

The Sacramento Movimiento Chicano and Mexican American Education  
Oral History Project

**Dolores Delgado Campbell**

Oral History Memoir

Interviewed by Erica Yáñez  
May 17, 2014

Transcription by Francisco Valverde and Technitype Transcripts

**Yáñez** Good morning.

[00:00:09]

**Campbell** Good morning.

**Yáñez** Good afternoon.

[00:00:10]

**Yáñez** So could you please state your name, your full name?

[00:00:14]

**Campbell** Dolores Delgado Campbell.

**Yáñez** Could you please state your date of birth?

[00:00:18]

**Campbell** November 6<sup>th</sup>, 1943.

[00:00:20]

**Yáñez** Could you please state your marital status?

[00:00:26]

**Campbell** Married for forty-one years.

**Yáñez** Wow! Do you have any children?

[00:00:31]

**Campbell** I have one son, Javier Sean Campbell, who is thirty-four.

**Yáñez** Where were you born and raised?

[00:00:39]

**Campbell** I was born and raised in El Paso, Texas, but kind of a little community right outside of it by the name of Isleta.

**Yáñez** What did your parents do for a living?

[00:00:52]

**Campbell** Well, many different things. My dad was an immigrant who came to the United States during the Mexican Revolution as a young boy, so I think because of that, my dad really didn't have much of an education, he really never went to school, so pretty much everything that he learned in terms of the language and all that was pretty much was self-taught. So I think from an early age, my dad told me that he had been involved in farmwork, agricultural work, picking, hoeing, different kinds of things, kind of some migrant work. And then later on, my dad became a baker. In fact, when he married my mother in 1933, he was a baker. As the years went on, my dad became a plumber, a stonemason, a baker, and the last work that he did at the end of his life and before he retired was he was an electrician for about twenty-five years.

**Yáñez** Do you have any siblings? If so, how many?

[00:02:02]

**Campbell** Yeah, I have—well, I didn't tell you about my mom. You want me to tell—

**Yáñez** Oh, yes.

[00:02:07]

**Campbell** Okay. Yeah, because my mom also worked. My mom was the oldest of sixteen children that my grandmother had. She was the oldest of the eleven that survived to adulthood. So from the time I was a kid, I remember my mother always had some kind of a job, whether it be she was a seamstress at home, she made clothes for people and lots of different things, and then I think eventually when I went to high school, my mother decided that because she was sure that she wanted me to go to college, she didn't quite know what that was, but she wanted me to go to college, so she worked at a gift shop so that she could help save money for tuition. So she worked at doing that kind of work until she retired, and she didn't retire till she was like seventy-seven years old.

**Yáñez** Wow, wow! Do you have any brothers and sisters?

[00:03:02]

**Campbell** I have two older brothers, my brother Mickey, who passed away recently. My brother Mickey, in his adulthood, worked as a surveyor for the county of El Paso and the city. And then my brother Gonzalo, who's the middle brother, and my brother worked for the City of El Paso in the garage, the manager of maintenance of the equipment.

**Yáñez**        Could you please describe your experiences as a child and youth in your family and neighborhood in Texas?

[00:03:37]

**Campbell**     Well, when I was growing up, because my mother had *so* many brothers and sisters, we were always surrounded by family, and we lived out in the country. My mom, because she was the oldest and I think probably because she was not only the oldest, but my grandmother would a lot of times allow my mother or encourage my mother to take leadership role within the family, so my mother was kind of like the second mother to a lot of her brothers and sisters. And my mother was a very strong, dynamic, very smart woman. I think if she had gone to college, wow! She was very smart. So we were surrounded by a lot of family. A lot of family came to our house for parties, for advice. My mother was kind of like the bank of the brothers and sisters and the advice person, and that was really great.

My dad came from a family of seven, and we saw them and interacted with them, but I think the people that we interacted a lot more were my mother's brothers and sisters, their children, my aunts, my uncles, my cousins, and we really had a lot of fun because we lived together. A lot of us lived out on the country, and we didn't have a car. My parents later on got a car. We didn't have very much, we were poor, but I think at the time when I was growing up, none of my relatives had anything more than we really did, so we didn't consider ourselves poor. So we spent a lot of time playing outside, walking from one house to the other, fishing, playing out in the yard, making toys and doing stuff.

So I think I really had a wonderful upbringing and with a lot of cousins and a lot of fun, but like I said, we really didn't considered ourselves poor. And it was interesting because a couple years ago I was at my aunt's ninetieth birthday and I was talking to a lot of the cousins, and my cousins said, "Oh, we were jealous of you guys."

And I said, "Of *us*?"

She goes, "Oh, you guys had everything."

I said, "No, we didn't."

Well, then I stopped to think about it. My parents had a home. My dad bought a tiny little house, and then as time went on, he remodeled it and added to it. And my dad always had a job of some kind. My mom worked. And I realized that some of my cousins were from families where there was domestic violence and alcoholism and things, and I never experienced any of that. My parents had a really solid marriage. They were married for sixty-six or sixty-seven years, my dad dying at ninety-three and then my mom dying at ninety-one. They were very supportive parents and very loving, and the whole family was, all the cousins. We had a great relationship.

**Yáñez**        Could you explain the dynamics of your community in El Paso, Texas?

[00:06:40]

**Campbell**    Well, we lived out in what we called this little place called Isleta, and Isleta was between the big city of El Paso and kind of out on the suburbs, kind of like you'd say like Carmichael, except it was a poor, mainly a rural community.

We lived in that area because my mother is an American Indian; my mother is a Tiwa Indian on her mother's side. In 1680, my ancestors moved from Albuquerque when there was something called the Pueblo Revolt. They moved to what is today El Paso and the little town of Isleta, and they founded the town of Isleta, because my family, my Indian family, comes from a town in New Mexico called Isleta, which is "little island." Then they founded another one with the same name, only spelled it with a Y, Y-s-l-e-t-a instead of I-s-l-e-t-a, where I'm from. So my grandmother was born there, my mother's mother. So I think my family always felt a sense of belonging there. They were farmers. My grandfather was a farmer, my grandmother, and she was surrounded by her siblings.

So when they moved there, as time went on, probably about 1751, my family received a land grant from the King of Spain, and so my grandmother's Indian family all received a piece of land kind of in a L-shape, and every brother and sister had a plot of land right next to each other in what is now called the Isleta Land Grant, so I grew up in part with that too.

[00:08:23]

**Yáñez**           And when did you come from Texas to California?

[00:08:28]

**Campbell**       I used to come and visit all the time because a lot of my mother's sisters moved to L.A. and to Ventura, but it wasn't until I moved here—let's see. I moved to Pasadena. I moved to Pasadena in 1970. I had girlfriends that had graduated from college with me, and they had moved and had gotten jobs teaching in Pasadena

and Alhambra and some of these areas, and I came to visit. It was a strange time, because I came to visit and at the time I was engaged to be married. I was supposed to be getting married, but it turned out that it didn't work out because the guy I was going to marry ended up having a history. So I broke up my engagement. I came to visit my girlfriends.

I had given up my teaching job in Texas. I used to teach in Fabens, Texas, in a high school. I'd taught there for three years. So I had no job, and I was really devastated because of the engagement and everything, but I came to visit my girlfriends and they said, "Don't worry about it. There's *lots* of teaching jobs in California. We're *sure* you'll be able to find a job."

So I came to stay with my girlfriends for about three weeks and, sure enough, there were jobs. They drove me around to different interviewing times. It was interesting, because then I got offered a job to teach at Pasadena High School to teach Spanish. Well, I have a degree in history and I have a degree in Spanish. So I had taught Spanish in high school. So I taught at Pasadena High School. I taught Spanish, I taught Introduction, Advanced Spanish, and Chicano Literature at Pasadena High School for one year, so from '70 to '71.

**Yáñez** Were you a Fellow or Felito during the Mexican American Education Project?

[00:10:28]

**Campbell** I was a Fellow. I was recruited in 1971. I think in the spring I was at a conference in Santa Ana or somewhere down south, and I met Steve Arvizu and we

started talking. He said was I interested in applying for a fellowship. At the time, I didn't know what that was, so I said, "Well, tell me what that is."

And he told me, and he said, "Oh, I think it'd be really good. You'd really like it."

So to make a long story short, I applied, was accepted, came up here and interviewed and was told that I was going to be a Fellow in the Mexican American Education Project.

**Yáñez** How did you participate in the Mexican American Education Project, and how did it influence your thinking and involvement in the Chicano community?  
[00:11:23]

**Campbell** Well, first of all, I participated by coming here and becoming a full-time graduate student. Moving here, I knew no one, never been here. I had a lot of relatives in Southern Cal, so my parents came up here with me and helped me find an apartment. I started going to classes, and it was great because I made friends. Turns out that a lot of the Fellows that I met, a group of them were from Texas, not from El Paso, but from other parts of Texas, and just we kind of became almost like the Texas mafia, because we became friends and we had stories to share. We spoke a lot of the same kind of Spanish and Spanglish, so it was really fun to be a part of that, and just really lively and making us feel like, "Wow! We're somebody!" And that was *really*, really exciting.

**Yáñez** So how did your participation in the Mexican American Education Project influence your career and life during that time?



[00:12:31]

**Campbell** So I went to the project and I graduated in 1972. At the time, I met the man that I would marry. He happened to be a professor at Sac State. So I met him, and in August of 1972 we got married.

I really changed a lot of my way of thinking, because growing up in Texas, having gone through a lot of discrimination and struggling to get my degree at the University of Texas, El Paso, I think it was really different to come here because there was people saying, “You’re smart. You have things to contribute. You have a culture. You have things that your ancestors have contributed to this country.” Well, I knew a certain amount because my parents were very proud of the *cultura* and the language and all that, but my mother had a fourth-grade education and my dad had never gone to school, so it was what little they knew.

So I think when I came here, it really helped me to decide, “Well, I want to continue being a teacher.” But here I had been a high school teacher and now I thought, “Well, I have a master’s degree. I could apply to teach at a community college.”

So I applied at Delta, and I went and I interviewed, and actually they offered me the job. But at the time, I just became engaged and my fiancé really thought that—he really wanted to encourage me not to take the job, because he felt that that would put pressure on us if we got married and I had to travel all the way there.

So then I had also applied to American River College, and I was hired at American River College to teach part-time, and what was exciting was they hired me

to teach a class called Social Science. It was a Social Science class, 42, and it was about “The Mexican American Experience,” which was exciting because that’s what I studied a lot at Sac State.

But what was interesting about it was a part-time job. But I figured, “That’s okay, because in the future I can apply when they open it up to a full-time.” They did a year later in 1973. They had an opening in the history department as a full-time job, and so I applied for that. I was really excited. I interviewed, and then I got called and congratulated that I’d gotten the job. I was *so* excited. I called my parents.

But then it was very devastating, because several hours later, I get another phone call and this time it’s my department chair in the history department and he says, “I’m sorry, Dolores, but I’m going to tell you that I’m going to have to rescind the offer for employment because the president of the college will not allow me to give you the job.” He couldn’t quite explain, but he says, “Why don’t you come into the office and we’ll talk about it.” Then what was really interesting, too, he said, “And I will be a witness in your behalf if you sue the district.” I was like [laughs]—I was kind of shocked.

So I did talk to him, and it turned out that the job that I had gotten was indeed a full-time job, but the president of the college had to approve it, and apparently he had learned that I was at the time involved with the United Farm Workers Union. My husband I used to run the boycott. From 1972 till ’77, we ran the boycott here in Sacramento. And he had heard of my activism and then he didn’t like that some of my Chicano students from the social science class would go picket. I mean, I didn’t

force them; I just told them about it and they'd show up, and it was a good experience for them because they were learning stuff like that in class about being assertive and all that.

So that was really difficult for me because I didn't get the job, and it was devastating because I had been prepared, I felt humiliated. I think the thing that helped me was a fantastic husband that I have, *fantastic* husband, very supportive, very caring, and then friends who found out and called me and they said, "We are here for you to help you in any way we can." And one of my friends said, "I think you should go file a suit with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, because *definitely* you've been discriminated against." So I drove to San Francisco, I filed a complaint with the Equal Opportunity Commission.

Meanwhile, I taught at Sierra College, I taught at Sac State, "La Mujer Chicana". I could teach at other places. I taught at Sac City, I taught at Cosumnes, but I was not allowed to teach on a regular basis at AR.

So from '73 to '77, they were kind of preparing and they finally heard my case. The Los Rios District and American River College at first did not want to admit that they'd discriminated against me, but my case was investigated by the chief investigator of the District of Northern California for Equal Employment Opportunity discrimination cases, and she was later on able to tell me some of the reasons why I didn't get the job, which was nothing—no reason for me to not get the job; it's just that the president, I think, was a racist and a sexist. He'd never met somebody like

me. And several of the other woman on campus who happened to be Latinas said to me, and other women said, “Oh, you just came on too strong.”

And I said, “But I hardly ever spoke to him or anything. I was respectful.”

And they said, “Oh, but you were assertive and you were popular with the students and you took the students out to the community.” So that all was put on the negative column. [laughs]

So it was very, very devastating, but I did get my job back in 1977. I was not allowed to come teach at American River College until he retired. So I was lent to Sac City and Cosumnes and taught in outreach until he retired. Then once he retired, I could come back and teach, and I’ve been teaching full-time in the history department since then.

**Yáñez** In the course you taught, the social science course, “The Mexican American Experience,” what things were you teaching the students?

[00:19:41]

**Campbell** Well, a lot of things I was teaching students were things that I had learned through my graduate program at Sac State. I’d taken a lot of cultural anthropology, I’d traveled to Mexico and I’d learned a lot of the history, I’d taken literature. So I had a lot of background, and so I tried to put a lot of that together into the class teaching about our history, teaching about our ancestors from Mexico, and teaching pride, and then talking about literary figures from our culture and artists and musicians, just kind of an overall picture.

It was really exciting because I had lived a certain amount of that through the Chicano Movement, and I think it was also exciting because I had the son of the vice president, who was not a Chicano, take my class, and he *loved* it. And his dad said, “Can I come in and sit in your class?”

I said, “Sure!”

So it gave me more a feeling of “You’re doing the right thing.” That’s why when I didn’t get that full-time job, it was devastating, but at the same time I didn’t understand what I had done. Then later, in retrospect, I realized that when you assert yourself and feel pride in who you are and where you come from, and people have that negative stereotype that we’re supposed to, especially Latinas, Chicanas, be humble and cower down and bow down. I wasn’t brought up that way, first of all. My mother was a very dynamic woman, and I was not brought up that way. And then the project, it’s like an injection of vitamins, like [demonstrates]. So I taught them a lot of that, and I still teach. Now it’s called History 327, “The Chicano/Mexican American History,” and I still do a lot of that in my class.

**Yáñez** Did your study of cultural anthropology influence your involvement and participation in the Chicano Movement?

[00:21:48]

**Campbell** Yes, it did, it did, because I think I learned a lot of stuff from taking those classes, but I think one of the many things I learned was the participation of our indigenous cultures in many aspects of life and that they had discovered many things, they had done many things, they had built many things. They had religion, they had

literature, they had culture, they had music, they had art, things that we had never been taught about in school. Even when I went to college in Texas, that was never taught. So I think all that, again, I felt like it was almost like a vitamin shot. It fortified me and gave me strength and gave me like a bag of things, that I had expertise and knowledge of things that I could go out and share with people, including my students.

**Yáñez**        Could you please explain the perspective of influences and your understanding of the Chicano Movement with the courses of anthropology?

[00:22:58]

**Campbell**     Well, I think in the different courses that we studied, I think a lot of them were things that, again, had to do with our indigenous past, but also we were learning Mexican American history with Professor Pitti, and I think a lot of those gave me perspective on things that—like, I knew about the Chicano Movement a little bit before I came here, because when I was a student in Texas getting my bachelor’s degree, I had taken a sociology class with a professor who later on would become the dean of the School of Education at Sac State, and his name was Tom Carter.

I was a student at UTEP, University of Texas, El Paso, and one time he came in and he was talking about the Chicano Movement. I could feel my ears almost perk up. Then he talked about the blowouts and the walkouts. I had never heard of that, and it was really exciting then to try to pick up the information and figure out, “Okay, where is this being reported?” And it wasn’t really being reported in Texas, but I

think Tom had probably gotten that information from national news or something else. So it was really exciting, so I already had some background, some background.

Then when I taught at Pasadena High School before I came here, I had been involved with my Chicano students in sponsoring MEChA, bringing the Teatro Campesino to Pasadena High School to perform *I am Joaquin*. I used to go to East L.A. with my students to buy stuff, to do stuff on the campus of Pasadena High School, because Pasadena High School was primarily pretty much an all-White high school and they integrated with a few Latinos and Blacks at the time that I arrived there. And then I was teaching Chicano Literature. So all those were things that later on when I came to graduate school, it just kind of added more to my knowledge and it made me know more about the Chicano Movement.

**Yáñez**           What were your earliest memories of events that attracted you to Movimiento?

[00:25:13]

**Campbell**       That attracted me to the Movement?

**Yáñez**           Mm-hmm.

[00:25:16]

**Campbell**       Hmm. Well, I know that when I first arrived in California was when they were having the Chicano Moratorium in East L.A., and I didn't know anything about that, but my aunt, my mother's sister, lived in East L.A. Several of my aunts lived there, and my mother made sure that when I came, I had to make sure to notify

my *tías* and stay with one of my *tías*, and she would find a place to live, I mean just all this kind of stuff.

So I remember calling my *tía*, who was supposed to be living like two blocks from later on where the Chicano Moratorium is happening, and I kept calling and calling and the phone kept ringing and ringing. I called it morning, noon, night. I called lots of times, and then finally I turn on the TV and I see what's happening, and I was like, "Whoa!" But I still didn't make the connection to where my *tía* was living.

Finally, when I finally got a hold of her, she told me how they had been crawling around on the floor of their house for several days because there were bullets flying and and teargas and all kinds of unrest in the community. It was like, wow, that was another part of the Chicano Movement that I didn't know about.

What was interesting, though, was when I talked to my relatives, I think because none of them had the background that I had when I came here to go to graduate school and get all this stuff from the project, that when I talked to them about it, it was almost like an isolated incident. It wasn't like the Chicano Moratorium happened because the Chicano Movement was happening because we were tired of being discriminated. They didn't have *any* clue to *any* of that.

So I spent a lot of time when I would go visit after being in graduate school here, I'd go visit, I spent time and they'd say, "Now, what is it that you're studying?" And I'd say, and they'd say, "What's that?"

And I remember some of my relatives saying, "Oh, but we're not Chicanos," because they remembered the negative connotation.



And I said, “Well, in Texas I know we called ourselves Mexican Americans, but here Chicano, and this is why.”

And my relatives were like, “Oh, okay.” And I think for some of them, they saw me as kind of a strange radical that I’d become.

**Yáñez**        Would you say you were an educator for your family in some sense?  
[00:27:48]

**Campbell**     I think to some extent I was, in part because I loved reading. I always loved reading and my parents really liked reading, and so when I came here and went to the project, I got exposed to so much literature and so many things that were written by our own people about our history. I gave everybody in my family copies of Rudy Acuña’s history book, this book and that poetry book and this and lots of books, lots of books.

I was recently in Texas visiting my family, and I saw my sister-in-law’s shelf, all the books that I had ever given my brother that he had read, and I noticed that he had the pages turned down that he had read. And my parents, I gave my dad books. And my dad, after a while, started calling himself a Chicano, but in the beginning, it was like, “What is this Chicano stuff?” And then later on, he said, “*Yo soy Chicano.*”

And I said, “Okay.” [laughs]

He was really proud because we took him to hear Cesar Chavez, and that was really exciting for him. So whenever they would call us and we may not be home, my mom said that my dad would say or my mom would say “*Andan en el boycott, andan*

*en el boycott,*” you know, “They’re out there boycotting,” or something. It was just funny.

**Yáñez** And what year did you take your father to see Cesar Chavez?

[00:29:18]

**Campbell** Well, let’s see. We became involved with the United Farm Workers in ‘72 when we got married, and we ran the boycott from ‘72 to ‘77. So I would say we took Dad probably ‘74 or so. There was a big UFW march and rally, I think it was in Delano, and we took Dad, and Dad was so excited because he was like this close [demonstrates] to Cesar. I said, “Dad, *si quieres se lo presentamos,*” and Cesar was so nice. He came and he shook my dad’s hand, and my dad was so excited. Later on, he went home and told the family, the relatives, that he had shaken the hand. They didn’t quite know who Cesar was, because I think in Texas my family was really not into any knowledge of that or very little, unless I told them, I don’t think. And the media didn’t really cover much of anything when I was growing up and even later on about the Chicano Movement and all that.

**Yáñez** How did other Mexicans, Mexican Americans, Latinos react to the term *Chicano* and the Movimiento Chicano?

[00:30:30]

**Campbell** Well, I think when I was teaching in Pasadena, I think it was really exciting, because, again I was a faculty sponsor for MEChA, and I think what was exciting about it was that these students had been bused into an all-White, pretty much upper-class school, Pasadena High School, and here I am, I’m teaching Spanish

and I'm a Chicana, and I think we were talking about it, and I teach Chicano literature, and I think for a lot of the students it was slow. I could see for some of the students it was like, "Yeah, okay, but why do you call ourselves that? And what's happening?" And for some of them, even they had grown up at a time when they were trying to Anglicize their last name. Like I remember a kid whose last name was Muñoz. I called the roll and he said, "Munoz."

And I was like, "Who?"

And he said, "Munoz."

And I said, "M-u-n-o-z." I said, "Muñoz."

And he said, "Munoz!" So he and I kind of just left it at that.

But as time went on, I realized that some of my students, I think, became more socially conscious of our place in society different than they thought it should have been. It was moving ahead, getting an education, being out into the world, and that was really exciting. It was really exciting to help the students.

So I had done a little bit of that in Texas when I was a teacher, because when I was a teacher in Texas, they were really discriminatory, and even then, I think I helped my students to learn that we had people that had written books and written poetry. I would take them to the library and they would do research, and I think they began to recognize that we had a different role in history. They'd never been taught anything. "All your parents are farmworkers. All you're going to do is pick cotton and work for other people."

And they were curious about me. I was the *only* Chicana teacher at that high school when I was hired, and it was very difficult because the principal was *constantly* on my neck because I played music in Spanish. It was a Spanish-speaking class! We'd play *loteria*, all kinds of things to entice the students who already spoke Spanish to kind of want to learn a different type of Spanish, a higher level of Spanish. I did everything I could, and I was young and I had fun with my students.

I was there three years, and those three years were miserable because of the administration. Wonderful for the students, but I think it's because I encouraged my students to feel better about themselves and raise their sense of self.

When I left, that principal never gave me a letter of recommendation. What was ironic is I did go back there after I was in the project, I did go back there to visit my old high school, and they had a pep rally for me, which was really amazing. I got there and I remember going into the building, and as I'm walking down the hall, students are saying, "Miss Delgado! Miss Delgado!" And people were coming out the classroom and hugging and all that, and then they said, "We have a pep rally."

And I said, "Oh?"

And they said, "And you're the honored guest." And that was really surprising and humbling.

**Yáñez**           And what year did you leave that?

[00:34:12]

**Campbell**       I came here in '71, so it was in '71.

**Yáñez**           Did your involvement in the Movimiento change you personally?

[00:34:28]

**Campbell** Yes, it did. I think even though I had been encouraged by my mother to feel good about myself and where I came from and who I was, I think the Movimiento definitely added a perspective to my life—makes me almost tearful [cries]—that I didn't have before, and it made me very proud of who I was and proud of the language, the culture, the background, and made me the woman I am today. Sorry. Just— [cries]

**Yáñez** Would you like a break?

[00:35:15]

**Campbell** Really quickly.

**Yáñez** Okay. We can take a break.

[Recorded turned off]

**Yáñez** So the next question would be, what role do you believe the Chicanas played in the Movimiento?

[00:35:26]

**Campbell** Well, I think that we played very important roles in leadership, I think important roles in the field of education, of science math, music, art, human relations, labor relations. I think we've played a part in all aspects of the life of many of us, and I think the fact that for many of us through the project were empowered by—you know that saying that knowledge is power? It is true. Knowledge is power, but then a lot of times what do you do with it? And I think it made me feel very empowered and

it made me feel like I could be in a room with people and talk with people about things and not feel like I should apologize for where I come from.

Every once a while, I have somebody say. “You don’t have an accent in your English.” Like, do I care? [laughs] And I don’t want to sound arrogant and say, “Do I care?” but am I criticizing the way *you* talk? But I think it’s because some people, they’re trying to be nice, you know, they’re trying to be nice. And then I have some people—I learned to speak English, actually my second language, and Spanish first, but I’ve spoken it so long. So it’s just funny when people say things like that. Or every once in while I’ve had somebody said, “Well, you don’t dress like a Chicana.” I mean, I don’t know. What are Chicanas supposed to dress like? *Huaraches* and our hair in a braid? I don’t know. [laughs]

**Yáñez**           What did you personally initiate or help initiate in the Movimiento?  
[00:37:06]

**Campbell**       Well, I think here is Sacramento, I think through my work in education, through helping my students, whether when I was teaching and I didn’t have all the background for the project, and then once I graduated, being involved with the students. I’ve been the faculty sponsor for the Latinos Unidos Club and MEChA. I wrote the curriculum for the Chicano History class which is a transferable college class to CSU and UC. I taught at Sac State “La Mujer Chicana”.

I’ve been a part of lots of groups here in Sacramento. I was a part of the Latina Leadership Network of the California Community Colleges. Locally, we had a

group in part through Davis called MALCS, Mujeres Activas en Letras y Cambio Sociales. I was a member of that.

I've also been a leader in different ways. I was awarded the Outstanding Faculty Teaching Award in 1996 by the Patrons Award at American River College, the first Latina to have ever gotten that. Then I was the president of the Faculty Association of the California Community Colleges, which represents all the faculty of all the community colleges in California, first Latina ever to do that. I was the chair of the Catholic Social Services and Catholic Charities with the Diocese of Sacramento. I was one of the founding members of a collective here in Sacramento called La Semilla Cultural Center.

I've done work on immigration, immigration counseling, I've done outreach to communities on immigration and on basically knowing your rights. I've been involved in helping do work with people of El Salvador, the committees to support the people coming from Latin America and kind of learning to fit in here. So I've kind of done a lot of stuff not just with Chicanos, but with Latinos and other Spanish-speaking people.

When I was elected the president of Faculty Association of Community Colleges, that was surprising, and then a few years later, the California Teachers Association Award awarded me the Woman of the Year Award. So in some ways, I've been out there not just in my Chicano community, but I think representing the Chicano community and trying to kind of teach people that we have a lot of things to offer, not just me personally, but we as a collective. I'm just one person.

**Yáñez** You did mention you were a faculty sponsor for MEChA and you did teach the Teatro Campesino. Could you tell me what specifically within that you did?

[00:40:11]

**Campbell** Well, I taught Chicano literature at Pasadena High School, and when I taught Chicano literature, what happened is that Pasadena High School was all of a sudden busing in these Latino/Chicano students, and they really didn't know what to do.

Since I was a new teacher, they brought me in and they said, "We want you to work on curriculum."

I said, "Okay." I'd never worked on it, but, you know, I wasn't ever one to say no. I said, "Okay."

And then they said, "How about a literature class?"

So I was kind of like two weeks ahead of the students, doing research on finding literature and stuff. Then I, because of where I lived, had relatives in East L.A., I heard of the Teatro Campesino. I made a contact and I invited them, and they came to Pasadena High School and did a presentation. We had a big assembly, and it was exciting. And the students had been reading it. I had a Chicano Literature class, so they'd been reading it and now they saw the play, and it was really exciting. And I think for a lot of my students—and I still use *I Am Joaquin*, the poem—I think for a lot of my students, I kept pointing out, "This is the history that we were never taught. This is the history we weren't taught about who we are, where we come from, what we've done, and what we still have to go."



And a lot of my students, really even now when I teach it, they really pick parts of it a lot of times to write for their take-home final, which is due next week, because the final question is “Define and describe the Chicano Movement,” and then they have to pick certain people from it and describe it. They always frequently still pick that, probably because I’ve encouraged them and had them look at the importance of something like that.

**Yáñez**        So did the Movimiento raise your consciousness along social, cultural, political lines?

[00:42:10]

**Campbell**     It did a lot. It did a lot, especially when I would go back home to visit my family. As I told you, I would try to educate my parents and my brothers and my cousins, but a lot of times I think it’s hard to do that without feeling like you’re being pushy and arrogant and kind of *sabe lo todo*, know-it-all.

So I remember that, for example, one time we were there in the summertime, and where I come from, right next door, New Mexico, they have this thing called a Chili Festival, *chili*, you know, chili peppers. And my family said, “Oh, we’re going to go to the Chili Festival!”

And we said, “Okay, we’ll go.” So we drove in two cars, my parents and my brother and his wife, and my sister-in-law and the kids, and my dad and I, and my son and my husband and I. So, two cars. We’re driving around, and my dad said, “Well, let’s stop and buy something to drink.”

So we stop at this little roadside stand out in the middle of all these fields of chilis and cotton and things. We get out. And that time, we were already working for the United Farm Workers Union, running the boycott. So my sister-in-law picks up a head of lettuce, and my husband says in Spanish to her, “*No la compres, no la compres,*” “Don’t buy it.” And then my sister-in-law did something else and we bought our sodas.

And we were getting ready to go out, and out comes this great big—out of nowhere, this great big White guy, like 6’6,” in coveralls, with a flattop and red hair, and he comes out and he starts cursing at us, “You—” dah, dah, dah, dah, dah, “—Mexicans, get the ‘mm’ out of here!”

And my parents were like [demonstrates]. I could see my dad and my mom were, like, almost shocked. And then at the same time, my dad is like, “*Vamonos! Vamonos! Vamonos! Vamonos!*”

Well, you know, I don’t know what I was thinking, but I’m still standing there, and this guy comes up to me and starts trying to intimidate me, and I start arguing with him. And my husband says, “Dolores! Dolores! *Vamonos!*” grabbing me by the arm [laughs] and finally got me out of there. My parents were *shocked*.

When we got back home, everybody was all, I think, intimidated and terrified and angry at the same time. “What was that all about?”

And then my husband I sat around and thought about it, and we said what we think happened is that we were speaking in Spanish, and my sister-in-law picked up that head of lettuce. At the time, the UWF was boycotting head lettuce and grapes,

and my husband said to her in Spanish not to buy it, and this guy heard us. He just wasn't going to put up with—I don't know. Maybe he was threatened by us or whatever. Then he came out with a shotgun, and that's when we all got in the car and *drove fast* back to El Paso.

But my parents had never—even though we grew up in a discriminatory town with a lot of discrimination against us, we kind of very early on learned kind of our place, and so that's why we didn't get into anything with anybody and were very respectful, you know, “good little Mexican.” And I think when we did that, my parents were shocked because they'd never experienced that kind of blatant racist threats and things. They'd had a couple of altercations with a teacher of mine or with my brothers, but never—and then with a gun, with a shot gun.

And afterwards, my dad was very interesting. My dad then started cursing in Spanish and saying, “We're not going to let something like that happen.”

And I said, ‘Yeah, Dad. Well, that's why we're involved in doing all this Chicano stuff so that that will never again happen to us.’

**Yáñez**        Would you say that that incident was a—not a life-changing experience, but just something that empowered your parents and you?

[00:46:21]

**Campbell**     Well, the other thing, too, is that my mom—it was really hard when we'd go shopping with Mom, because Mom wanted to cook when we got there, you know, our favorite food, and then she would always buy, like, lettuce for tacos or whatever. And I'd say, “Mama, *no compres esa lechuga.*” In fact, my mom and I had

a discussion about that, that lettuce thing, and I think eventually my mother got the idea why the boycott was important, why we were telling people, the power of the purse, and why if you didn't buy something, maybe then people might listen to you and give you some time to discuss with them what it is that you wanted, and maybe even because they might not want to, but because of the pressure of losing money and the societal pressure and the economic, that they might actually give you something that you wanted, like respect, like a five-cent raise, or fresh water in the fields or something. They finally understood that, yeah.

**Yáñez**        You also did mention that you and your husband were involved with the UFW. Could you explain a little more on that?

[00:47:38]

**Campbell**    Yes. When we got married, my husband was a professor at Sac State in the Bilingual/Multicultural Program. In fact, he had been one of the directors of the Mexican American Education Project in the early period before I came, so my husband was politically very knowledgeable. He was very supportive of Chicanos and all that. And so when we got married, we got married in August of '72, and we were talking about it and we decided that were going to help the UFW.

                  So he called down to the UFW. I think it was in La Paz or Delano. And they said, "Oh, there's a boycott in Sacramento."

                  And we said, "There is?"

                  And they said, "Yeah, people that you should get in contact with are Joe Serna."

We said, “Oh, okay.”

So we called Joe Serna, and Joe and my husband talked, and basically Joe said, “You know, if you guys want to go out and picket, we have some people show up, but if you want to put it together.” So we did. So I bought twenty-five yards of red fabric, and the RCAF, the Royal Chicano Air Force, they silkscreened the Aztec eagle for the flag on white fabric. So I bought like twenty-five yards of red fabric and twenty-five of white. They did the eagle and then I made all the flags, stitched them. My husband went out and bought the sticks, and went out to the picket line and we made flyers and we got buttons and a few things from the UFW.

We would go every Saturday and we did that from '72 until '77, every Saturday. And any event that came, like the UFW came to town to speak at the Capitol and they'd come to our house and we'd fix dinner for 150 people and they'd come and eat on our backyard and take a shower in our house.

**Yáñez** How did these changes impact your personal relationship with your family, peers, and anyone else in your community during this time?

[00:49:48]

**Campbell** Well, I think definitely we became the people that my family always asked about anything that had to do with Chicano politics. [laughs] It was kind of like my husband I were kind of like the *profesors*. So we'd go home, and my *tío*, I remember—my *tío* just died, my mother's younger brother—and he'd say. “*Bueno, Loli,*” my nickname, “*aver que esta pasando con los campesinos?*” and he'd always

ask me, so I'd try to explain. And my uncle was a really sharp guy, and I lent him some books and stuff.

So when I would go home, a lot of times my parents would ask us, then sometimes they would invite people to come over for a barbecue or whatever, so it might be my *tío* or my *tía* or sometimes my *primos*, and so a lot of people knew that anything that had to do with Cesar Chavez or the farmworkers or that Chicano stuff, you could ask Duane and Dolores. And it's actually still the same today. I have to tell people, "You know, Cesar Chavez died in 1933, but you can go see the Cesar Chavez movie."

When I was visiting in Texas recently, my sister-in-law said, "*Visto la pelicula de Cesar Chavez?*" "Have you seen the Cesar Chavez movie?"

And I said, "Yeah, it's a great movie."

She goes, "Oh, I want to go watch it." She said, "I wish you were here so we could talk about it."

I said, "Well, next time we see you, we'll talk about it."

So I feel like my family learned things about the Chicano Movement that they wouldn't otherwise have learned because they got to know us, and it was always a part of our life. It wasn't just a piece of it; it involved a lot of our lives, and I think they became knowledgeable and began to pay attention to stuff.

**Yáñez**        You did mention before that your grandmother is Native American.

Was there conflict between Chicano and Native American?

[00:51:40]

**Campbell** There was not a conflict, because when I was growing up in Texas, I didn't know a lot of this, but my tribe, the Tiwa, the Tiwa had come in 1680 to the little village that they called Isleta, so that would have been my great-great-grandparents. But the thing was that when they settled there, eventually, because of the border with Mexico and the river that separates today, the river that separates Texas from Mexico shifted, and at one time, as it shifted, part of the land where my relatives lived had been Texas, and then when the river shifted, all of a sudden now they're living in Mexico. So as time went on, a lot of *mexicanos* more and more began to move there because of the commerce, and my city, El Paso, was kind of a pass to the North from Mexico and that.

My tribe really didn't get officially recognized as a tribe—well, there were several steps. Kind of the first initial step was, like, in the seventies, I want to say like '78, and then about ten years later in 1988, the federal government finally recognized as an official tribe, which is the process that has to happen. When that happened, suddenly my tribe has money and they built a casino, a gambling casino, they built a restaurant, they built a Cultural Center. A lot of my cousins on my mom's side all of a sudden were getting money, and some of them were moving into houses that the federal government had built, really nice houses for them to live in, because a lot of my mom's relatives had lived in shacks with dirt floors and no running water and no electricity and, you know, an outhouse down the road.

So it really changed a lot, but I think for some of my family, they were brought up *mexicano* and very little Native American, because my tribe didn't have

an identity. We didn't have any of that until I got older. So I think for some of my relatives on my mom's side, some people kind of grew up more *mexicano*, and some kind of both, and then some of us have gone back and reidentified with that and talked about the pride in where we come from, that our great-great-grandfather was the chief of the tribe. I've done a lot of research on that, on our tribe.

But I don't think there was any conflict. The conflict is more today. The conflict is more today as the tribe has been given money. They won a suit against the government of the United States. They regained thousands of acres of land that there had been a treaty between the U.S. and my tribe, and it had expired and they never renewed it. So my tribe ended up getting thousands of acres of land that had once been taken from us. They began building houses and things.

So the biggest thing has been in recent years of who's the real Indian. You know, "Will the real Tiwa please stand up?" And I don't want anything monetarily from them, but I did try to register my mother with the tribe, and they acted like I was a disease. They'd known my mother for years, my mother had been a part of the group and everything, but the minute I tried to go to the Cultural Center and register my mother, all of a sudden they didn't know her, they didn't want to talk to us. The people doing the registering weren't in. And I nicely said to them, "It isn't that we want anything monetarily from you folks. We just want the acknowledgement that we are Tiwa," because my grandmother was a full-blooded Tiwa. So that's where we're at.



**Yáñez** Can you please describe some of the impacts that your involvement with the Chicano Movement had in your career, other than the Fellowship program?

[00:56:06]

**Campbell** Well, as I mentioned, I did teach at Sac State “La Mujer Chicana,” and I had never taught that, and what was interesting about that, I think, I got a call one day saying, “We’re looking for someone to teach “La Mujer Chicana,” because the woman that used to teach it suddenly quit on us.”

And there’s a real interesting clique of real strong, dynamic Chicanas who were friends of mine, and they said, “You can teach it. We’ll help you get the materials together.”

And I’m like, “Uh, uh, uh.”

So they called me, like, on a Wednesday, and I’m supposed to start teaching class the following Monday. So with their help, we put together a big reader, and the class went really well. I think it’s still taught at Sac State. Other people have taught it after I left, and so that was really exciting.

Then I also did go back and get a master’s degree in counseling as well, so I have an MA that I got under the Mexican American Education Project. That was in ’72, and I think in ’74 I got an MS in counseling. I decided that because I’ve talked to a lot of students and a lot of students needed guidance, a lot of students had never talked to a counselor or had never talked to a counselor that had suggested to them things they might do other than—I’ll give you an example. I was a counselor at Sierra College for a short time while I was suing the district, and I became the MEChA

sponsor and I was working in the EOP office and doing some counseling. The students used to come to me, talk to me all the time, the Chicano students. And one time this guy said, "What are all these students coming to your office all the time? I keep seeing the same ones."

And I said, "Yeah, sometimes they come to ask different things that they need help with."

And he said, "Well, you know, they can't come to see you more than once a semester."

And I said, "And why would that be?"

And he said, "Well, because they're taking your time away from other students." Well, you know, I didn't listen to him.

And then another time he said to me, "I don't know why you're spending all this time with these girls. You know, Dolores, they're all just going to either drop out of college, get pregnant, or maybe if they're lucky, they might be able to get a secretarial job."

I felt like he had slapped me, you know? So then he and I got into a *big* argument. In fact, I remember the dean saying, "Oh, we had to close the doors everywhere because you would hear."

And I said, "You know, he was saying racist, sexist crap and I wasn't going to put up with it."

And he said, "Yeah, I guess he didn't know you."

And I said, “Well, you know, the problem is I’m a really nice, friendly person, but you push that racist button and it just kind of [demonstrates].” And I said, “And what he said was wrong.”

And he said, “Yeah, I heard him. It is wrong.”

And I said, “And here he is a counselor at Sierra College and a lot of our students coming in here are Latinos and Latinas, and he’s already got this idea that he’s only going to help them as far as he thinks they could go because of his prejudice.”

So I think that’s another thing that the project empowered me to say you have a voice and you have knowledge of things and you shouldn’t allow things like this to happen and you don’t speak up. It’s your responsibility to speak up. You’re your responsibility to help people if they find themselves in that kind of a bind.

**Yáñez** Exactly. Looking back on your experience in the Movement, are there any issues that were left unsolved?

[00:59:54]

**Campbell** Well, I think at times, I think, sexism. I think the Chicano Movement, for all the great things that have happened, I think we Chicanas had to fight for our right to be heard. I remember one time somebody telling me, “Well, you’re just being a *gringa* feminist.”

And I said, “No.” And I said, “Oh, so you think that the only women who do this are White, blonde, blue-eyed women?” I said, “No, we have a lot of women in our culture who have done—,” and I started naming, like, [unclear] Dominguez

[phonetic] and a lot of women from our cultural past, which this person didn't know anything about, and I said, "You know, we have to recognize that we have to be partners with the men in our society to get ahead and achieve what we want to achieve."

And I have to tell you that when I became engaged to my husband, who is not a Chicano, but was a professor in the Mexican American Education Project and a lot of people know him, a lot of people were really down on me. "Wow! She's going to marry a *gringo*," you know, and all that.

And I said, "You don't even know him, and if you did, you wouldn't say that. But I don't really need your approval for who I've fallen in love with and who I'm going to marry."

But I think at times we still have not only the sexism, but I think at times we have some people, instead of being happy for you or I because we've advanced, we've gotten another degree or something, sometimes people still, in their jealousy, try to pull us back and down. And I don't support that. I'm happy and congratulatory because I know that people worked to be where they're at, and if I can help, great, but I'm not threatened by somebody's who achieved, another Chicana. I'm not threatened by that; I'm happy for them. But I think we still have a little bit of that at times.

And the sexism we battled a lot. That's why I was a part of MALCS, Mujeres Activas en Letras y Cambio Sociales, that's why I was a part of the Latina Leadership Network of the California Community Colleges, to try to empower girls and women to get an education, to get ahead, to do what they want to do, and not the fact that,

“Well, I’m a girl and I can’t do that,” or, “My husband won’t let me,” or, “What would my boyfriend say?” And to also say you have to be strong in who you are, but you also have to make the right choice when you become involved with someone, that you have to make the right choice, because a lot of times whoever you marry or you live with or your boyfriend can bring you to another place.

And I’m very happy to say that my husband is my best friend, he’s very supportive, very encouraging, and we’re a real good team.

**Campbell** Good to hear. Could you describe how the Chicano Movement impacted your life here in Sacramento, other than what you’ve been stating so far?  
[01:03:03]

**Campbell** Well, I think the other thing in the community, one of the things as I started teaching in the community college, I looked around and I saw that there were a lot of our Chicano students that were not taking advantage of the community college, that a lot of them just didn’t think that they could go to college. So I became involved with a group downtown, and we were the people that founded the Washington Barrio Education Center. The Washington Barrio Education Center, I was a part of it, a lot of other women were. It was actually a lot of us women who did a lot of this from talking to Sac City, because a lot of students wouldn’t come here on campus to Sac City. They felt that Sac City wasn’t welcoming, that Sac City didn’t really feel like a place where they could come and be encouraged.

So we established the Washington Barrio Education Center, which at one time was between 12<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> on C Street, C or D, and eventually had classrooms there,

we had counselors there, we taught classes in literature, English, all kinds of stuff, and we tried really hard to hire only Chicano and Chicana faculty to teach there and counsel there and help the students apply for financial aid. It was really successful for quite a few years.

Then I went on to do stuff with the Diocese of Sacramento, especially when the immigration law changed in 1986 and all of a sudden the Diocese of Sacramento was looking around and saying, “You know, there’s a lot of people who are undocumented, and we’re sure that some of them could be documented.” So I helped the Diocese establish ninety outreach centers to do immigration counseling throughout the Diocese of Sacramento. It wasn’t like we had a big—we might have a room with two chairs and a table, but we would have somebody who was trained. We were all trained by Immigration to do, like, paralegal, help people fill out immigration papers and all that.

And that was really exciting, because a lot of people would come to me and say, “Wow! I was born at home with a midwife, and they had no papers, no proof, so we had to go through ‘Can you prove that you’ve been living here?’” It was exciting and, at the same time, it was empowering, not just for me, but for them, because they could actually—they’d been kind of hiding out, afraid that the *Migra* was going to pick them up, and it was exciting because they could say, “You know, [Spanish]” “I’m going to have my papers.”

And I know what that's like, because my dad was a naturalized American citizen, and my dad would cringe if the police or the Immigration came by, and I'd say, "Papa, [Spanish]." And he'd kind of like, "Okay."

**Yáñez** Do you see any current or future challenges in the Chicano community?

[01:06:12]

**Campbell** Oh, I still see a lot. I still see a lot of challenges. In education, we still have a lot of challenges. We still have too many of our students dropping out, too much gang violence, too many girls dropping out because they get pregnant and can't come back to school.

I think we have too many schools who still don't teach about us, don't teach our history, our culture. And then just two days ago, a report came out from UCLA, from the Civil Rights Project, that says that the majority of our students today in California are still attending pretty much segregated schools, Black and Chicanos, and it has to do a lot with poverty and economic problems because of lack of education, low wages, people live in bad neighborhoods and they go to bad schools, you know. There's still a lot of that. There's still a lot of that.

**Yáñez** Do you see yourself staying involved with meeting these challenges?

[01:07:16]

**Campbell** Oh, yeah!

**Yáñez** Even after you're retired?

[01:07:18]

**Campbell** Even after I retire. I told my husband, “I have to have something interesting to become involved in, that I can contribute to, because if not, I’m going to die of boredom, and you’d better get my plot.” I’m not one to stay home and watch *novellas, telenovelas*. That’s not me.

I have a student, she’s a counselor out in the community, and I’ve told her that I can do counseling in English and Spanish, and I have a degree, so I might volunteer there. I might volunteer at some school. Any and everything that has to do with education and the community kind of stuff, I see myself volunteering until I can no longer function, but, luckily, at seventy I still have a lot of energy and I still have things that I think I can offer and learn.

**Yáñez** Is there anything I missed that you would like to mention?

[01:08:16]

**Campbell** Well, I think just a couple of things that I was thinking. In 1975, I went to Mexico City for the International Women’s Conference, and that was an interesting experience because I had previously gone with the project when I was a Fellow, but this time I was teaching there. Some girlfriends from Sacramento said, “We’re going to Mexico. We’re going to go to this conference.”

Now, we didn’t think anything about it, but we were really shocked when we got there and learned that there was no delegation representing the Chicana/Latina from the United States. There was a White guy representing women. And we were like [demonstrates].



So a lot of us quickly got together, some of us from Southern Cal and from here, and we decided that we were going to kind of break into the conference [laughs], which is naïve. They had all the doors locked and everything. Some of us were able to find our way in, and one of my friends, I don't remember, but I think she charmed one of the guards to kind of open the door and let us go in and check the place out. Well, they were in between sessions. We went and checked it out, and then we never left. We kind of hid out there.

Then when the session started, they picked me and picked me up bodily and threw me on the podium to address the session. My husband, meanwhile, we were living in Cuernavaca and teaching classes there. I was teaching "La Mujer Chicana," and he was teaching "Introduction to Bilingual Ed." And he turns on the TV, the news, and there I am, and he was terrified.

So I came home, or back to where we were staying, and my husband was terrified. The house we were living in, there was a couple that had rented us a room, and they were terrified, because I had invited the *señora* to go with me, and she was, "Oh, no, no, no. My husband wouldn't allow it." And then she said, "You're lucky that you weren't put in jail and arrested."

And my husband said, "You're lucky you weren't arrested and put in jail."

And I said, "But I didn't do anything wrong."

And my husband said—and we did write a statement for that, and I'll have to look for it. I don't know if you want me to contribute a copy. I can, but I have a copy of it somewhere in my files. We sat down that day and we wrote something about

living in the belly of the whale, and we just went on and on and on about how we were feeling oppressed. I just remember that. That was really fun and empowering, but kind of scary too.

[End of interview]