291 the Pan African American students, Asians, and um um MEChA and stuff kind of working  
292 together like you know, addressing general issues but I can't remember what the name was but  
293 um mainly uh those groups.

294 Violeta: Now you mentioned MEChA. Can you elaborate more on what MEChA was and what  
295 did you do?

296 Anita: That was mainly, you know, going to the meetings and uh-- uh they were always going to  
297 try and identify uh being there for students who were coming in and helping them, you know,  
298 mentoring them and helping them also as they were coming onto the campus. They were a great  
299 help with that and also they were involved in a lot of-- a lot of activities with the EOP and other  
300 activities on the campus and in the community. They were a real driving force for that. Also,  
301 trying to get, you know, involved in student elections on the campus uh trying to get Chicanos  
302 elected to student office, things like that.

303 Violeta: Now when you were talking about La Familia and it's uprising you talked about a  
304 breakfast what was that?

305 Anita: Oh no, that was through the Washington Neighborhood Center where they had, it was  
306 called Breakfast for Niños and that was...where, and at that time it was gosh Lorenzo Patiño and  
307 his girlfriend Nellie Patiño, ....they were uh and uh he later on he came to be a judge. We lost  
308 him early on uh. He passed away very early in his life to cancer. And um and them and some  
309 other students would come in the morning and make breakfast for um the kids in the  
310 neighborhood and they would serve them breakfast and uh it became called Breakfast for Niños.  
311 And then they also had students coming in from the campus that would do uh after school  
312 programs for the kids there at the center cause at that time is more diverse now, but at that time  
313 the Washington Neighborhood Center was right in the heart also of the Latino community in that  
314 area in the Alkali Flat area.

315 [00:26:22]

316 Violeta: So what significance activities or organizations created play in the *movimiento* Chicano?

317 Anita: I'm sorry what was that again? I didn't hear.

318 Violeta: What significance did the activities or organizations created play in the *movimiento*  
319 Chicano?

320 Anita: Oh I don't think you can separate them out. I think they were a big impetus in having a  
321 *movimiento* Chicano. I mean, I don't...you can't separate one out from the other. And um and I  
322 know that those student uh-- uh groups are still very active on the campuses and-- and I'm glad  
323 that they are because I-- I wish I could say that all the work has been done. And-- and that when I  
324 leave this earth it's been done, but it hasn't, you know. When I could still pick up a young girl  
325 from high school, when I was working at La Familia, and for her...and I'll never forget her  
326 sitting in the car with me and say you know, "Mexican aren't stupid." And I go, "No, they're  
327 not. How did you get that?" And again, it reminds me like when I was you know, being told not  
328 to speak Spanish and stuff it was just very overt. Right? And I go, "Who told you that?" You  
329 know, and I'm getting ready to go, "Let me go talk to the teacher the counselor. Who told you  
330 that?" And she was, "Nobody says it. I just feel it." You know, so and you know that she's telling  
331 the truth probably cause she's just she's getting it from somewhere. Right? So that hopefully, you  
332 know, there's still just a lot of work still to be done and we need a lot of you guys [laughs]. I'm  
333 glad that all of you young people are out there and coming and working. One of things that I  
334 always loved La Familia was have so many students that graduated from-- from college and so  
335 forth that had that passion for working in the community and they would come and they would  
336 bring all that with him and-- and give that to you know, the young people that they were working  
337 with and uh I think that's so important.

338 [00:28:06]

339 Violeta: So I know what you said that you and your friends would feel that isolation, that  
340 oppression of not being able to express who you really were in terms of not being able to speak  
341 your language what a-- where are they now? Did they participate with you in the program  
342 [indistinct]....?

343 Anita: Yes, like I said Isabel, you know, when she came she brought me in and opened the door.  
344 And then I reached back and brought our girlfriend Francie who lived in Vacaville who was  
345 about three years younger than us. And she got her teaching credential and she went back to  
346 Vacaville and taught at the high school there until she retired. So uh it really made a  
347 difference because we were able to uh, you know, support each other and uh and then open the  
348 door for others in our.... Now, you know, the village in Vacaville now has disbursed its uh  
349 families are disbursed all over Vacaville but a lot of my cousins are going to college or have  
350 gone to college so that has changed a lot from when we were there. But we would have not been  
351 able to do it unless we had move-- things like the movimiento that open those doors for us. That  
352 was crucial I-- I know I wouldn't be sitting here if it wasn't for that. There's no doubt in my  
353 mind.

354 Violeta: Now going back up we forgot we...or I did forget to ask. Do you have brothers and  
355 sisters?

356 Anita: I have one brother. And very interesting cause he's three years younger, so our  
357 experiences are very different. Where I love Spanish music. I celebrate the culture. I celebrate  
358 the food. I love *mariachis*. I love, you know, *salsa*. I love everything, okay? I have it in my car.  
359 My brother being 3 years younger, in order for him to survive the way he did. He won't speak to

360 you in Spanish, okay? He doesn't-- he doesn't really listen to Spanish music. So for him and in  
361 order...his process was different, you know. He just had to um push it all out to be able to learn  
362 English and be able to-- to uh to you know, accommodate and be able to be accepted.

363 [00:30:02]

364 Violeta: Where is he now?

365 Anita: Well, that's just about...when my dad died about 12 years ago. He comes to me and he  
366 goes, "Anita, you know, I'm looking at my-- my birth certificate and why does my birth  
367 certificate say Diego and everybody calls me Richard or Dick?" And I said, "I don't know."  
368 Because as far as I know, and if you guys know let me know. I've never been able to find a  
369 translation of Diego to Jimmy or Richard or Dick it's Diego. Period. End of the sentence. And  
370 so, he went through a time there were he felt like, "But why did they do that? Why didn't they  
371 call me Diego?" And so he had to deal with that you know, later on in life you know, so uhm  
372 he's...he came back then he says you know, "I want people to start calling me Diego." And I  
373 said, "okay." And so we did that. And uh so you know, he's Diego but you know, that he had to  
374 go through that and I said, "You know, what your right because you're not Dick and you're not  
375 Richard. And Dad wasn't Jimmy!" I don't know how they ever got Jimmy [laughs] but they did.

376 Violeta: So the *movimiento* Chicano raise your conscience a long social, cultural, and political  
377 lines?

378 Anita: Oh yes, in every-- every-- every area. Like I said, that-- that just open the doors for  
379 everything you know, culturally um politically and every area. I can't think of one area that it  
380 didn't, you know. And it made me a better person. I think all of us that had, I think, the privilege

381 to have been able to experience the-- the movement and-- and just made us better people, you  
382 know.

383 Violeta: So how did these changes impact your personal relationships with family, peers and  
384 significant others?

385 Anita: Well, everywhere I went now I spoke Spanish. I mean, it-- it's funny when you speak  
386 Spanish at Nordstrom's and I'm with Isabel-- another friend, when we were there. And someone  
387 always looks at me and says, "Your...speak—" and I said, "Yes. Let me go finish this sentence.  
388 I'm speaking...I do speak Spanish, but what is that I don't look Spanish?" And they'll say,  
389 "Yes." you know, because remember we come in different shapes and forms. It's not, but there's  
390 that stereotype, right? So-- so and if I'm speaking with friends or even now when...somebody  
391 will always say [pasuse] and I say, "Yeah. It's my first language." And they go, "How can that  
392 be?" you know, [pause] and so I kind of freak them out a little bit that way, but it's interesting  
393 how that still happens, you know.

394 [00:32:23]

395 Violeta: So please describe some of the impacts that your involvement with the *movimiento*  
396 Chicano had on your career. it went to been

397 Anita: Well, if it hadn't been for the *movimiento* I would have never gone and work at La  
398 Familia and hopefully been able-- been had been able to leave my handprint at La Familia and  
399 creating a multicultural service Family Service Center that I hope you know, really made a  
400 difference in the life of a lot of families and a lot of kids.

401 Violeta: Looking back at your experiences in the Chicano movement are there any issues that  
402 you felt were left unresolved?

403 Anita: [pause] I'm sorry what, wa-- I'm trying to picture the word the-- the question go ahead.

404 Violeta: So do you feel that there are still issues needing to be resolved?

405 Anita: Oh yes! Like I said, oh yes! I wish I could say it was all done. When a couple...when  
406 maybe halfway through La Familia I had someone come to me and say, "You know, La Familia  
407 will make it better and it'll grow better, but change the name from La Familia. Change it. Don't  
408 hes—" and I thought about and I said, "No, we'll keep it La Familia." And we did it and we  
409 became one of the premier agencies in Sacramento. But, you know, when you get hit with things  
410 like that you know, that there's still work to be done. And um I still think that uh you know,  
411 they're still discrimination in jobs when it comes to Latinos. There's uh-- uh discrimination even  
412 in, you know, in going to school and trying to get the opportunities to go to school, you know.  
413 Look what we've done with affirmative action, you know, the steps we're taking backwards and  
414 even like an impacting programs like EOP, you know, like a lot of the steps that were fought in  
415 are starting to be you know, they're starting to be chipped away. But that we still need them?  
416 Sure we do. But it's an equal playing field? No. I wish I could say it was but it isn't, you know. If  
417 there's more opportunities: yes, but they're there because of movements like the-- the-- the  
418 Chicano movement.

419 [00:34:20]

420 Violeta: Describe how the *movimiento* Chicano impacted life here in Sacramento over  
421 [indistinct].

422 Anita: I think Sacramento had a tremendous impact, of course cause we're at the state capitol so  
423 uh the *movimiento* was very involved in politics. Um you know, the farm worker movement  
424 really uh-- uh looked to Sacramento when they needed support uh. When they did the marches.  
425 When they came into town for the boycotts, you know, with the grapes, with the lettuce so you  
426 know, Sacramento was really I think in the forefront you know, LA but Sacramento just cause of  
427 the capital. I think the RCAF Chicano Royal Air Force or the Chicano Royal artist front uh they  
428 just had an impact in the arts that was just incredible. I mean right here in Sacramento with a  
429 José Montoya and-- and-- uh and Ricardo Favela uh, Juanishi Orozco, um uh oh gosh I can see  
430 him Rudy Cuellar you know, so many of the young artists that uh and-- and through their work  
431 they just impacted. you know, the world through their art and they impacted politics through  
432 their art. They became a voice through their art that uh could not be said any other way but they  
433 said it through the art, you know.

434 Violeta: So when you think back to the Chicano movement, what do you think in your opinion  
435 would be the most lasting legacy for people now to look back and say this the greatest  
436 contribution [indistinct]?

437 Anita: I think provided the foundation for everything that came after. It provided the foundation  
438 for opening the doors for so many things you know, educationally, politically, uh culturally, you  
439 know. The celebration of culture, you know, celebrating things like Cinco de Mayo, the *posadas*  
440 things like that. Bringing all of that in, you know, Día de los Muertos. All of those things that it--  
441 it became I think the foundation for strengthening all those cultural ties, all of that. And I think  
442 all of that foundation is still there. It's just being um drawn on I think in different ways, but I  
443 think it's still there, you know those original roots, those original thoughts are still there.

444 [00:36:33]

445 Violeta: So you mention a lot about La Familia-- which is one of your major works.

446 Anita: Yeah

447 Violeta: What do you hope that when people look at it or participate in it what do you hope that  
448 people are learning?

449 Anita: Learning to work multiculturally and the importance of celebrating diversity and  
450 celebrating the uniqueness that we all bring into the world, you know. It may be some-- someone  
451 you know, from Hmong culture, or Spanish culture, or African American culture, even  
452 Caucasian culture, but the we all have something to bring. I-- I said it's a mosaic. I've always  
453 said that everybody that comes through La Familia, it's like a quilt and they leave their  
454 handprints. Whether it's one of the kids, one of the family members or board member, a donor.  
455 Somebody who gave a dollar somebody who gave a million dollars. They all leave their hand  
456 print there. And that makes what La Familia is. And celebrating diversity like when you have a  
457 potluck and there's food there from the Hmong community, there's the enchiladas or the-- the--  
458 the ribs, there's this there's that. And people enjoy that and they celebrate that. So I hope that  
459 that's what stays there is that thing... that we're...and we're all here together. We're all here, you  
460 know, in here in this country together. In the world, I think we're together. We're also a global  
461 world where we're all interacted together but that we can celebrate our uniqueness and our  
462 differences and-- and that those are good. Those are to be celebrated. That we can speak more  
463 than one language is great! You can speak 7 languages that's even greater! And all the richness  
464 of the different you know, like the Pacific Rim [?] um uh celebration and how that's attended in--

465 in uh Día de La Familia. you know, how those things are attended and how people you know,  
466 celebrate culture but like unfortunate I said we still have work to do in so many other areas.

467 [00:38:17]

468 Violeta: So you did mention a lot of the work that has been done up-to-date by La Familia the  
469 past is it-- but what do you hope that this program would lead to?

470 Anita: Uh you know, expand the work in the community expand the-- the resources for families,  
471 you know, we can only provide so much um. Expand uh the youth programs for kids to be able  
472 to have a safe place to come and just be kids. I think that's one of the things that gets lost so  
473 much with kids that live in certain neighborhoods that are kind of high-risk neighborhoods, is  
474 that they kind of lose being a-- a kid you know, just being able to play and feel safe so that's one  
475 thing that we really did. And I-- I hope that-- that's expanded being able to expand um the  
476 education programs helping with pre-employment you know, helping uh young people to feel  
477 facil-- facilitate work you know, it's great to go to college and get a college degree, but not  
478 everyone is gonna want to go to college. "So, then what is it that you do want to do?" My brother  
479 didn't go to college. He became a mail carrier. And he had many opportunities to come out and  
480 be a supervisor for the Post Office, but he loved being a mail carrier and having his route. And  
481 he was happy. And he went to work. And he loved doing what he did it. So, it's just, you know,  
482 providing people with resources and to be able to be the best that they can be. And that's what I  
483 hope what La Familia will always be. Is just helping. And helping families also when they're in  
484 need of services or help that they can come and get the resources and the help they need and the-  
485 - and cause it's hard out. There for and for a lot of families says and we don't realize you know, at  
486 least for undocumented families I mean I always get so upset because those families to working

487 in three, four, five jobs, you know. People always look at me when...they think I'm crazy when I  
488 say, "Hey if you're going to get Social Security you better thank some of those are  
489 undocumented workers because they have been paying Social Security and they're never going  
490 to see it!" You know. So, it's not like, you know, undocumented families aren't here paying their  
491 taxes doing the best that they can. And they want the best for their families. So, um-- um [pause]  
492 and that's one thing that still makes me upset. So, like I said, that we haven't solved that one. So,  
493 cause they're good families. And so that they can feel safe. When you were talking about La  
494 Familia, bringing it back, that La Familia continuous and I know it will be. Where families that  
495 are undocumented, kids can come. They can feel safe. They can get the support that they need.

496 [00:40:29]

497 Violeta: So what do you see as current or future challenges for the Chicano community?

498 Anita: That um, hopefully not to forget the roots of where the community came from. And be  
499 mindful of those roots. Not to be co-opted and forget th...those roots. To keep the culture, to  
500 keep the language, to keep all of those things going. I mean, you could be part of the culture.  
501 You know, American culture because we all are. We're here, of course. We all draw from it, but  
502 you're not to be co-opted. Not to lose it to-- to still keep those fruits there. And to still fight for  
503 injustices. I mean they're still the injustices of undocumented um. They're still the injustices of--  
504 of um you know, uh Latinos/Chicanos you know, having equal access you know, in jobs and  
505 education. That's still there. So there's still, you know... putting Latinos in political positions  
506 where they can be part of the voice of this country and solving the problems that are happening  
507 in this country.

508 Violeta: So do you see yourself as being involved in meeting these challenges?

509 Anita: Um, when I left I was tired. So, I was a little tired um. So, I put the tennis shoes away for  
510 [laugh] a little bit but you know, I do what I can working with politics and stuff. I wanted to do  
511 something a little bit different. So I do volunteer, but I volunteer with Meals on Wheels and  
512 delivering meals to homebound seniors and I also donate time at the senior Heart Center  
513 Downtown working with seniors. I feel that um seniors are also a population that get lost out  
514 there and are-- uh are very isolated so I wanted to dedicate some of my time to that. Uh I'm  
515 working on a few campaigns right now uh. Just doing uh some work for the candidates. So I try  
516 to keep involved a little bit here and there. I still uh go back to La Familia when needed and  
517 provide input on some projects, things like that.

518 [00:42:29]

519 Violeta: Now I noticed you brought a picture--

520 Anita: Oh.

521 Violeta: Do you mind me asking what that is?

522 Anita: Oh yeah, they said-- they said to bring something and I thought well [indistinct] and it's  
523 one of uh my Professor Joe Serna when he had young and had a long hair and with Cesar. And  
524 somebody gave this to many-- many-- many years ago and I've always had on my desk at work  
525 and I have it at home now so it's still....

526 Violeta: What does that picture mean to you?

527 Anita: That just means to me uh when I always look at it, not forget what all the struggles were  
528 about. What all the possibilities were about, you know. How injustices could be um-- um

529 answered you know, by even just one person making a difference which to me was Cesar what  
530 he was able to do, okay. And that's I think the message they're always have for kids and for  
531 people, you know. Sometimes we think, "Oh we can't make a difference or what I'm gonna do?"  
532 Sure you can! You can make a difference in someone's life. And if you just made a difference in  
533 that one person's life you've done it. But this just reminds me what you know what? You know,  
534 what one person did. And also what Joe did when he became the mayor of Sacramento. And you  
535 know, if he wouldn't have passed on, I'm sure he would have gone on further and politics. And  
536 what he did for the community here, you know.

537 Violeta: So looking back who would you said were your biggest role model? I mean you do  
538 mention your mentors throughout your education, but other than that like....

539 [00:44:02]

540 Anita: Well, my biggest biggest role model was my father--

541 Violeta: Okay.

542 Anita: He uh when my mom-- my mom passed away when I was 10 and my brother was 7. And  
543 he raised us as a single parent and-- um and he was always there. You know, telling us you  
544 know, you can go to school. You can do something, but just do something, you know. Make a  
545 difference but you know go out and-- uh and do something and uh you know learn from our  
546 struggles. Learn what we had to go through and you can-- you can do it you can-- you can go  
547 forward. You can make it, you know. You don't have to...you're gonna have an education. You  
548 can go to college. You can do all those things you want to do. So, he was always the person that  
549 always said you can do it, no matter what you do you can do it. Just go out and do it. And um he

550 was a quiet man. He was not a man of a lot of words uh, but you know, he always knew what to  
551 say and when he said that you paid attention. And-- and it was able to do what he did. I mean we  
552 didn't have you know, we had one car and that was it, that car broke down that was it we never  
553 had another car. But uh he was always there. And he always you know provided for us and  
554 always did it with a smile. And we may not have had a lot but we always had something, you  
555 know. And there was a lot of love and a lot of laughter. And so he was probably my-- my  
556 greatest role model.

557 Violeta: So for anyone that watches this video what would you want them to get from your  
558 conversation with us?

559 Anita: Just how dynamic and how impactful the Chicano movement was that you know, that I'm  
560 glad it's being-- being put into an archive, a videotape uhm uh kind of format so that others can  
561 come and see it. Sometimes my biggest fear is that as young people come along they're going to  
562 forget what the struggles were. What it was. And I don't think we can ever forget that. I think  
563 that's when we're in danger; when we start to forget that. So I think this is a great teaching tool  
564 not to lose. When I was talking to David Rasul, when he called me he mentions, "Anita can you  
565 imagine that we've had...we lost the voice. I think he said of one hundred-nine people that were  
566 involved that are no longer here." You know, so you wonder you know how that enriches the  
567 dialogue and the conversation. So, I really think this is important to keep that dialogue in the  
568 forefront. To be used as a teaching tool for young people that you know, you kind of forget after  
569 a while you know. "What-- what do you mean the Chicano Movement? What do mean this? You  
570 know I'm into my video game. Or no, when was that? or—or..." Uh so I think this is really  
571 important.

572 [00:46:33]

573 Violeta: So, are there any final things you would like to add on things you forgot to mention  
574 before?

575 Anita: No, I just think this is a really good thing that you guys are doing. And that they're  
576 showing people like you that are our future. So, when I look at you guys say I look at the future  
577 and I think it's really good and there's it's gonna to be okay. Yeah.

578 Violeta: So those are all questions--

579 Anita: Okay.

580 Violeta: I have for you thank you so much--

581 Anita Ramos Barnes: Thank you.

582 [00:46:47]

583 END OF TRANSCRIPT