The Sacramento Movimiento Chicano and Mexican American Education Oral History Project

Name of Interviewee: Angelbertha Cobb

Name of Interviewers: Nataly Figueroa and Jordon Nguyen

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Name of Transcriber: Carlos Rendon

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1 BEGIN TRANSCRIPTION

- 2 [00:00:40]
- 3 Feliciano [videographer]: Muy bien [Very well]
- 4 Jordon: Ok, so can you please state your full name and date of birth please?
- 5 Angelbertha: Angelbertha Cobb, ten, ten, thirty-two.
- 6 Jordon: And can you tell us your marital status?
- 7 Angelbertha: Happy widow [chuckles].
- 8 Jordon: And do you have any children and if so, how many do you have?
- 9 Angelbertha: Well, are you want to find out? Ok, I have nineteen children, sixteen boys and three
- 10 girls. Uh, thirty-nine [pause] grandkids and I think so forty-two great grand kids. I'm not too sure
- about it, because I never know. To tell you the truth or not.
- Nataly: Um, where were you born and raised?

- Angelbertha: Where I born was the highest part of the eastern Sierra Madre of the state of
- Puebla. I was raised in different states in Mexico so it was a lot of traveler.
- Nataly: Um, what do your parents do for a living?
- 16 Angelbertha: What?
- 17 Nataly: What do your parents do for a living?
- Angelbertha: Well, when used to be alive, my mother was a doctor there at Cross hospital in
- 19 Guadalajara and my stepfather was a odontology- uh dean of the university of odontology in
- 20 Guadalajara.
- 21 Nataly: How many brothers and sisters do you have?
- 22 Angelbertha Cobb: In which part of the country? [laughs]
- 23 Nataly: [laughs]
- 24 Angelbertha: Um, I have probably [pause], my stepfather married six times so [pause] uh, I
- 25 don't-- I don't have no idea [laughs].
- Nataly: Um, how would you describe your childhood or your neighborhood that you grew up in?
- 27 Angelbertha: It's uh, quite different. Um where I grew up there's no such thing as a
- 28 neighborhood.
- 29 [00:02:45]
- Angelbertha: Uh, was only- was not a ranch, was not a-- oh, was kind of ah, is different. Uh, it's
- a [pause] place where bunch of Indians were living [chuckles]- Was a two-hundred and sixty-

- 32 five persons there, was happy because we were able to do what we pleased. There was no fights,
- 33 no rivals, no gangs. Um, the elders are the ones who were our teachers. So, I was raised in what
- is now known as a *calpulli* [a pre-Columbian Aztec society designation unit or barrio] uh
- neighborhood school. No high school, no [pause] elementary school [pause]. I don't know, it's
- way different [pause]. What?
- 37 Jordon: Continue. Did you have anything else to say?
- 38 Angelbertha: No
- 39 Interviewer 2: [laughs]
- 40 Jordon: Uh, can you answer if you were uh a fellow, Felito, or were you actively involved in the
- 41 Mexican American Education Project?
- 42 Angelbertha: When you talking-- when-- when are you talking when I was a child or when I was
- already grown up?
- 44 Jordon: Just any time.
- Angelbertha: I was involved in [pause] well for sure, when I was six years old, um I was choose
- [chosen] by, um teachers from the *Academia de la Danza* [Academy of the Dance], nineteen
- 47 thirty-eight, when uh *Presidente* [president] Lázaro Cárdenas expropriated oil, I was choose
- [chosen] by those um teachers who went to the place I born because President Lázaro Cárdenas
- 49 want to demonstrate to the entire world the natives, they-what so call it Indians, where the true
- 50 honors of the richness of Mexico.
- 51 [00:05:10]

Angelbertha: Because the arts, crafts, um, even the oil is part of our country, and um the place I coming from is full of arts, because we dance, sing, um [pause] play instrumental--instrument, you know, musical instruments um so I can say yeah I was involved in, in that. When I got smart, married, and came here to the United States, I formed here the first, um folklorico dance group, and then the, along with one of the teachers who helped me to move here, I formed the Aztec dancers. So who, became familiar, you know, with the Chicano movement, and to me the word Chicano was not a stretch, because we are Chicanos but not with "C-H" pronounced with the sound of "X" - Chicanos. Um, the language I speak, my first speak language is Nahuatl, who is not a written language, it's oral language, so now, some books and everything they have, what I call it, language and dictionary and everything, but it's according of what you can pronounce, so you can put Kuetzalcoatl with "K" or Quetzalcoatl with "Q". Or it depends how you want tohow you be able to pronounce. So since I was six, I've been involved in [pause] everything in it. [00:07:27]

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- Nataly: Um, did your study of cultural anthropology or your knowledge of culture influence 65 your--66
- Angelbertha: I born with-- I born with them. I didn't went to anthropology. Everything is there. I 67 live in a place where uh [pause] where you call them pyramids here. They are not pyramids they 68 are teocallis. Are teocallis were my playground, so I think when I studied right there [pause]. 69 Esperame tantito [Wait just a second]. [pause] Can I [indistinct] [pause]. Thank you. When I'm 70 71 talking-- when I'm talking about being in anthropology or everything um [pause] I'm sorry I was [pause] my um I'm a few generation of pure Aztec blood, but I do have French blood in this 72

- rock. My great, great grandfather was fighting against the French people, and that's what they
- were having: rocks. And you can see here going: French, rock, dead.
- 75 [00:09:37]
- 76 Nataly: [laughs]
- Angelbertha: Cool as blood. It's a French blood. It's what I say, I have French blood, but in the
- rock, not in my body [laughs]. Ok, so, when I left, six years old, my tato [grandfather] gave me
- 79 this and he said this is your degree. You talk, teach, they don't understand, hit them in the head
- 80 [laughs] and do understand. That's why they call him: *La piedra para romper cabezas* [The rock
- for breaking heads]. The *roto* [breaks] what break the heads. And then understand. So, this is
- anthropology, 1862 natively. So I didn't went to school, I was in the school [laughs]. The school
- came to me.
- Nataly: Um, so how do you think your knowledge helped the Chicano movement?
- 85 Angelbertha: Well, the first ceremonies, they were done here in Sacramento, were under the
- teachings of Señor Maestro Florencio Yescas and myself. Uh, start dancing in [pause] San
- 87 Diego with the movement when they-- when they were trying to take uh, uh Chicano Park in San
- 88 Diego. With teachings, the discipline, the desires of people, they teach them that you don't have
- to go and kill or go in the gangs and everything because when you dance, you have a discipline,
- 90 you have rules, you're learning.
- 91 [00:11:52]
- Angelbertha: Uh, designs to make your costume, *trajes* [costumes]. You learn what kind of birds
- 93 you can use in your attire, and especially the [indistinct] to each other, because uh we believe

and we are equal. Not because you white, you are superior than me. Not because you taller you bigger than me. If you are fatter than me, well, start learning how to lose weight [laughs] because it's not good. But the respect to each other is what's very important. When you are in the circle of *danza* [dance], you have to do the very step, the very sound, if everybody going to the left and you are going to the right, it's different. So, you have to put attention and do what you're supposed to do. Especially, you educate yourself. If everybody was having a rule, and when the Mayans, uh believe [pause] as they you my other me. We are the same. You have two eyes, a mouth, ear. Everything is the same, so I don't have to see the difference. We are, live on the same Mother Earth, live on the same Father Sun, so we are one race, the human race.

[00:13:53]

Angelbertha: And that's *In Lak'ech* [Mayan meaning for you are my other self]. That's why I know I understand because I've been seeing a lot of kids [pause] that to be in the streets and start dancing. They don't want to go in the streets no more. They want to go and rehearse. Uh, I see families, complete families, husband wife, children, be together. I can see somebody who were very important in some of the places here, uh, who participate in those ceremonies here in Sacramento in Southside Park. They start all the ceremonies that are still going alive, because it's a place for the children, it's a children's honoring, elders honoring, uh *quinceañera* [sweet fifteen] *xilonen*, and then for the young uh youth is the *Jaguares* [jaguar] ceremony. So everybody have a place, and every time get together and start the Concilio [council], participate with us, El Hogar, La Familia [Sacramento Chicana/o social service agencies], um Sac State, City College. Because uh, before there was no Cinco de Mayo deal. I was uh, named the mother of the Cinco de Mayo celebrations because regardless in Mexico it was not that important. A lot

of people start thinking that Cinco de Mayo was [Mexican] Independence Day and it's not, but I just started teaching those children for the Cinco de Mayo, was the last months of school.

[00:16:04]

Angelbertha: So, next time you can know already who can dance, who can sing, and who can have discipline. And all the farm workers, they were here still [indistinct]. So, that's why I chose Cinco de Mayo. So, since uh, uh nineteen-- oh god, numbers to me is, why don't stick in my head. So, I have to use the rock right? Uh, probably for 48 years here in Sacramento I've been having all those, uh ceremonies, and uh I have a lot of children, who were children young, teenagers, who now have more white hair than mine [chuckles]. But, uh I have the response of every circle, no matter what race, human race, general.

Jordon: Alright so can you talk about uh, some of your earliest memories of the events that attracted you to the Chicano movement?

Angelbertha: I'm telling you it's- I'm too old for that [coughs]. I'm eighty-three year old, was no Chicano movement. So I'm not going to tell you about early [pause] the latest you mean [coughs]. So I don't know. Um, it's hard to me to respond that.

Jordon: Can you talk about, like, a time that seemed important to you during the Chicano movement?

Angelbertha: Not related to Chicano movement. Every moment I was living is important, because take me to one event to another event. Every moment in my life been important.

Jordon: And uh, did- did you hear about the civil rights movement at the time and did you think it helped inspire the Chicano movement or anything like that?

[00:18:04]

Angelbertha: No, because I have my head in the right to do. Everything I do, I do it right.

Nataly: Um, do you think your involvement in the movimiento [movement] Chicano helped you

140 personally?

Angelbertha: Again, I don't have to put movimiento [movement] Chicano. Every movement I've been involved I've been having lots and lots of privilege to be in it. With the youth, with the youngers, with the children, and uh the name Chicano to me is part of what is the human race [pause]. Uh, you want to be more specific, uh well uh, the dance itself [pause]. Well, I don't like to bragging about- but I have uh more trophies, more rec- more recognitions, more uh diplomas, uh, that I need more wall. Probably I need room like a library to put all my accomplishments, are

marching with you on the—" I say, "No- well mijo [son] I don't remember from yesterday from

done with pride because a lot-- now grownups say Mrs. Cobb, "Do you remember me? I was

today." So, but yes so it's hard to answer the specific questions about Chicano movement.

Jordon: Can you talk about um, some roles that you think Chicanas played during the movement.

Like can you talk about like any specific Chicana that you think played a really important role.

Like yourself or anybody?

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Angelbertha: I'm not going to talk about myself, but you can look in the uh book of uh Betita [Martínez], put it on [means look it up]. You might have it in your- in your library. That's uh five hundred years of the Chicana movement [correct title: 500 Years of Chicana Women's History, Angelbertha is featured on page 192]. It's a lot of people, a lot of women, and a lot of men who

have involved in it. And right there, um talking about the dance, how dance are men helping.

And right there is about 10 or 14 more women who are following, I can say. Everybody knows

me as Mama Cobb, Señora [Mrs.] Cobb. Um, with respect, with the honor. I even-- I even hear.

Uh, but it's very very important dance be part of any movement, because every country you go

they have a festival or they have something, they have a [pause] dance.

Jordon: Can you mention, like any specific names of those women and what they did or?

Angelbertha Cobb: Well [pause], which way do you want me talk, the application?

Jordon: Like some kind of event they did or how they influenced the movement?

Angelbertha: Oh God. [pause] [laughs]

Jordon: [indistinct]

Nataly: Oh, I'll start. Um, okay so a part that you said that dance was very important that you helped contribute. What else did you might have been a part of or helped with the movement?

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Angelbertha: Like I said before, um, it's a lot of talkings [sic], a lot of learning. I say before discipline, family, family together, because when you are in a place where you cannot stay with your husband and your children, and learn something that you might not be able to learn, regardless that you are Mexican and Chicana, and you have the way that you continue teaching your children, your grandchildren, and everything is different. Um, I'm not talking about political, I'm talking about in the content of the house. Um, it's a lot of people, a lot of women, who have been involved, they not even know their names. Course, names like Dolores Huerta, um, Jacqueline Kennedy, you know, whoever. But I'm not talking about those ones, the ones

they know. Like I mentioned, la Adelita, Valentina, [Mexican Revolutionary icons] but what happened to the other ones? They been sacrificed themselves, and their names are gone. So women first, I'm talking about the women perspective. Uh, the first thing, you are a mother, you give life and how you going to continue discipline your children. You have to go to work.

[00:24:19]

Angelbertha: Some parents they uh, *madres solteras* [single mothers], you know single parents. But you still have to see the okay for your children. Some environmental thing too, a safe place for your children. Uh, and the schools, you know the teacher, you know the principal, but you don't know the person who's helping the teacher [pause], the student; the lady who scrub the floors, the lady who work in the-- in the, in the hotel. Everybody have a big role, the movement. How many are now of the young generation, they call them the Dreamers [get their name from the DREAM Act of 2001which sought to legalized undocumented youth who were brought to the U.S. by their parents]. Why do they call them Dreamers? Because they dream to be more elevated in all social levels. A lot of [indistinct] parents work in the fields and in this first generation they go to college. That's a movement. Who plays a role? The girl who's fighting to go, the boy who wants to be a doctor. But the parents. The women who work sometimes even three jobs. Now I'm going to talk about my case. I'm going to start to play the yoyo. Uh, I've been in this country for fifty-five years. Not one single day in welfare, not a single day in free lunch. I was working four jobs, and I have persons here in Sacramento; they are my witness.

[00:26:23]

Angelbertha: I was going in the morning to work as a teacher's aid at school. From there right from the school I was taking the bus and going to Sac State. From Sac State I was going take the

bus and going to work in a restaurant. Then, going one o'clock in the morning when the restaurant was closed, going back home and correct papers. And I always was sure that my children have a safety place, a safety place to stay, a safety place to go, and continue with the school because I was working in the same school they were. Uh, so it's sacrifice, to any movement. A lot of people I say is not recognized, and a lot of people say oh those people, the Chicanos are gangs, belong to a gang, a gang. No, it's not. It's the way, the level that a lot of people give us. I'm a Chicana, now that we see [age?], Chicana with "X." Why, because I'm Mexican. I don't like the way the Latino. I don't speak Latin [pause]. So, I'm not Latina. Latina [the tub] is when I take a bath. Is *la tina* [the tub] to me [laughs]. So, no matter what name that you name, the dream that you have to be united with your family.

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Angelbertha: Your education is very important because if you not go to any college in any school, then you loss [lose]. So no matter what name they give you, I'm sorry to [indistinct] answer for the *movimiento* Chicano [Chicano movement] because it's- I don't like specifics I don't be boxed in one movement. No matter what race you coming from, you have to make the effort to get education, because you have the right for education. You have the right to continue ahead in this uh, thing. It's no matter if you eat tortillas or corn, and you eat the fancy "taco" [says in Americanized manner]. So, this is one of the things now, if we want to go specific to some movement, every restaurant now have Mexican food. It's not Chicano movement. Everybody wants to turn Mexican now. Uh McDonalds, Taco Bell, fancy restaurants, they have that thing. Because what? Because we are important. We making the effort to go ahead any movement. If you continue the education, and you don't have the opportunity, what are you

going to do? You are going to fight for it but no fight, fistfight. Fight with your desires. I want to be a teacher. I'll be a teacher. I want to be a doctor. I'm going to be a doctor.

[00:30:29]

Angelbertha: This is the fight in the movement, so it's [pause] it's real hard to describe when it's been this many, many years since when the Chicano movement start. What was it, sixty's? and now two thousand and still fighting. So, this means the movement is not accomplished yet. It's going to take maybe another twenty years but it's going to be happen. A lot of the universities, they take the bilingual education. In elementary schools, no bilingual education. Why not? If you bilingual, you bi-culture. So you were too, and why here they don't want the children to learn another language? If you left-handed, when you're in elementary school, they put your hand over here and teach you how to do the right hand. Why? If your left-handed and you write perfectly, why you have to use the right? This is one of the rights that I'm ready to fight for. You don't change the way of the children if they are going in the right way. Movement is a movement, Chicano or no Chicano. You want to change your name, you can change your name. You have the right for it.

[00:32:30]

Angelbertha: Of course, I'm not going to put, uh my name is uh what, Marilyn Monroe [laughs], because nobody is going to believe they are Marilyn Monroe, right? So either can call María, they say, "Oh yeah, María." But, it's [pause] it's hard to me to explain to you all the [pause] hassle I had in the pass when I was going to Sac State. One of the professor was start talking something and I was not agree and I told him, "No, that's not the way it happened. You talking about Mexico you talking about this. It's not." And I challenged his class. I won, but he said, "as

long as I live, you will not receive your degree from this university." And I said, "Why?" "Because I say so." "I say ok don't worry about it. You'll die before I do." And he did. So, I have my degree. Not like the- the rock taht I showed you before but I do have my degree. And I have wonderful teachers in Sac State that really give me the incentive to do it. I was going through all my trouble. I say I have nineteen children and I was going instead of—"Please teacher my son is in the hospital he's going to..."—"Oh yeah, go ahead take these notes and when you waiting, study." And other ones who—"Well, it's your problem not mine." [00:34:33] Angelbertha: But it was not for the incentive. The five teachers in Sac State got me through. I never, never got the degree, because fight, yes you have the right, fight yes, the way the teachers told you. The ones that are interested, the ones that want you to be somebody. Change your name from María to Mari, or Mary, but you do it. So, I don't know what else I can tell you. [pause] Jordon: Can you name some of the, um organizations you were involved in? Angelbertha: Well, okay. WOOSH. If you told me then, [indistinct]. Okay. Mexican American Education Association, um bilingual education, CABE. Uh SALSA, Comite Patriotico Mexicano, Concilio de Sacramento, um [pause] wow. Um, I was involved with the Correctional Officers, I was on the Board. Um, then the [pause] Youth Educational Center, um [pause]. Too

many. Probably, I can send you the paper [laughs]. And I think so it's uh probably about fifty

movements. [coughs] You can tell me to give me you, address and I will send you my resume

[laughs] because I know that's uh, [pause] but uh, I don't--

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- Jordon: Uh, can you talk about some of the most important things you- uh that the these
- organizations you were involved in did? [pause] Like anything important.
- Angelbertha: Everything what is done by these organizations is important [coughs]. And since I
- 269 was a part of it, I feel honored that those organizations to call me and do it. Like uh, um, okay
- 270 [pause]. The name of the park here, Zapata Park. I was involved in it. I was involved in the name
- of, uh Washington School. I was involved in the [indistinct] to look for the young prisoners to
- 272 have something to be proud of it. Uh, everything that is done by an organization, if it's done
- 273 right, is important. If you part in it, do your best. And not because your name is in the paper you
- 274 mean I'm very important. No, the job I do for this organization is what it mean. So, probably
- about 50 organizations. [laughs] [indistinct] worse. [caugh gets worse. Takes a water break]
- 276 [00:38:56]
- 277 Jordon: Can you describe some of the impact--
- 278 Angelbertha: [coughing]
- 279 [00:39:05]
- 280 [inaudible] [coughs] [sound level drops] [inaudible]
- Senon Valadez: Quieres agua? [Do you want water?]
- Angelbertha: Hay voy a tomar. Aquí traigo. [Ha, I'm going to drink. I have some here.] Okay,
- 283 thanks. [says something to Senon ...inaudible...] Remember one thing Senon, It's real hard for
- me. I think Nahuatl, translate it to Spanish, and then the English don't come out.
- 285 Senon: [inaudible] Say this in Spanish. It's okay.

Angelbertha: Oh I can...Oh in Spanish I can do better. [Senon says something inaudible] Pues en Español porque en Nahuatl ne me entienden [I'll say it in Spanish then, because in Nahuatl they won't understand me]. [laughs] [Senon says something to the student interviewers about doing the interview in Spanish inaudible]

[00:40:53]

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Angelbertha: De dónde vo soy, se baila porque llueve, se baila porque está nublado, se baila porque salió el sol. Es un movimiento que es continuo, y la danza no muere, si no que se evalúa más, conforme va pasando. Ah, cuando llegué yo aquí ah Estados Unidos, ah, pues ah tenía yo ya una familia un poco crecida y vo no podía participar en muchas cosas pero yo seguía con la danza en mí. Y entonces al grupo de danza lo hice con los mayores de mis hijos en casa. Cuando algunos de mis hijos empezaron a ir a la escuela, las maestras ah, me dijeron que iba a ver una fiesta allí en la escuela, que si podía yo ser, ah unos tamales, unas tostadas, ah una comida. Y yo me sentí pues muy ofendida. Digo en primer lugar, yo no sé hacer tortillas. Soy india, pero no sé hacer tortillas. Frijoles no como porque me hacen daño. Chile no me gusta. Pero si les puedo ayudar en enseñarles unos, unas danzas. Si no quieren los niños, con mi familia. Y entonces ah, en esa forma les ayude, y era un pueblo muy chiquito en la frontera. [Where I come from, we dance because it rains, we dance because it's cloudy, we dance because the sun came out. It is a continuous movement, and dance doesn't die, but it is evaluated more, as it passes on. Um, when I came here to the United States, um, well my family was mostly grown and I couldn't participate in many things, but dance was always alive inside of me. So I created the dance group with the eldest children at home. When some of my children began to go to school, um, the teachers, uh told me that there was going to have a party at the school, and that if I could make some tamales, some tostadas, or bring some food. Well, I felt very offended. I mean, first of all, I

don't know how to make tortillas. I'm Indian, but I don't know how to make tortillas. I don't eat beans because they make me sick. I don't like chili. However, I told them I can help with teaching some, a few dances. If they don't want with the school kids, I can have my familia, so then, I helped in that way. And it was a very small town on the border.]

Angelbertha: It was San Ysidro. San Ysidro en ese tiempo no tenía banquetas, no tenía luz eléctrica. Había tres escuelas pero ninguna de las escuelas tenían a nadie quien hablaba español. [San Ysidro in that time didn't have sidewalks, didn't have electricity. There were three schools, but none of them had anybody that spoke Spanish.]

[00:42:58]

Angelbertha: Entonces cuando ya empecé yo a enseñarles danza, la otra de las otras escuelas me llamaron que si les enseñaba a los otros niños. Allí estaba la oficina de César Chávez en San Ysidro, y empeze a ver que pues, muchas gentes iban allí. Y pues yo, y estos que? Pues a buscar el trabajo para los files en fin. Pero a mi eso no me llamo la atención. Si no que, me llamo la atencion mas preguntarles por los hijos, en cual escuela estaban. Y ya iba yo y les— les hablaba bilingüe en una manera, pero al menos si les traducía lo que les costaba trabajo. Después, la—el Departamento de Seguridad de San Diego necesitaban quien les tradujieran para las vacunas, para las visitas de, de salud, y entonces iba yo. Pero siempre seguía yo insistiendoles con la danza, porque yo veía una forma en que ellos podían unirse y estar—no necesitaban hablar inglés, si no que llevar solamente el ritmo de— de la música de la danza. Y empezaron a— a bailar, a unirse, y a sentirse contentos y orgullosos de que ya no los hacían [pausa]— no les hacían el feo. Si no que si podían cooperar en algo. Entonces para ellos les decían, "Hablas ingles?" "No, pero danzo, yo danzo." [So when I began to teach them dance, the others from the

other schools called me to see if I could teach the other children. There was the office of Cesar Chavez of San Ysidro, and I began to see that, well, a lot of people went there. So I thought, and these people what? Well they were looking for work in the fields. But that didn't get my attention. No, what got my attention more was asking them about their children, what schools were they attending? Then I would go and ask them—ask them bilingually, in a way, but at least I would serve as translator in what was often difficult for them. After, the—the Department of Safety in San Diego needed someone to translate for vaccinations, for the visits of, of health, so I would go. But I would always insist to them about dance, because I saw I way in which they could be united—they didn't need to speak English, just have only the rhythm of—of the music of dance. And they began to—to dance, to get together, and feel happy and proud that they weren't—weren't looked down upon. But that they could build something. So they would ask them, "Do you speak English? No, but I dance, I dance."]

[00:44:57]

Angelbertha: "Que danzas?" Dice, "Danza de Chin, Chin, Chin." Le decían. "No, Danza Azteca." "Pero yo no soy Azteca maestra." "Mira, yo no soy maestra." "Si, usted nos enseña." "Bueno, esta bien. Que eres?" "Pues mi papa es huichol." "Bueno pues es danza, también tienen danzas." "Y usted la sabe?" "Si, unas poquitas." Y así empecé a enseñarles la-- el orgullo de poder identificarze en algo de movimiento y de la danza. Este, de allí me llamaron, de otro pueblo más adelante, el pueblo de Chula Vista. Para que pusiera unas danzas para lo de la Virgin de Guadalupe. Y entonces empezaron las Guadalupanas. Las señoras grandes en lugar de ser tamales, se pusieron y aprendieron una danza. Y dicen, "Que bonito esta eso. Yo tengo mucho que no...si me acuerdo cuando estaba chiquilla en mi pueblo bailaban. Pero nunca pensé bailar." Entonces ya le dedicaban tiempo a la danza, y a unirse, y ha aprender canciones, y la

disciplina. Después, ya los-- los señores, también los esposos, dicen, "pues que tanto hace la vieja aquí?" "Pues, bailan." "Di, ha apoco mi vieja anda bailando?" "Si." Ya empezaban—"O, eso bailaba mi pápa cuando yo estaba chiquito, nos enseña?" "Si." Y llegaban del fil, y a veces unos que llegaban, decían "maestra no tuve tiempo de ir a bañarme ni a cambiarme pero así de mugroso?" "Si! Andale!" y empezamos a bailar. ["What do you dance?" "The dance of the Cheen, Cheen, Cheen," they'd say. "No, Aztec dance." "But I am not an Aztec, teacher." "Look, I'm not a teacher!" "Yes, you teach us." "Well then. What are you?" "Well, my dad is a huichol." "Well then, that's dance, they dance too!" "And you know some?" "Yes, I know some." And that's how I began to teach them the pride of being able to identify themselves in the dance movement. Then, from there they called me from another town a bit farther, the town of Chula Vista, so I could teach them dances for the Virgin of Guadalupe. Then, began the Guadalupanas [a Catholic association of Mexican American and/or Mexican women formed to perform works of charity in local communities]. The older women instead of making tamales, learned to dance. And they said, "this is so beautiful. I remember went I was little they would dance in my town. But I never thought about dancing myself." So they now dedicated time to dance, and to unite, and learn songs and discipline. After, the—the older men, and the husbands, said well, "what is my wife up to here?" "Well, they're dancing." "Is my wife really dancing?" "Yes, go on!" and they said—"Oh, my father used to dance that when I was little. Can you teach us?" "Yes." And they would come from the fields, and sometimes some would come and say, "Teacher I didn't have time to shower or change, but dirty like this?" "Yes, go ahead," and we would begin to dance.]

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Angelbertha: Después, ya por dos años teníamos ya variedades de eventos para el Cuatro de Julio bailabamos, para el Dies de Mayo bailabamos, para el Doce de-de Diciembre baile danza, danza baile. Estábamos- después las mismas mamás empezaron hacer los trajes a los niños y de allí a San Diego. De San Diego, a Los Angeles, de Los Angeles a Sacramento. Aquí en Sacramento localmente, pues sin miedo equivocarme, casi la mayoría de los grupos danzantes que hay aquí empezarón conmigo. Muchos ahora, pues, ya no me conocen ya no saben quien soy. Y niegan el que haya empezaron conmigo, pero it's okay. Aprendieron y siguen haciendo. Uh nombres, bueno durante el folklórico, esta Nellie Bermudez, viuda de Patiño. Este yo tenía el grupo, um, en el que después ella siguió y lo agarró por cuenta de ella. María-María Miranda. Um, [pause] quien más? Pues ay, ay muchas personas aquí. Había un chamaco que el me decía mamá y toda la gente creía que si era su mamá. Su name era Chuy Órtiz. Este, hice yo una ceremonia para el Dia de Muertos, y escogí un grupo de muchachos, de los perditos, de los que hablaban. Ya con eso—y ya eso era una ceremonia de pueblo kikapú, en el cual se escogen el diablo, el ángel, la muerte, y el pecador. [Then, after about two years we had a variety of events for the Fourth of July, for the tenth of May we dance [Mother's Day celebrated in Mexico on May 10th], for the twelfth of—of December [Our Day of Virgen of Guadalupe] we danced, danced. We—after, the same mothers began to make the costumes for the children and from there to San Diego. From San Diego, to Los Angeles, from Los Angeles, to Sacramento. Here in Sacramento locally, well uh, without fear of making a mistake, the majority of dance groups that are here began with me. Many today, well, don't know me, don't know who I am. And they would never believe it began with me. But it's okay. They learned and continue on. Um, names, well during the folklorico, there was Nellie Bermudez, widower of Patiño. Well, I had a group, um, in which she continued and got it from her own account. María—María Miranda. Um, [pause] who else? Well, there,

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there are a lot of people here. There was a kid who would call me his mother and everybody believed that I was his mother. His name was Chuy Órtiz. Well, I made a ceremony for the Day of the Dead, and I chose a group of young men, of the perditos, the ones that would talk. And with this—with this was a ceremony in the town of Kikapu, in which they choose the devil, the angel, death, and the sinner.]

[00:49:07]

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Angelbertha: Y a Chuy lo escogí yo como pecador, el que andaba borrachito. Pero a él no le costo mucho trabajo porque ya andaba de borrachito. Entonces ah, hice esa ceremonia y gusto mucho. El que me hablo para que siguiera eso fue uno de los maestros antiguos de aquí. Ya paso a mejor vida, José Montoya. El me llamo y lo hicimos. Y despues, cada año. El José Montoya ya murio pero todavía esa ceremonia del Día de los Muertos sigue. Chuy, cuando uno de mis hijos ya no quiso seguir en la danza, el agarró el grupo, y pues, fue muy conocido aquí. Ayudó a muchos. También él anduvo aquí en City College. Bailabamos en Davis. Bueno, bueno ya llegue a un lugar muy, muy este, que yo veía en la, la universidad de Davis, a se formó el primer grupo folklorico bajo mi, bueno mi enseñanza. A, precisamente para movimiento Chicano. A, y ahí tenía yo treinta-y-cuatro estudiantes, hombres para bailar folklor. Tenía cuatro mujeres. Entonces los muchachos, algunos de ellos, um se vistieron de, de con trenzas y con faldas y empezaron a bailar. Y le preguntaron, "porque andan vestidos?" Dicen, "porque no hay mujeres. Y si nosotros vamos a ser maestros, tenemos que saber lo que vamos a enseñar." Dicen, "cómo vamos a bailar mover la falda!" [And I chose Chuy as the sinner, who was the drunk. But it wasn't too difficult for him to assume that role because he was already a drunk. So uh, I made the ceremony and it was a hit. Who called me to continue with that was one of the old teachers from here. He already

[00:51:08]

Angelbertha: Ese, ese grupo se llamó Aztlán Davis. Y se formó otro grupo que les dieron cinco um unidades. Es la única vez que se ha hecho eso. Era [pause], perdón esque ya son ochenta y tres años que me pesan mucho. Ah, historia, leyendas, danzas, costumbres y costumes de Mexico. Y el primer-- la primer persona que estaba allí como director de Chicano, su nombre es Jesús pero no recuerdo el apellido pero un señor alto, grandote, jovén del departamento de Chicanos. Y el maestro Rojas, que era el que hacía el tiempo necesario para que ellos aprendieran. Allí en Davis, fue la primera vez que la estola esa que usan ahora los Chicanos como, como sarape se hizo. Porque no, los muchachos que estaban eran pobres, no tenían para el *gown* ni para esto. Entonces yo con los sarapes que tenia del ballet folklórico, los hice tiritas y les hice sus estolas. Ahora ya, ya hasta los venden. Si e sabido les pongo mi marca y hago fábrica.

Pero, si este, hay muchas cosas que la danza ha llevado a. [That, that group was called Aztlán Davis. And another group was formed that was given, um, five units. It is the only time that has been done. It was [pause], sorry it's eighty-three years that weigh on me. Uh, history, legends, dances, customs and costumes of Mexico. And the first-- the first person that was there as the Chicano director, his name was Jesus but I don't remember his last name. But a tall man, big, young from the Chicano department. And the teacher, Rojas, made the time necessary for them to learn. There in Davis was the first time that the stole that is used today by Chicanos like, like a serape was made. Because the young men were poor, they didn't have enough for the gown. So with the *sarapes* [a cloak often brightly colored, striped, and fringed at the end] that I had from the ballet folklorico, I made strips and I made them into stoles. Today now, now they even sell them. If I would have known, I would have put my brand on them and made a factory. But, yes well, there's many things that the dance has given way to.]

[00:53:05]

Angelbertha: En, ah, D-QU University, un grupo de danza, ah, fue--- el grupo ese fue el más joven durante el movimiento mil novecientos sesenta y siete [1967]. No, no lo recuerdo pero si tengo los papeles. Este, nos escogieron y fuimos a la apertura del quinto festival de teatro Chicano y primer encuentro latinoamericano, a abrí la ceremonia del teatro en las pirámides de San Juan Teotihuacán. El que estaba en primer lugar era Luis Váldez y nosotros hicimos la-- la apertura. El no llevaba danza, llevaba sólo teatro. Pero nosotros llevamos danza, teatro, y lo hicimos en tres idiomas.: en inglés, en nahuatl, y en español. Después, para la, para la- el cierre, se hizo unas pyramides de tajín. Y también lo hicimos nosotros, con lo mismo, con danza. En la Ciudad de Mexico durante ese festival, ah, participamos en el teatro Jorge Negrete en el foro Isabelino en La Casa de Lago. And uh, en el teatro Comonfort, danza, teatro, canción. Entonces,

la danza siempre les ha llamado la atención a los jovenes. No solamente el boogie boogie, el Charlie Stone, oh el danzón, si no lo que es de ellos. Lo que es danza autóctona, danza indigena, uh como les quieran llamar. [In, uh, DQ-U University, a dance group, uh, went—the group was the youngest during the movement in nineteen-sixty-seven. No, I don't remember but I do have the papers. Well, they chose us and we went to the opening of the fifth festival of the Chicano theater and first Latin-American encounter, to the opening ceremony of the theater in the pyramids of San Juan Teotihuacán. First in line was Luis Váldez [playwriter, actor and founder of El Teatro Campesino] and we did the—the opening. He didn't take dance, only theater. But we performed dance, theater, and we did it in three languages: in English, Nahuatl, and Spanish. After, for the, for the—the closing, we did some pyramids of tajín. And also, we did it ourselves, with the same, with dance. In Mexico City during the festival, uh, we participated in the Jorge Negrete theater in the Foro Isabelino form in the Casa de Lago. And uh, in the theater Comonfort, dance, theater, song. Since then, dance has always called the youth's attention. Not only the boogie, boogie, the Charlie Stone, but also what is theirs. What is autonomous dance, indigenous dance, um, however you want to call it.]

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Angelbertha: Pero tienen la seguridad de que van a ensayar, que van aprender, y que van estar juntos con su familia, con sus hermanos, o como generalmente yo les digo, la danza es un círculo. Es un círculo, dice el círculo de danza. Pero es la creación. La creación no tiene principio ni tiene fin. Y existe la philosophia de los antiguos. Con las cuatro direcciones. Las cuatro direcciones cuales son? Dicen la cruz de las cuatro direcciones no es precisamente la cruz católica. Si no es norte, sur, oriente, poniente. Y sobre todo, son las cuatro direcciones y nosotros estamos en medio. En la-- lo que aprenden es que, el círculo, es una cosa que siempre va tener

unida. Y si lo ven así, pues si aquí si saben donde esta mi-- mi dedo y el otro, pero en un dibujo, no sabes donde empiezas y donde terminas. Bajas del norte hacia el sur, del este, al oeste, ese es la cruz. No estoy enseñando religión, si no, lo que es y lo que significa. Ah, que-- que cosas sale del oriente? Te pregunto a ti? [But they have the reassurance that they will be able to practice, that they will learn, and that they will be together with their family, with their brothers, or how I generally explain to them is that dance is a circle. It's a circle, they say the circle of dance. But it is the creation. The creation doesn't have a beginning or an end. And the philosophy of the ancients exists. In the four directions. What are the four directions? They say the cross of the four directions isn't necessarily the Catholic cross. Instead, it is the north, south, east, and west. And above all, they are the four directions and we are in the middle of them. In the—what they learn it that, the circle, is what will always unite. And if they see it like this, well yes you know where — where my finger is and the other one, but on a drawing, you don't know where it starts and where it ends. Lowering from the north to south, from the east to the west, that is the cross. I'm not teaching religion, but what it is and what it signifies. Uh, what—what things come out from the east? I'm asking you.] Nataly: Uh, um, me puede preguntar otra ves? [Uh, um, can you repeat the question again?] Angelbertha Cobb: Si, que cosas sale todo los días del oriente? [Yes, what things come out every day from the east?]

- Nataly: Uh, el sol? [Uh, the sun?]
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Angelbertha Cobb: El sol. Exactamente. Con el, viene la luz, viene vida, viene todo lo que nos hace seguir porque es fuego. El fuego lo tenemos dentro de nosotros. En el corazón siempre

- tenemos el fuego de la vida. Y a dónde se dirige el sol al atardecer? [The sun? Exactly. With
- 514 him, comes the light, comes life, comes everything that makes us move because it is fire. The
- fire we have inside of ourselves. In the heart we always carry the fire of our lives. And where
- does the sun go when it sets?]
- Nataly: Uh, al otro parte. [Uh, to the other part.]
- Angelbertha: Si, es el este. Pues el-- el este, pues el otro. Al oeste. Es el lugar, si este es el
- opposite, se este es fuego, que es aca? [Yes, from the east. Well, the—the east, well the other.
- The west. That place, if this is the opposite, if this is fire, what is over here?
- 521 Nataly: [Inaudible]
- 522 Angelbertha: No, fuego [No, fire].
- 523 Nataly: O, agua. [Oh, water].
- Angelbertha: Es el lugar del agua. Es donde se ve que se mete el sol. Sale por aca, y se mete en
- 525 San Francisco. Allí se mete en San Francisco. El este es el lugar de los guerreros, de los
- 526 hombres. El oeste es de las mujeres. Hacia el sur, es el lugar de los niños, es la tierra de donde
- venimos, y de donde vamos a terminar. Y el norte es el lugar de los ancianos. Por eso cuando
- 528 todos nos hacemos viejos, tenemos el cabello blanco. Porque es el norte, pero es el lugar del
- oxígeno, del aire. Dicen, ya cuando esta uno viejito, dicen-- No le hagan caso esta hairada osea
- esta un poquita safada verdad? Pero son las cuatro direcciones y los cuatro elementos. Y es el
- movimiento que nosotros hacemos con la danza. Nosotros estamos en el centro de esas cuatro
- direcciones, y somos el centro del universo, con nuestra cultura, con nuestra enseñanzas, y con
- nuestra educación. [It is the place of water. It's where the sun sets. It rises here, and it sets in San
- Francisco. It sets in San Francisco. The east is the place of the warriors, of men. The west is of

the women. Towards the south is the place of the children, the land where we come from, and where we will end up. And the north is the place of the elderly. That's why when everyone becomes old, we get white hair. Because it is the north, but it is the place of oxygen, of air. They say, when one is old, they say—don't pay attention to her, she is "airy" that is she is a little out of it, right? Those are the four directions and the four elements. And with our dance we make movement. We are in the center of the four directions, and we are the center of the universe, with our culture, with our teachings, and with our education.]

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Angelbertha: Y sobre todo, con [And above all, with] be proud of what you are. You're not can dance, sing. You're not can sing, play. You can play the--the drums, the flutes, um, the sonajas como dicen [rattles as they say]. Pero al mismo tiempo, es una manera de estar conjunto en todo las cosas, fases de tu vida. Se le hace una ceremonia a los niños en primavera, porque en primavera todo renace. Las flores vuelven a venir, las hojas. En fin, y es los niños. Los niños vienen a esta vida. Y nacen. [But at the same time, it's a way to be together in everything, phases of your live. A ceremony is done for the children in spring, because in spring everything is reborn. The flowers come again, the leaves. In conclusion, and it's the children. The children come to this life. And they are born.]

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Angelbertha: A los jovenes se les hacen otra ceremonia. Cuando dejan de ser niños y van hacer *teenagers* cuando son que dicen "Yo lo se todo." Verdad? Se les enseña que el peor enemigo que ellos pueden tener son ellos mismos. Entonces esas ceremonios se les llaman juagares y esa ceremonia la establecio Chuy el maestro Órtiz. Dice que para traer el *ximalli* el *ximalli* [escudo],

es para defenderse de lo que pueden atacarlen los demás y ellos cubrirse solos. Ser Fuertes, pero para sobrevivir su propia vida y no por que traigan esto van ha ir a la guerra, no! Es para defenderse ellos. [The youth have their own ceremony. When they stop becoming children and become teenagers and they say, "I know everything!" Right? We teach them that their own worst enemy that they can have is themselves. So that ceremony is called jaguars and it was established by Chuy, Mr. Órtiz. They say that *ximalli* or *ximalli* is so that they could defend themselves for when they are attacked by others and that they could protect themselves. So they could be strong, survive in life and just because they carry it doesn't mean they're going to war, no! It's so they can defend themselves.]

[1:01:15]

Angelbertha: Se hace ceremonia a las jovencitas. Cuando también dicen, "Ah, yo no tengo que hacer lo que dice mi mamá. Yo no. Yo puedo tener novio, yo puedo hacer, yo, no, ha, ha..." Es es xilonen, xilonen quiere decir la diosa, bueno no es diosa es el símbolo del maíz porque el maíz como alimento [pause] es parte de nosotros y la mujer se cumbierte en maíz en fruto da maternidad y sigue en su *role* de mujer. [There is a ceremony for young ladies. When they also say, "Ah, I don't have to do what my mom says. No way! I can have a boyfriend, I can do what I want, blah, blah, blah..." That is xilonen, xilonen means goddess, well not goddess per se but symbol of corn because she is corn like nutrition [pauses]. She is part of us and the young woman becoms corn like fruit, she gives maternity and continues her role of being a woman.]

Angelbertha: Y nosotros, en el norte, los ancianos pues ya nos dicen los loquitos, ya nos dicen muchas cosas pero nosotros temenos aquella serenidad que ya pasamos todo el camino lo que todos van ha pasar, ya llegamos arriba. Ya nos llega la nieve en la cabeza. [And us, in the north,

the elderly well they call us crazy, they call us a lot of things, but we have with in us a serenity 579 because we have walked those pathways that they are about to pass, we have reached the top. 580 The snow now falls on our heads.] 581 Angelbertha: Entonces la danza en la cualquier manera es mucho muy importante y lo seria 582 imposible acordarme yo de cuantos y cuantos este estudiantes he tenido pero hay familias vamos 583 a decir como la señora Calderón que tiene ya tres generaciones bailando. María Miranda también 584 ya tiene tres generaciones bailando. Em, pues, la danza es una parte muy importante en la vida de 585 todos nosotros. No importa de donde vengas. Cada paíz tiene danza. No bailamos de puntitas. No 586 bailamos con castañuelas, pero cada paíz tiene esa parte muy importante—la danza. Um, si 587 588 puedo hacer un relato ya con más calma [inaudible] así del principio con acordarme de los nombres porque de allí de Davis tenía 34 estudiantes y la mayoría de ellos siguieron en la danza. 589 Desde que...pues no se que más? [So dance is very important and it would be impossible for me 590 to remember the number of students I have had, but there have been families like señora 591 Calderón who has had three generations of dancers. Well, dance is an important part of our lives. 592 It doesn't matter where you come from. Every country has dance. We don't dance on our 593 tippytoes. We don't dance with castanets, but every country has that very important element— 594 dance. If I can recall with more calm [inaudible] from the beginning and remember the names 595 596 because there in Davis I had 34 students whom the majority continued dancing. Well....I don't know what else...?] 597 Nataly: Aparte de danza hacienda halgo positive para el movimiento usted piensa que las 598 problemas...ya se re--resolvaron...[Apart from dance what other positive movement do you 599

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think problems...or were resolved...]

Angelbertha: Resolvieron? [Resolved?]

Nataly: Si. Oh, todavía siguen las problemas? [Or do you think the problems still continue?]

[1:04:14]

Angelbertha: El problema existe y existirá toda la vida. Porque uno a uno vamos teniendo más problemas. Tengo periódicos en que el movimiento para la inmigración, para la educación, para esto, trata de muchos presidents atras. Sin embargo con la danza a mi me toco bailar en la casa blanca junto con mi grupo para el Presidente Jimmy Carter. Así si eso no es importante y no es llegar a una meta si no pienso llegar a bailar ha Obama porque haorita hay mucha cosa, pero si queremos si vamos y bailamos enbes de hechar piedras. [The problem exists or will exist all for a lifetime. Because one by one we will have more problems. I have newspapers that deal with the immigration movement, education, with this and with many past presidents. However, dance allowed me to go dance at the White House with my group for President Jimmy Carter. Now if that is not important and it's not accomplishing a goal. Now I don't think I'll be able to dance for Obama because right now there's a lot going on, but if it's possible we will instead of throwing stones.]

Senon: We're at a good place. [talking amongst interviewers to end interview.]

Nataly: Cuales son las últimas ideas que me quiere decir o hablar del movimiento? [What are the last ideas you'd like to share or talk about the movement?]

Angelbertha: Pues lo único que te puedo decir es decirtelo en mi propio ídioma, es una, pues un decir. Si me permirtes te lo voy a decir en Nahuatl y luego te lo voy a traducir [speaks in Nahuatl]. Quiere decir, "Somos hijos de la misma tierra. Vivimos bajo el mismo sol. Somos

seres humanos. Que temenos alma y pensamiento. Si estamos unidos, todo lo lograremos. Así
sera. Así Sera." Es todo lo que puedo decirte. Se tiene que hacer, porque si seguimos unidos,
estamos aquí. Seguimos con lo mismo. No hay que dejarnos vencer de ninguna manera. [Well,
the only thing I'd like to say is say it to you in my own language, it's an idiom. If you allow me l
will say it Nahuatl and then translate it. It means, "We are children of the same earth. We live
under the same sun. We are human beings. We have a soul and thoughts. If we are united, we
can accomplish anything. That's what it will be. That's what it will be." That is all I want to say.
It has to happen because if we continue united, we are present. We will continue with the same
path. We cannot let them conquer us in any shape, way or form.]
Nataly: Muchas gracias por su tiempo. [Thank you so much for your time.]
Senon: Muy Bien. [Very well.]

634 END OF TRANSCRIPT

1:06:53