

## **Interview with Carmen Molina Rodriguez**

**April 18, 2011**

**Conducted in the Rodriguez home, Kinsley, Kansas**

**Interviewers: Joan Weaver and Rosetta Graff, Kinsley Library**

Joan: Carmen, can you tell us what your full name is, with your maiden name?

Carmen: My maiden name was Carmen Rustica Molina.

Joan: When and where were you born?

Carmen: I was born in Offerle, Kansas, on February 17, 1930.

Joan: What were the names of your parents?

Carmen: My parents were Joe and Alberta Molina.

Joan: And what was Alberta's maiden name?

Carmen: Her maiden name was Sapien.

Joan: And your grandparents, what were their names?

Carmen: Joe and Isabelle Gonzalez.

Joan: Do you know Isabelle's maiden name?

Carmen: Perez.

Joan: And the other set of grandparents?

Carmen: I don't know them.

Joan: Did you have any brothers or sisters?

Carmen: Yes, I did. I had three brothers and four sisters.

Joan: Do you want to tell us their names? Just their first names.

Carmen: Tony and Jesse and Frank and my sisters would be, Jane, Soleda, Mary Frances, Clara and myself.

Joan: Were you in the middle?

Carmen: Yes. Actually, my sister's name, I guess you might say the Spanish version would be Soledad.

Joan: Do you know what brought your grandparents or your parents...who were the first ones that came to Edwards County. What brought them here?

Carmen: Well, I really don't know what brought them to Edwards County. All I know is that my father

was working for the Santa Fe Railroad. At that time, we were living in Belpre, and I was going to school up to the 5<sup>th</sup> grade in Belpre. From Belpre, we made the move to Kinsley, and we lived in the Santa Fe houses for a while, and then we moved to town at 304 N. Colony.

Joan: So you were initially living in Belpre, Kansas.

Carmen: Yes.

Joan: And you were in the...Frank Castenada calls them the "Santa Fe Hilton"?

Carmen: Well, you might call it something other than Santa Fe Houses.

Joan: What were those like?

Carmen: Well, they were cement homes, and according to the size of family you had, you either had two rooms or three rooms. The two rooms would be the bedrooms, a combination bedrooms and a living room area, and there would be a kitchen. And you were allotted two to three rooms, depending on the size of family you had. That's what I remember.

Joan: And one room was the kitchen?

Carmen: One room was the kitchen.

Joan: So the family had to do all their living in the other one or two rooms.

Carmen: Yes, and the biggest room was the combination of a bedroom and living room area.

Joan: Was the dining table in the kitchen or in the living room?

Carmen: In the kitchen.

Joan: And when you were living in, well you said you were in the middle, when you were in Belpre, were there eight children?

Carmen: Yes.

Joan: Were all eight of you living there, or how many were living in Belpre when you were there?

Carmen: When we were living in Belpre? Well, the biggest room held two beds, and then there was the kitchen and there's also another bedroom. But the living room area was enough to where you had to make do with a little living area and if you were lucky you had a couch that doubled as a bed which generally was what we had, a couch that doubled as a bed. You know, you could pull out the bed.

Joan: Was your youngest sister also in Belpre? Were you all living in that house?

Carmen: Well, at that time, there was just part of us. We weren't all born when we were living in Belpre.

Joan: Well, that helps.

Carmen: But I remember that my oldest brother and my sisters, we went to school there in Belpre. The youngest one was born afterwards. And the youngest girl was born afterwards. But in Belpre just the oldest was living at that time.

Joan: The cement building was several units all connected?

Carmen: Yes, there was a full...

Joan: Like a motel?

Carmen: Yes, like a motel. And it was a long building, and it would house up to three to four families, that's how long they were. Each one was allotted so many rooms according to the size of family you had. And if there was just two of you, you just had two rooms, a kitchen and a bedroom. And that was just the size of it. And the kitchen when there were just two people, like my grandparents, they kind of made a living area out of the kitchen, as well as the kitchen too. They had a little table and maybe a small couch or whatever, that they could call a living area.

Joan: So your grandparents were there at the same time?

Carmen: They lived in Belpre about the same time we were living there.

Joan: Do you remember who else was living there, who the other families were?

Carmen: I remember the Trujillo family, they were living there. And there was another...he was a bachelor; I don't remember his name. (*His name was Leonardo.*)

Joan: You father worked on the railroad, was he home every night? Or was he sometimes gone?

Carmen: No, he worked and he was home every night. I remember that time. I was growing up in the Dirty Thirties.

Joan: You can tell us about that too!

Carmen: But no, my father came home every night for dinner.

Joan: Was that house pretty tight for the Dirty Thirties? Or did the dust blow through it like it did everywhere else?

Carmen: Well, my mother was very ingenious about wetting bed sheets and putting them up against the windows to catch the dust. Otherwise, you could just open your mouth and you could breathe in all the dust. But she always kept...we helped her keep a wet sheet on the window to keep the dust from really blowing in the house. Yes, that helped a lot, because by the time we took the sheets down, they were literally black with dust. Other than that, we all did our share of keeping the wet sheet up against the window to keep the dust from really blowing in all over the house. Otherwise, it would have been pretty bad.

Joan: Do you remember the clouds coming in and everything?

Carmen: I remember that you could open the door and you could hardly see outside. The dust was so

heavy and fine that you could look out and all you could see was just dust. Maybe you had a glimpse of a building or something like that, but other than that, it was just to where you could hardly see. That's how dusty it was. Anyway, I remember that, being so dirty going outside that you could hardly see, and the minute you went out, you felt like you had dust in your eyes and you were breathing it in. So as little as possible, we just stayed inside.

Joan: I guess I should have asked, but I think I know the answer. Your bathroom facilities at this time, was that an outhouse?

Carmen: It was an outhouse, and you had to walk, not very far, but far enough.

Joan: And it was a community outhouse for the whole unit? Or did you have your own?

Carmen: No, it was a community outhouse. It had two, connected. It was two outhouses, but they were connected together. And you had to walk to go use them.

Joan: But you had water in the house?

Carmen: Well, we had what you call an outside pump. You had to prime it to get water, and then you had to get the water in buckets and bring it inside the house.

Joan: Okay, how about electricity? Did you have that?

Carmen: There was no electricity.

Joan: No electricity either!

Carmen: When I was growing up, all it was was a kerosene lamp. You know, what we call "hurricane lamps" now, that's what it was. It was our only way of light. You had to make sure that you had plenty of kerosene and each room had maybe one or two lamps to light up the area. It was kerosene. There was no electricity whatsoever at that time.

Joan: Was all of Belpre that way? Did no one have electricity?

Carmen: We didn't have electricity.

Joan: Nobody in Belpre did?

Carmen: The town had it, but the Santa Fe houses did not. But yes, the town did have electricity, but we didn't.

Joan: Where was it located in Belpre?

Carmen: Oh dear. I really can't tell you the location. I remember the town was on one side, right across the railroad tracks. It was in an area all its own.

Joan: But it was south of the railroad tracks? The town would have been north?

Rosetta: Belpre, most of it, is on the south side.

Joan: So you would have been on the north side.

Carmen: So we were on this side of the track, and the town was on that side. In order to go to school, we had to walk along the railroad tract and then cross a big area, you know, to get to the sidewalk, and then go to school from there. It was like a field. You had to walk across a field.

Joan: So, you were east of where the elevators are now?

Carmen: I don't even know where the elevators are in Belpre right now, to be honest with you.

Rosetta: I don't know Belpre at all. I just know most of the town is on the south side, and the school is on the south side. The Co-op Elevator is like right here (*gesturing*) and the main highway that went to Larned, was beside it. Were you close to that highway?

Carmen: Well, you had to drive a ways because there was like a, you might call it a country road, coming into the Santa Fe houses. You had to drive out there.

Rosetta: So it would have been west.

Carmen: Yes, because the main road going to Larned was between the two cemeteries, at that time.

Joan: At that time, so they put in a different road.

Carmen: But the other one was, you know where you can just drive on through it.

Joan: So sort of northwest of town.

Rosetta: Well actually, I've never been to the cemeteries at Belpre, and I need to do that.

Joan: I thought we did that one day.

Rosetta: Belpre? I didn't think so, we went to Fellsburg.

Joan: We didn't stop, but didn't we drive out? We found it, I thought. Well, let's see.

Rosetta: You were born in Offerle.

Carmen: I was born in Offerle, yes.

Rosetta: Your mother just went there to be with your father?

Carmen: They were working there at that time. And that's where I was born, but from there they made the move to Belpre, and then from Belpre they made the move to Kinsley.

Joan: Were you born at home?

Carmen: At that time, you were born at home.

Rosetta: So were a lot of the people we've interviewed.

Carmen: We moved to Kinsley in November of 1940. And then from the Santa Fe houses, we lived there maybe a couple of years or so, and then from there we moved to town.

Joan: Were the Santa Fe houses in Kinsley just about the same floor plan as Belpre?

Carmen: Yes, exactly. You could also get electricity because there was one family that had electricity, you know, piped into the house. Oh we didn't, you know, because my father said, "I don't intend to stay here very long, but I want to see if we can get a home." You know, in town, so we could get out of the Santa Fe houses.

Joan: Did you have a garden in Belpre? Do you remember?

Carmen: No, there wasn't much of a place you could really grow a garden. You could, if you really wanted to, but in Belpre we did. In Belpre there was a garden, there was enough ground behind the section houses that you could grow a garden. My grandfather across the tracks, had a garden. He had a green thumb for vegetables. He grew tomatoes and carrots and radishes, potatoes and peppers. He had a real nice garden, but of course he also put in a hand pump for water, and he was able to water his garden that way. But yes, my father had a garden behind the house. Back there, there was enough ground, behind the section houses that you could have a garden, which he did. He raised peppers also and carrots and potatoes.

Joan: Now Frank Castaneda, I think his father had a cow even.

Carmen: My father did too. He had a bull, and oh that bull. He was so huge; he was scary. And we had two Jersey cows.

Joan: He kept the bull to breed to the cows?

Carmen: I really don't know, all I know is that we had a bull and we had two cows. My brother used to take the cows to pasture. We had a farmer neighbor that told my dad he could take his cows to graze on his pasture land, which we did. My brother would take the cows over to graze on his land, and my mother made cottage cheese, and she made white cheese, and we had milk, of course. But at that time we only had a refrigerator that took ice. And of course, there was a place there in Belpre that did sell ice, so we had ice in our refrigerator. But at times, the milk would be kept inside the window, in between the window and the screen, to keep it cold, particularly in the winter.

Joan: Your brothers did the milking?

Carmen: My father did the milking. They took the cows out to pasture, but my father did the milking.

Joan: Did your family consume all the milk? Or did you sell any of the cream?

Carmen: Well, my mother would make cheese, white cheese, which she did sell. People would come by and want to buy some cheese, and she did make it. As far as the cream goes, I think she found different ways to use the cream, in baking and stuff like that. But as far as selling it, no. The milk itself, I think we just had what was needed for us, but as far as the cheese, that she would sell because she had quite a few people asking if she would make them cheese. But I don't know what you would call it in English. But it was a white cheese.

Joan: Okay, what do you call it in Spanish?

Carmen: I wouldn't know what they called it in Spanish either, to be honest with you.

Rosetta: It's a white cheese.

Joan: Part of the cream was used for butter, she probably did too.

Carmen: Oh yes.

Joan: Did you have chickens?

Carmen: Yes, we raised chickens. My parents and my grandparents, my grandpa and my dad raised chickens and they had pigs. So we didn't have any want for groceries because we had the milk from the cows, meat from the pigs, and chicken and eggs. So at that time, before we even found out that pinto beans were protein, he would buy the pinto beans by the big sack. And of course my mom and grandmother each would cook whatever they needed for themselves. And we had potatoes, we planted potatoes, and they learned how to keep them. During the wintertime, as far as wintertime goes, we had potatoes all the time.

Joan: Did you have a root cellar?

Carmen: No, I think they had one way. They would dig a hole, and then they would put the potatoes in a sack and all the earth would cover the potatoes, but they knew where to go dig whenever they needed them. But I remember that very well. You know they were told, I think it was some farmer who told my dad at that time, I don't know who the man was, but he told him, "Joe, if you want to have potatoes as long as you can have them, dig a hole, put in potatoes in a gunny sack and cover them up with earth. Just put the dirt right back on it.

Joan: And you get it down below the freezing line, where it stays a constant temperature.

Carmen: He would, also my dad and my grandfather, he would give them hay to put over the sack, like a cradle, to cradle them in hay. And then they would put the bags inside of that hay and then cover them up with hay and cover them up with earth. So we would have potatoes for a long time.

Joan: Did you eat what I would consider Mexican food? Did she make tortillas and that sort of thing?

Carmen: Oh yes, they made tortillas. My dad would buy flour by the 50 pound bag. She would make tortillas like we also ate bread. But tortillas went a lot further than the bread. When you have that many kids...

Joan: I hadn't thought of that, but that would be true.

Carmen: They went a lot farther, because every day, the tortillas would be nice and warm. She would make a big stack to feed everybody, and then when there was some left over, my dad would take it to work in his lunch. Yes, she made tortillas. But corn tortillas, just forget it. I never did care too much for corn tortillas, but flour tortillas, yes. She would make them by hand, and roll them out. My sisters at that time would help roll them out too, and they'd help cook them. The only cooking stove we had would be a wood stove. You had to have enough wood on hand all the time, of course there were ties that were worn out. The Santa Fe was always replacing ties for the old ones, and the old ones would be used for wood. As far as heat goes, it was either coal (more than anything else) that we burned.

Joan: And it was hauled on the Santa Fe too. Your family was pretty well off during the Depression and the Dirty Thirties because your dad had a job and you had all the food. You even sort of had free fuel.

Carmen: Santa Fe supplied a lot of that stuff which was good because we weren't paid that whippy, at that time. I can remember when I first went to work, I got paid 25 cents an hour I thought I had a lot of money! I mean, to them, I think it was more or less like amenities, working for the Santa Fe. The ties were old and almost rotted. They were chopped up and used for a wood stove, that's the only way we could get anything done with the cooking. It made sure you had enough wood to heat up the stove with.

Joan: There were so many men during that time who didn't have a job. You were...

Carmen: My dad was pretty fortunate. He worked for the Santa Fe for so many years. And he just did the best he could.

Joan: Was there a station foreman? Was he Hispanic?

Carmen: Yes, they had a foreman. He was Hispanic also.

Joan: Do you remember his name?

Carmen: I think he was Joe Guillen. Or Jose Guillen, you know Joe is the same thing. But his name was Guillen.

Joan: Did he live in the same unit you had, or did he have a separate one?

Carmen: No, he had a separate house. There was a small field that you had to cross, and his house was set on that field. I remember my brothers and sisters and his family and all the younger kids, you know, they would get together and play baseball in this open field. That was our recreation during the summer, playing baseball. Everybody enjoyed it. But yes, they had a foreman at that time.

Joan: So what was school like for you to go to school there? Was your family speaking English?

Carmen: Let me put it this way. I do not remember not knowing how to speak English. When I went to school, I was always speaking English. I've been asked many times, "Did you have a hard time learning English?" But to be honest with you, I don't remember not knowing how not to speak English.

Joan: So your parents spoke English in the home?

Carmen: No, my parents spoke Spanish. But at that time in Belpre, there was a priest, and of course at the time most of the Spanish families who lived there, you know, they would go and talk to him and he would have to have an interpreter. My dad made up his mind one time that he was going to learn how to speak English. He said, "I came to this country to live, I need to learn how to speak English." So he met this priest and he told him, "Joe, you teach me how to speak Spanish, and I'll teach you how to speak English." He said, "You teach me how to speak Spanish, if your wife can help you teach me and help you learn how to speak Spanish, I'll teach you how to speak English." That's how my father picked up his English.

Joan: Do you know that priest's name?

Carmen: No, I don't remember his name. But I remember my dad saying that he had a real embarrassing moment one time. He went to the grocery store to buy some eggs. He couldn't come out and say the word, "Egg." It kept coming out, "Leg." He kept telling the lady at the store that he wanted some legs. And she looked at him, and she said, "Joe." (He could understand English a little bit, being



around it all the time, but he couldn't speak it.) And he said, "No, I want legs!" And she kept saying, "Joe, I don't have no legs." And he said, "Weet a minute, weet a minute." All he could say was, "Weet a minute." He went looking around the grocery store and found the eggs. He came back and he showed the lady. He said, "Legs!" And he said it was embarrassing, because I kept saying, "Leg." And she kept saying, "No legs. No legs," until he went and got an egg and showed her. Then she said, "You mean eggs!" And he said, "From then on, I made up my mind that I was going to learn the English Language." It took him a while, but he learned enough to get by. The more he spoke it the better he got.

Joan: And your older brothers were probably speaking English because of school?

Carmen: Yes, my oldest...my sisters, they were always speaking English. So maybe that's where I learned it because like I said, I don't remember not knowing how not to speak the English language. When I went to school, I could always speak English.

Joan: So you were bilingual at six years old. That's a nice thing to be. That was a gift!

Carmen: I don't know. My kids keep telling me they wish they were bi-lingual.

Joan: Yes!

Carmen: They're not bi-lingual. None of my kids speak Spanish.

Joan: Did you have a good experience at school at Belpre?

Carmen: Well, yes. I remember one of my teachers was a Miss (*Myrtle*) Rankin when I first started to school. I guess I was too young when I went to school. She told my parents, "She is just too playful. She's too young. She needs to have another year." So I was held back a year when I first started, because I was too young and too playful. She said, "She's doing okay here, but she needs to be a little more mature." And so I was kept, but it didn't hurt me. I do remember her name was Miss Rankin.

Joan: About how many kids were in your class at Belpre?

Carmen: Well, I think we had maybe two grades in one. One room held two grades, if I remember correctly. One would be maybe first and second grade because there was no kindergarten at that time. It was either first grade or second, but I think in my room was first grade and second grade both. Because grade school and high school were all in one building. But I do remember that each room I think had two grades.

Joan: Were there maybe what, 10 or 15 kids?

Carmen: Well, it was enough that the room was pretty well filled. So it must have been half and half. I don't remember how many, but the room was divided in half. One half would be first grade, and the other half would be second grade.

Joan: Did you go home for lunch or did you take your lunch?

Carmen: Well, we took lunch, rather than having to walk that long distance back home. My mother would make us maybe a sandwich of some kind to take to school for lunch. And then maybe we would come home. Otherwise, we would have to walk the distance going home and then going back. At that time, they gave you, I think it was an hour, to go home and to go back. I mean, particularly us, where

we lived on one side of town, and school was on the other side of town. So it took a while to go back and forth, so yes. I took my lunch.

Joan: Did you notice any prejudice at that time?

Carmen: Not in Belpre. Everybody was real friendly in Belpre. It was a very nice, thriving community.

Joan: What was there in Belpre?

Carmen: Well, at that time we had a grocery store. I think it was Land's Grocery (*E. O. and Mamie*) I remember we had that. We had a real nice library that everybody went to. During the summertime, the town was built around the square (which was like a park area) there would be the bazaars going on in the summertime. There would be free movies in the summertime that were shown outside. But it was a real nice thriving community. I remember Belpre as a real nice, thriving community.

Joan: Was there a drugstore?

Carmen: I don't remember a drug store there, no, but I do remember they had a grocery store and I think there was a clothing store at one time and a library.

Joan: Was there a lumberyard?

Carmen: I don't remember a lumberyard to be honest with you. If there was, I don't remember it. But I do remember there was a grocery store and I think there was something like a clothing store or maybe a combination of both, and the library. But the community was lively. There was always something going on in the summertime. And every year at the end of the school year, it ended with a whole family picnic, school and all. Every family would take a covered dish of some kind, and somebody would be drumming up homemade ice cream. There was ice cream galore for everybody to enjoy. But the last day of school was a big picnic and everybody enjoyed it. They all took covered dishes, so there was always plenty to eat. Everybody looked forward to the last day of school, a family picnic. It was just a humongous event. It always came out just real good.

Rosetta: Was that a Catholic or a public school?

Carmen: Public. The last day of school was a big family and school picnic because the families were all involved with their kids. They made homemade ice cream, there was always plenty to eat. Every family pitched in and took something, and they would tell us at school what to take, and we always took it. My parents made sure we had whatever we were supposed to take. So we would spend the whole day at school. We ate and whatever and just had a nice time. I don't remember the games very well, but I do remember there was something going on. There were activities going on at that time.

Joan: Races and things like that?

Carmen: Besides the picnic, yes. It was a big event.

Joan: Were there other events in Belpre? Like the 4<sup>th</sup> of July or anything else?

Carmen: I don't remember that, but I do remember that every summer there was some kind of a bazaar, regardless of who put it on, whether it was the Catholic Church or all the other churches together. It was the bazaar that I remember going to. It was exciting. When you're young, you just enjoy it. I

remember the free movies that they would show, outside movies. Everybody went to them.

Joan: Where did they show the movies?

Carmen: They showed them in this area.

Joan: In the baseball area?

Carmen: No, it was...

Joan: In the park or square?

Carmen: Yes, it was built around a square. It was in that square.

Joan: And you brought your blankets?

Carmen: Yes, and you sat down on them and watched the movie and just enjoyed the evening. It was always on a Saturday night or a Friday night. You would enjoy a movie and everybody would come around and enjoy the movie.

Joan: Did you have to pay for the movie?

Carmen: I don't remember ever having to pay for the movie.

Joan: They were provided by...

Carmen: They were provided by the community itself. They would never charge us, but you know, we just enjoyed them.

Joan: Did you take your food? Did you take your popcorn with you?

Carmen: Oh no, no. Popcorn wasn't even...we didn't even think about popcorn as long as we were going to go see a movie.

Joan: And you were at Belpre until what grade?

Carmen: Let's see, we moved when I was in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade. I finished up the 5<sup>th</sup> grade here in Kinsley.

Joan: Is there anything else you'd like us to know about Belpre? Was there a doctor in Belpre?

Carmen: Oh, no, I don't remember if there was. There probably was a doctor at that time, but I don't remember.

Joan: Rosetta, is there anything else you'd like to know about Belpre?

Rosetta: She's the first person to talk about going to the library! Nobody else talked about going to the library.

Joan: Well, thirty years from now, they're going to talk about going to the library.

Rosetta: Not that I can think of.

Joan: Well, we're very appreciative of your very good description of the housing and stuff. We've been trying to sort of get a picture of what the Santa Fe housing was like. So, in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade you moved over here to Kinsley, and for two years you lived in the Santa Fe housing. But you didn't put in electricity because your dad didn't want to spend the money, which was probably wise. You were used to not having it.

Carmen: You know, the Santa Fe probably could have put it in for us, but he said, "We're not going to stay here very long. I want to move to town." And that's when we moved to the house he bought on 304 North Colony.

Joan: And the housing here in Kinsley was about the same size as the one in Belpre?

Carmen: Yes, in the Santa Fe houses? Yes, they were identical. And yes, they had an outhouse as well. You had to walk to it, and it was a community one. Only at that time, there were two Santa Fe Section houses. One was like a motel on one side, and another one on the other side.

Joan: Was the railroad track between them? Or was it the road?

Carmen: It was across from each other. It was like from here to next door, there would be an open area and then another Santa Fe house over there. Each Santa Fe housing would have its own outhouse. The people that lived on that side of the Santa Fe houses would have their own outhouse, which was a double; they were all double.

Joan: Were they double with separate sections, or just double?

Carmen: No, they were doubled so that there was enough outhouses for everybody, so you wouldn't have to stand around just to use one. There were double outhouses on this side and double outhouses on that side.

Rosetta: About how many people lived in the Santa Fe houses?

Carmen: Well, when we first moved to Kinsley, there was us, and there again, we had three rooms, and the biggest room had its own entrance and you had to come outside to go into the kitchen, which was connected to the extra bedroom, and you had to come outside. Of course it was cold, but still you had to come out to come into the kitchen where it was warm because by that time the pot-bellied stove had already burned itself out and it was cold. By gosh, you'd better get dressed real quick like and go into the kitchen so you could have breakfast before you went to school.

Joan: Did you have water over here in the house? Or was it still a pump?

Carmen: It was a still a pump, and you had to pump water from it and carry it in. I remember that, it was still a pump and you had to pump water and carry it in buckets.

Joan: And so there would be about twice as many people working here as there had been in Belpre because you had two units.

Carmen: Right you had two units. There was, if I remember, there was one, two, I think in our unit. At that time, I think, there were just two families living at that time in our unit. We lived in one end, and the other family in the other end. And in the other unit, there was one family living in one end of the unit and there was another living in the middle, and I think there was another one living in the other end

of the unit. But so many rooms were all alike, you know.

Joan: And again, there was a foreman, and he had his own house. Was he Hispanic or white?

Carmen: Hispanic. I don't remember his first name, but I do remember his last name was Perez, at that time. Then later on, he left and then there was another foreman. He didn't even live on the Santa Fe section; he lived in town. He had his own place in town. And his name was Cecil Lemuz. He was Hispanic also.

Rosetta: Was Mr. (*Pete*) Amaro?

Carmen: Mr. Amaro...we both lived in the same unit, but he lived in one end and we lived in the other end.

Joan: Then where did you buy your house?

Carmen: 304 N. Colony..

Joan: You were on Colony.

Rosetta: And it's still standing!

Carmen: It's still standing, nobody lives in it, but it's still standing.

Joan: Could you buy anywhere in Kinsley? Do you know?

Carmen: Yes, we could buy anywhere in Kinsley, but that was the house my dad fell in love with, so we got it and he had an addition put in because we did have a restroom in the house. It had an outhouse at that time, and he said, "We're not moving until there in a restroom inside the house!" So there was an addition built to the house which housed the bathroom and housed the utility area where we had a washer and a dryer put in.

Joan: Now did you have electricity in the Santa Fe houses?

Carmen: No, we didn't, but Pete Amaro's family had it.

Joan: That's right, and then when you got your house then you had it.

Carmen: We had it; there was electricity already in it.

Joan: And you got the water in it.

Carmen: And there was heat in it We didn't have to worry about it.

Joan: Now we're talking the early 1940's, right? Before the war still? You were born in '30, and here you were 6<sup>th</sup> grade. That would be '42. So this is during the war, maybe.

Carmen: I remember being in school, I was in junior high. I remember when the announcement came across the intercom that Japan had bombed Pearl Harbor and at that time the United States had declared war on Japan. I remember being in school, in junior high, probably in 7<sup>th</sup> grade at least, more or less by 7<sup>th</sup> grade.

Joan: Probably the Monday after.

Carmen: I remember it coming over the intercom. Mr. Wood was superintendent of the school at that time. We had junior high and high school all in one building here in Kinsley. I remember having two schools: Southside School and Northside School.

Joan: And you went to?

Carmen: Northside because it was right on where we lived there just a few blocks up the street. Oh, I remember a lot of things about here in Kinsley when I was younger.

Joan: Tell us about them!

Carmen: Well, I remember that there used to be a Mammal store (*123 E. Sixth St.*); there used to be an IGA store (*218 E. Sixth St.*); there used to be a Safeway (*101 E. Sixth*) and Hearn's Jack and Jill (*422 S. Colony*). It was a thriving community.

Joan: Very much so.

Carmen: I remember when Earl Ehler had his business (*200 E. Sixth St.*). He sold clothing for both men and women. One side was men's clothing and the other side was women's clothing. I bought my clothes there at Earl Ehlers'. I remember we had two stores that sold clothing and sold...

Rosetta: Al Akers?

Carmen: I remember Al Akers' Store (*Al's Clothing, 124 E. Sixth St.*).

Rosetta: And Julie's (*203 E. Sixth St.*).

Carmen: It would have been before Julie's.

Rosetta: Clarice's?

Carmen: It use to be Clarice's. And the other store was on the...

Rosetta: Workman's. Do you remember Workman's? (*Workeys Men's Shop, 106 E. Sixth St.*)

Carmen: Oh gosh, yes. I remember Ed Taylor's business.

Joan: What was Workman's? Wait a minute, I haven't heard that name before.

Carmen: Well, they sold work clothes that I remember. A lot of work clothes, more or less. I remember Ed Taylor when he had his business there (*Home Oil Company*). I remember going to him. I had to one year. There was a Gamble's store, and there was another store, True Value. I don't think there was a building in town that didn't have a business of some kind. True Value was there on Main Street (*113 E. Sixth St.*). Gambles was on Main Street (*113 E. Sixth St.*). They even had a restaurant right on Main Street, and of course Buford's Dry Cleaning (*Buford Brodbeck, 222 E. Sixth St.*) was on there. There might have been two little restaurants right on Main Street, right on the corner and next to the railroad tracks was a little restaurant (Reeder's Café, *102 E. Sixth St.*) Bartman used to run that. There was another little restaurant on the next block (*McClendon Café, 212 E. Sixth St.*) But there were two places where you could go eat. Every building had some kind of a business going. On Saturday night

Kinsley would just be thriving. People would just...and I don't think there was a parking space left where you could park your car in. The theater at that time...everybody went to the movies.

Joan: Did you get to go to the movies?

Carmen: Oh gosh, yes. They used to have what they called a serial going on every weekend. They would show one chapter this week and if you wanted to know what was going to happen on the next chapter, you'd better go to the movies the next week. You would find out what happened in that chapter. And there was a going series every week. The community was just thriving. At that time, it was just thriving. You had your automotive business, which was going on pretty strong. There was something going on every weekend. Kinsley would be just thriving with people shopping and enjoying themselves. I remember all these grocery stores. I think about them now, whatever happened to them?

Joan: Okay, we're in the 40's here. You had older brothers, were they in World War II?

Carmen: My brother Jesse was.

Joan: Was he in the army? Drafted?

Carmen: He was in the army, not drafted. He knew he was going to have to go, and he didn't want to be drafted. So he said, "I'll just go ahead and go in it. I don't want to be drafted, so I'll just go ahead and go."

Joan: Where did he serve?

Carmen: I remember him saying he was stationed in Hawaii.

Joan: Do we have his picture on our website? If you have a picture of him...you probably don't.

Carmen: No, I sure don't.

Joan: Well, if anybody does, we have all the WWII veterans on our website. So if you ever come across it, we'll put him up there too. So you were in school during WWII?

Carmen: Yes.

Joan: Do you remember any of the war efforts like collecting aluminum or rationing?

Carmen: Everybody was asking if you had any kind of metal. And yes, I remember them having ration stamps. You had a ration stamp for sugar, you know you were only allowed so much sugar, that was it. Particularly sugar was rationed more than anything else. I remember my dad saying, "OK, What are we going to do?" And we said, "I don't know, Dad." He said we could all have so much sugar because he loved his coffee and whatever. We learned how to use white Karo syrup in place of sugar for a lot of things, which turned out pretty good. My mother learned how to use honey for a lot of stuff. I remember that we had to have grocery stamps, food stamps particularly for sugar. And coffee too, there were some things that were rationed differently. It was kind of hard, you know, to cut back. We understood why, so...that's when a lot of us learned to drink coffee black without sugar.

Joan: I hadn't thought about that. So when you got to Kinsley, how big was your class? You graduated in 1950, how big was that class?

Carmen: Our class was exactly 50 at that time. We had 50 that graduated from Kinsley High.

Joan: What was it like going to high school?

Carmen: Oh, I enjoyed it. There were so many things to do. You had all the activities, you know, basketball, football, you had pep club, and we had what we called at that time, "Y-Teens." It was interesting going to school, and it was a little exciting because there was always something to do. When you took in the games, you always wanted to see your classmates play football, basketball or whatever. Then there was going to music festivals and we had musical contests. We would have, you know, a lot of times we went to Dodge City for competitions.

Joan: What did you play in the band?

Carmen: I did not play an instrument, I was in chorus. I was in girls' chorus and mixed chorus. We used to have competitions with other schools, and we were always going to Dodge City for competitions. I enjoyed my high school years.

Joan: Were the Hispanic and the white community close at that time? Mixed, or did they do things separately?

Carmen: No, I really didn't have any problems growing up here in Kinsley.

Joan: Did you have white friends in high school?

Carmen: Oh gosh, yes! Most of my friends were white friends. I always enjoyed being with them, and we always got together. Of course, I had friends with Hispanic girls too. But most of my high school days, I had school friends that we got together and enjoyed each other's company.

Joan: We had heard that before WWII, the black community had to sit upstairs at the theater.

Carmen: Yes, that's before we found out. When we first moved to Kinsley, that all Hispanic and if there were any Black Americans, they had to sit in the balcony. Of course, we wanted to go to movies, so we didn't take it to heart. Let me put it this way. My father and us didn't take it to heart. We just said, if that's the way it is, that's the way it is. But yes, they segregated all Hispanics and Black Americans had to go to the balcony. You were not allowed to sit in the bottom.

Joan: Was there any other place that things were segregated in town?

Carmen: Well, like I said, I didn't have any problems. I mean, I remember that Rapp's Confectionary, they sold fine jewelry and little notions of all kinds. They also had what they called a fountain area, you know, they had little booths where you could sit down and have an ice cream soda, or you could have pop or whatever which we did. I would go in there along with my friends and sit down and have some pop or an ice cream soda. It was like a combination of a store and yet you could get soft drinks. I remember. It was Rapp's Confectionary. I never experienced any of that there.

Joan: So it was just the movies.

Carmen: Just the movies.

Joan: We've also learned that after WWII, that stopped. Do you remember when that happened?



Carmen: Well after that, you know, I really didn't go much to the movies. By that time, I guess it really didn't matter to me whether there was something going on. I just wasn't a movie goer after that, after growing up or whatever. But yes, I understood that afterwards everybody was allowed to go down to the...and that nobody went to the balcony at all. But everybody was glad to go on. And when I left Kinsley, I went to live in Dodge when I got married, and then came back. That's when I understood that everybody was sitting all down in the bottom and the balcony was hardly even used anymore.

Joan: Now when I was a teenager growing up, we wanted to sit in the balcony! That's where you wanted to be, that's so you could look down on everybody. And everybody was up there kissing.

Carmen: Plus you could be up there without everybody's head in the way.

Joan: Okay, so let's see. You graduated in 1950, but you didn't get married until 1954. So what were you doing during those four years?

Carmen: Working.

Joan: Okay, where did you work?

Carmen: I worked for Rumsey Studios (*photographer*).

Joan: What did you do for Mr. Rumsey?

Carmen: I learned how to retouch films. At that time, there was a machine that vibrated so many seconds and you had a needle to get out all the imperfections. If a person had pimples or kind of a blotch, you had to kind of take it out so that by the time the picture was made, there were no blotches or anything on the face or on the portrait.

Rosetta: Were you working on the negatives?

Carmen: Yes, working on the negatives. I had to use a needle, and I remember that Mr. Rumsey gave me some practice film. I remember punching a hole in one! He looked, and he said, "What did you do?" "I made a hole in the film!" He said, "You know, you can't afford to make a hole in the film." Not only...it was like a...well, you know when you have a protractor? One end is real sharp? Well, that's what the needles were like. They were like a pencil with a needle. You had to very lightly go in and make...you couldn't go in a straight line. You had to make a little zig-zag so it would blend in. Then you had to use a pencil. Your pencil had to be sharpened, so sharp, that it was literally needle sharp. And you had to use a little square piece of wood with real fine sandpaper on it. You had to take a pencil and sharpen that pencil real, real sharp and then use it on that film as well. That's what I had to learn how to do.

Joan: So that was quite a skill, actually.

Carmen: It helped when what you'd call a retouching machine vibrated the film every so many seconds in front of you. You could get over there with that pencil or that needle and then blend in the blotches or the skin that needed to blend in so that when the picture was made, you had perfect skin.

Joan: These were all black and white picture we're talking about, or sepia tones.

Carmen: Yes, sepia tone and black and white. I remember that my employer's wife (*Beula Pound*

*Rumsey*) would color the pictures in oils. She did beautiful work.

Joan: And you were doing graduation pictures, weddings...

Carmen: Oh yes. I even worked on my own graduation picture.

Joan: Do you have one of those somewhere?

Carmen: No. Really, by chance, I don't. But there's one at the high school.

Joan: That's true, but I can't get that one out of the case. Maybe the yearbook.

Rosetta: We'll look in the yearbook.

Carmen: Yes. To me, growing up in Kinsley was an experience. I enjoyed it.

Joan: I bet you were a good looking young lady, were you dating in these four years?

Carmen: Yes, probably. That's how I met my husband that I married at that time.

Joan: Where did you meet him? He hadn't been in school with you?

Carmen: No, I met him quite by accident at a gathering one time that I'd gone to. They used to celebrate the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> of September in Dodge City (*Mexico's Declaration of Independence*). I remember going there because they showed real nice programs. They would have the young people dress up in costumes and stuff like that and perform.

Joan: Was it a rodeo? An Hispanic rodeo?

Carmen: No, I don't know what you'd call it. All I know is that they celebrated the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> of September, just like they celebrate May the 5<sup>th</sup>. Cinco de Mayo.

Joan: Was it an Hispanic holiday?

Carmen: Yes. It was on the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> of September. I remember going to see them perform. They would dance.

Joan: They would dance in Mexican costumes?

Carmen: Yes, in costumes and everything else, and that's where I met him. It was interesting, but other than that, I didn't really date too much.

Joan: Did you meet him before he went into the service?

Carmen: Yes, I met him before he went into the service.

Joan: So then you had to correspond with him?

Carmen: Oh yes, we corresponded.

Joan: Were you engaged at that time?

Carmen: No, we didn't become engaged until after he got out of the service.

Joan: That was smart.

Carmen: Really!

Joan: So he came back from the service, and somewhere in there you got engaged and got married.

Carmen: Yes, of course I was still working for Rumsey Studio at that time.

Joan: What was your wedding like? Did you have other people stand up with you? Did you have bridesmaids?

Carmen: Well, yes, I had bridesmaids. I really don't remember, unless I dig through some of the pictures I have, I guess. My bridesmaids wore pink and blue.

Joan: And you had a traditional wedding dress?

Carmen: A wedding dress, yes.

Joan: Was there a reception afterwards?

Carmen: Yes, we had one. Of course, it was a simple reception. It was held at my folks' house over here at 304 Colony. Then later on, his parents had a nice evening reception over at their house in Dodge City. Other than that, I...

Joan: Did you have a honeymoon?

Carmen: No, we didn't take a honeymoon at that time. We were just lucky to be able to start our home without going to a lot of expense. Of course, we could have gone to the expense, but both of our parents were older, up in their ages at that time. My parents were too, and they weren't plush. I wasn't going to put them through that. His parents were up in their ages too. He wasn't going to put them through it. I told him, as long as we get married, if both our parents want to have a reception, that's fine. My parents will have a reception over here. We can go through ours in the daytime and then attend the evening reception over at your folks'.

Joan: And then you moved into your home?

Carmen: Yes, we had an apartment.

Joan: In Dodge City. What did your husband do then? What was his job?

Carmen: He worked for Buick at that time, as a mechanic. Then later on he left Buick and went to work for McCoy Scaggs, which was Ford. Then from there, he decided he wanted to move out of the Dodge City area. That's when we made the move over to Lewis.

Joan: Why did he make that decision?

Carmen: Well, it seemed like, to me, I was more or less a small town community person. And Dodge City was always so busy and bustling and everything. He says, "How about moving out east." And I said, "That's up to you." He said, "I thought maybe we can just move to another community. You

know, not quite as big as Dodge City, but maybe a smaller community.” And that’s when we moved to Lewis.

Joan: What did he do when he went to Lewis?

Carmen: He was still a mechanic. He worked for Hugh Schnoebelen. He went to work for him as a mechanic.

Joan: Where was your house in Lewis?

Carmen: I think Avenue A. I remember it was a two storey house.

Joan: Did you rent in Lewis?

Carmen: When we first moved to Lewis, we rented at first. We rented a house not far from the school. We lived there for a while. Then we heard about this couple wanting to sell their house which was a small house. He said, “What do you think?” And I said, “Well, at least it will be ours.” So we bought this house from Clarence Johnson. I remember the couple we bought the house from. But anyway, it was a small house, and we kind of remodeled it. The basement was used as a dormitory for the boys. They had their bedroom downstairs in the basement.

Joan: About what year did you move to Lewis? You got married in 1955, ‘54...

Carmen: Oh dear.

Joan: Did you have any children when you went to Lewis?

Carmen: We had Dennis and Marlin, and Barry and...

Joan: So we’re talking in the 1960’s, when you were living in Lewis.

Carmen: I had Dennis and Marlin and Barry at that time. And then for there on, Dennis and Marlin were born in Dodge, and then Barry. Three of my boys were born in Dodge.

Joan: In the hospital there?

Carmen: Yes, Dennis and Marlin and Barry were born in Dodge, and then from there on from Douglas on down, the girls were all born in Kinsley.

Joan: But when you were living in Lewis?

Carmen: Yes, and Dr. Schnoebelen was our family doctor.

Joan: And then you became a homemaker? With enough kids that kept you busy?

Carmen: That’s for sure.

Joan: That’s interesting that in your lifetime, you lived in Offerle, Belpre, Lewis and Kinsley, all the cities on Highway 50. So your children went to school in Lewis?

Carmen: Barry, no, Dennis and Marlin went to school in Dodge. They started out going to the

Cathedral, at the parochial school. They went to school there. From there on, Dennis went to school enough to where...he went there for a while. Both he and Marlin went to school there. Then from there on, we took them to Miller School, a smaller public school. They walked to, went to the smaller school after that.

Joan: And when you went to Lewis, they went to Lewis school.

Carmen: Barry did graduate from Kinsley High. He came over here and finished school.

Joan: Was there a reason why he didn't...

Carmen: No, he just decided he wanted to change schools, so he finished high school over here at Kinsley.

Joan: It wasn't a girl?

Carmen: No, well, there might have been a girl! But anyway, there might have been.

Rosetta: But the others finished school at Lewis?

Carmen: Yes.

Joan: Let's see, we're in the 1960's while you were in Lewis, and that community was still pretty thriving?

Carmen: It was a thriving community. They had a grocery store,. They had a laundry mat there, and there was a . . . There was a grocery store. And there was a confectionary that was run by the Schnoebelen family. They sold items there, but they also sold soft drinks and stuff like that too.

Joan: Was there a drug store?

Carmen: No, I don't remember a drug store. It might have been; they sold notions and stuff like that.

Joan: Maybe where Pop was? .

Carmen: I don't remember if there was a drug store. I do remember there was like a confectionary. They sold items there, but they sold soft drinks too. There used to be a hardware store. There was a hardware store. There was a restaurant. There was, of course, the automotive businesses by the Schnoebelen family. So there was at least five businesses in Lewis at that time.

Joan: But there was no Catholic Church there?

Carmen: No.

Joan: Did you just come over here?

Carmen: We used to drive to Belpre (*St Bernard's*). Then I started going to St. Nicholas Church (*Kinsley*).

Joan: I always thought it was a little unusual that Lewis didn't have a Catholic Church. But you had the two big ones on both sides.

Carmen: There was a Baptist Church and a Christian Church and the Methodist Church (*in Lewis*).

Joan: This interview is going very, very well.

Rosetta: My mind jumps back and forth. When your husband was in the Korean War, was he always in Korea? Did he serve all of his time in Korea?

Carmen: If I remember correctly, he spent part of his time in Korea.

Rosetta: Just curious, where are your two brothers now? the rest of your family? I remember Frank, he was a little older.

Carmen: Frank lives in Wichita. He's the only brother I have living. I lost my brother Tony, and my brother Jess.

Rosetta: That's too bad.

Joan: We always ask people where their children are too, we're interested in seeing if they're still around.

Carmen: Dennis lives here in town.

Joan: He has a family? What does he do?

Carmen: He has a family. He works for the feedlot over here. Barry lives here in town also. He and Alberta live here in town.

Joan: What does he do?

Carmen: He works for Cross' in Lewis. Douglas lives in Herington, and he works for (*Russell*) Stover's Candies.

Joan: Do you get lots of free samples?

Rosetta: That would not be a good place to work.

Carmen: Nora lives here in town also. She works over here at the courthouse. My daughter Lisa lives here in town also.

Joan: What's she doing now? I know she's not at the school.

Carmen: Oh, she works in Dodge.

Joan: Beverly Jo?

Carmen: Beverly lives in Coldwater, and she works for the school over there.

Joan: And again, this is a little bit unusual. Your children are all still pretty close.

Carmen: Yes, we are a close family.

Joan: They haven't moved away. If you don't mind, can you tell us what happened to Marlin? You

said you lost one.

Carmen: He got killed in an accident.

Joan: Automobile?

Carmen: It was a truck. He was killed in an accident.

Joan: You said it was right after he graduated?

Carmen: Yes, he was 21 years old, and it was in August that he was killed in an accident.

Joan: That had to have been a hard time.

Carmen: Well, yes, it was really.

Joan: When did you start to notice the decline in population here in Kinsley, or Lewis or wherever you were?

Carmen: Okay, when I moved to Dodge, in the first years of our marriage, I remember coming back and finding out that some of the businesses had closed. I remember that what used to be Earl Ehler's became Fox's. I said, "What happened to Mr. Ehler?" And he said, "He no longer has a store." It is Mary Fox that has it now. That was half of part of the building. I said, "Okay." Because I remembered getting some of my clothes there. Let me put it this way, after Mr. Ehler closed, I remember Mary had it. But after that, it seemed like one store or building would close up, and then we just kind of wondered what happened to everybody? It was kind of disappointing to see a real thriving community like Kinsley where several of the buildings were closing because nobody was adding a new business or anything there. I remember that the True Value stayed open about as long as it could possibly stay open. Gambles stayed open quite a bit. And then after that, they were gone. Then, what happened to all the grocery stores? My gosh, when you stop to think about it, you know, we had IGA, and Mammals and Safeway and Hearn's Jack and Jill. What's happened to them? Slowly but surely, they were closing up. What used to be Mammals is now Circle K (*Automotive Parts*). What used to be Safeway is now Ryan's Appliance. Of course, IGA became Food Pride after that. What used to be Hearn's Jack and Jill, where that big building is, the young men used to have it as a grocery store. They turned it into a grocery store. Of course, they made it larger. But it closed up, and later it became Duckwall's. But it just seemed like one thing after another was closing. Maybe, it could be that so many of the young people that are graduating are leaving town. They're not settling down in Kinsley. They're going someplace else where they can make a living because sooner or later, jobs are getting less and less. You know that jobs are getting less and less, so you know, the way I saw it, they had to go where they could find jobs. Kinsley was just slowly but surely losing a lot of the, particularly the young people who could have been settling here or whatever. But they weren't. They were leaving town. Of course, there were families who were moving out. It just seemed like, okay, what's going to become of this little community? And to me, I like Kinsley. Even though at that time it was a growing community, thriving, and had quite a few people in it, it still wasn't so huge that you couldn't enjoy it. It was better being in the small community than being in the big city. I enjoy a smaller community more than I would a big large city. Yes, you have more advantages too, but everything is a lot more expensive in the larger city too. Even when they're getting more expensive in the small community also because of the way the jobs have affected everybody. Jobs aren't as abundant as they used to be.

Joan: Did you go back to work ever?

Carmen: Not after I got married. No, I never did. Well, yes, I did too. I take it back. I went back to work in June of 1975. I went back to work for Medicalodge. I worked for Medicalodge for 24 ½ years.

Joan: I think that's going back to work! What did you do for them?

Carmen: I started out in the kitchen, as I wanted to work at that time, and I thought I would do something different. So I figured, okay, I'll apply for a job to kind of get me away and bring in some extra money or whatever. I did, and I wanted to work more or less and was willing to work as a nurse's aide, and wanted to learn how to work as a nurse's aide. I ended up working in the kitchen. The people that owned or bought the nursing home because it was sold by the person that had it before sold it. I was encouraged to take what was called at that time the Food Service Supervisor's Course. I was encouraged to take it by the people that bought the nursing home. I said, "Well, I don't know if I'm able to." But he said that we'd rather have somebody from this community take charge of the kitchen, rather than have somebody from out of town come in. Well, that's when I took the course for the Food Supervisor, which was later changed to Dietary Managers.

Joan: Where did you take the course?

Carmen: It was a correspondence course. I had a dietician who monitored all my work, and I made it. Then I took over the kitchen, and I was Dietary Manager of the kitchen for 17 ½ years. Then I decided I needed to retire a little bit and step down to let somebody younger take it over. That's when I stepped down, but I kept on working. I enjoyed it during the time that I was there. You know, just learning about food and learning about patients' diets and what diets they were on. Then you also learned you had State regulations to follow. You have State and federal surveyors come in, and they check your work. They want to see how you're doing and so on. But to me, it was rewarding work. I enjoyed the work that I was doing. I learned. Besides being the dietary manager, I took a nurse's aide course. I took the medication course. But that helped me out in my work. I could monitor, or I could help the residents and get an idea of why they were not eating or if their eating habits had changed. Taking the medication course helped me out by learning the effects that the medication had on their appetite and behavior. I learned a lot, and I enjoyed it. I enjoyed doing what I was doing. To me, being responsible for their diets and being responsible for their care and wellness, it was important to me, and I enjoyed it.

Joan: Yes, it is very important.

Carmen: And knowing about medications and what effects they had on them and what the after-effects are, and what makes them change. You know, they can be happy one minute and just down the next. They can be eating great just one minute, and then their appetite decreased. At times I had to deal with their medication, so I learned how to use a PDR (*Physicians' Desk Reference*) to find out what all the medications they were taking was affecting them in their intake and output.

Joan: I think you did a very good job!

Carmen: Well, I enjoyed it. To me it was rewarding.

Joan: When did you get divorced? A long time ago? A short time ago?

Carmen: Oh dear, I was married for about 20 years.

Joan: Okay, you got married in 1954. So '64, '74. Had you gone back to work yet?



Carmen: Yes, I had already started working.

Joan: And you said you started working in June, 1975?

Rosetta: You got divorced in 1975? Or a little after that?

Carmen: A little after that. It didn't become final until after I started working.

Joan: Maybe that was another reason you went back to work?

Carmen: Yes. I had to do something, to think something other than to just sit home and ponder.

Joan: I guess we haven't talked about when did you move to Kinsley? Was that when you got divorced?

Carmen: No, no. I moved to Kinsley to be closer to my job at that time.

Joan: So it was about that same time period?

Carmen: Yes, during that time period.

Joan: Can you tell us the changes that you saw? You said you had been going to Belpre, but then you came St. Nicholas here in Kinsley. Changes you have seen in the church?

Carmen: Well, let me put it this way. The changes I saw in the church was when they started doing away with so many of the saints. They did away with so many of the saints. You know, each little saint had their miracle, and then all of a sudden they're not supposed to be saints anymore. At that time, I thought, okay, I'm not going to argue. You know, if that's the way it is, that's the way it is. But it was just that some things were considered saints and then some of them were not. And I thought, okay. I didn't know how to take it. I really didn't.

Joan: It bothered your faith?

Carmen: It kind of bothered me because to me, these saints that, you know, that you always thought were saints. All of a sudden the decision was made that they weren't. I don't want to say, or give names or whatever. I don't remember exactly, but I do remember that it got to the point that some of them that were considered saints and some of them were not. And that kind of bothered me a little. And it has changed. Our church here still has the statues of the saints and everything. Some churches do not have them anymore. You know, they done away with it, they have a cross. And maybe they'll have a portrait of Our Lady of Guadalupe. And you know, that's about it. They're more modernized than what they used to be. I remember going to Belpre, and Belpre had all the saints and everything in it, and, you know, Mary and St. Joseph, and they had all these saints and whatever, in statues. To me, they are beautiful. The way the old churches used to be were beautiful with all their statues and stuff like that. Same thing in Kinsley, beautiful with all of the statues. And of course, some places now, you know, they've more or less modernized them so much to where they'll have the cross, and maybe they'll have a portrait of Our Lady of Guadalupe like in Dodge at the cathedral. It used to be that the cathedral, I remember that to me the statues they had in there was beautiful. But when they made the new cathedral, it is just different.

Joan: When you were young, the Mass was in Latin?

Carmen: As far as I remember.

Joan: Then it went to English.

Carmen: I remember the Latin. I really don't remember when the English started. But I remember that most of the time when I was going to church, it was in Latin.

Joan: So that's another big change.

Carmen: Another change in there.

Joan: How about the size of the congregation? Have they gotten smaller? Well, Belpre is not longer...do they still have a service in Belpre?

Carmen: Yes, they still have services in Belpre. I know they do.

Joan: Offerle?

Carmen: They still have services.

Joan: A smaller service for small congregation.

Carmen: At our church, there are evening services on Saturday night and services again on Sunday. And they also have the Spanish version of the Mass on Sundays at 12:00.

Joan: I didn't realize that.

Carmen: You know, for Spanish speaking people.

Joan: So that's a change. When did that start?

Carmen: As far as I know, it's been quite a while. Since so many Spanish speaking people began moving in. I think it starts at 12:00 on Sunday.

Joan: Does the priest that's here do that? Or they bring one in?

Carmen: I don't know. I have never attended a Spanish mass. I don't know what or who gives it or whatever, anything like that.

Joan: We had a parochial school here, but that closed.

Carmen: Yes, that closed. I remember hearing the children playing out there for recess. Now it is so quiet.

Joan: Well, let's see. I think we've just about covered...What did we forget, Miss. Rosetta?

Rosetta: Well, I'm looking over my notes. We talked some about the medical, where the children were born and they were born in the hospital. And all that about the Santa Fe housing is just wonderful. We talked about WWII, and the Korean War.

Joan: Can you think of any other memories that you would like to put on this tape? That you want your

family to remember or to let them know about? Anything about the grandmas or grandpas or your parents? That's a good story you told about your dad and the "legs." That's interesting about Rumsey's studio; you've been a very interesting.

Carmen: I remember Mr. Rumsey's Studio was Dr. Unruh's office, wait a minute. I think it was Dr. Schnoebelen had his office next door to Rumsey's Studio at that time. Yes. You kind of noticed when the businesses started closing up. It just wasn't the same. It was lively when I left, but when I started coming back for visits with my folks, I would find out that this building was closed and so and so had closed down. It was just kind of sad that a thriving community like Kinsley slowly went down.

Joan: What do you see for the future? That's a hard question, but do you think we've reached a plateau? Or is it going to continue to decline?

Carmen: I hope that it will start growing. We definitely do need a variety store here in town. We really do because not many of us can drive out of town. The closest one would be going to Larned. You know, they have an Alco store; they have a Dollar General store. It just seems a little unreal to have to go 25 or 26 miles to go get what you would normally pick up here in town. And not every store here in town that is open can carry all the notions that Duckwall's had. Hopefully, maybe, I hope we can get some kind of maybe a Dollar Tree here. They have a Dollar Tree in Dodge; they have a Dollar General in Dodge. But that's having to travel 45 or 50 miles to go to one! We could use something like that here in town.

Joan: Plus the gas too.

Carmen: That's not helping any either. We have to spend \$4 and some cents just to buy gas to go get an item that you could just run down and when there was a Duckwall's and get it.

Joan: This isn't a question that we've asked other people, but in Lewis (I go to church in Lewis) the Hispanic community is starting to move in to communities. Perhaps that is a way that the county will stay viable. What do you think about that?

Carmen: Lewis has been very fortunate about having jobs for the people there moving in. Cross' has been very good about jobs and stuff like that. The only thing I'm grateful is that they're not union. Let me put it that way. If they were union, they would have a heck of a time getting jobs or whatever. To me, Cross' not being union, you know, this is higher. And no, not everybody can afford to pay \$15 an hour or \$18 an hour. No, we're still a small community; Lewis is a small community. To me, you'd have to be pretty greedy. To me, I think the wages are pretty reasonable. You can earn a nice living, maybe not live high on the hog or be rich. But you definitely aren't starving. You know, their pay scale is very well, considering the community and the surrounding areas. You know, maybe some of these other plants can afford to pay big, humongous wages. You know, that's fine. But even here in Kinsley we have so many...Kinsley Hospital has done really good by their nurses, and the same thing with Medicalodge. They've done real good by their employees. It's not that you need to be greedy. Let me put it that way. Their wages are very, very well within reason.

Joan: Is there anything else, Rosetta? We'll get back and then think of something else we want to know.

Rosetta: Not right now.

Carmen: Yes, my daughter was asking me about how we lived in Belpre. What kind of refrigerator we

had. I said we had a refrigerator that took ice, that's how we kept things cold. And she said, "Mom, you had to buy a lot of ice, didn't you?" I said, "You know, I remember where we lived, after it was a fenced in area. We had a nice front yard, and there was a road that led up to the foreman's house. And a little further on down was the railroad track. The locals (*trains*), every time they went by, they would drop off big old blocks of ice during the summertime. The blocks were really big, about this square and yea long.

Joan: You're saying that's a foot by a foot by three feet?

Carmen: I would say maybe a little thicker than a foot. You know, they were pretty good sized, maybe 18 inches or something like that. They were about so sized. And they would take them out, they would get on top of the ice cars and they would drop all these. These were from the trains, the local trains. They had always to refrigerate and carry ice back and forth. At that time they carried huge blocks of ice. The men that were on the train would go up and drop off big old blocks of ice. Maybe they'd drop off three, maybe four blocks of ice. I remember that my brothers, at that time, they had like a hook. They would hook it up onto that block of ice and bring it in. Half of it would be chopped in half and put into the refrigerator, and the other half would be used for making things like lemonade. At that time, we had what they called a snow shaver, or ice shaver. But you could run it across the top of the ice and make snow. We used to do that. There was enough ice that it would be putting...my mother always had a clean tub, strictly for ice, nothing else. And they would go get another block of ice, and somebody else would come in and take ice to their homes to put into their refrigerators. I remember that's how we kept..

Joan: So the ice was free? They were just dumping...

Carmen: The ice was free. They would throw it down. Now, you know, free ice was what those guys did at that time.

Joan: And you probably made ice cream too.

Carmen : Yes, we did make ice cream. We scraped it off with a metal shaver that scraped the ice off of it and made ice cream cones and things. That's how we kept cool in the summertime. Because they would drop off these big blocks of ice, at that time we called them the "locals". You know, the local trains, because they would get up there and drop off all these big blocks of ice. And the families that lived there, we just all shared it. They would take a block; we would take a block, and the man on the corner would take a small block; and the foreman would get some ice. Sometimes, they would drop more than just four blocks. They would drop smaller pieces. We would pick them up, wash them off and make lemonade, Kool-Aid or whatever. At that time, Kool-Aid was just as important a drink as anything else. I remember that, and she said, "They would actually do that!" And I said, "Yes, they would." When I think about it, it was very, very kind of them to do that. They probably thought, "We've got so much of it, it will melt here anyway." They would drop it off, and that's how we cooled off, and there would be ice to put into the ice box. That's how we kept cool, because every time the local train came by, they'd stop. I don't know what they were doing, changing trains or taking in water or whatever. They would drop all these blocks of ice. All of that lived on that little stretch of road, we all shared the ice. Everybody took home a block of ice. That's how we enjoyed it. We kept cool in the summertime. It wasn't anything unusual to spend the summer having ice cream, homemade ice cream all the time. Even if you used Kool-Aid. But it kept everything cold.

Rosetta: When you came to Kinsley, did they still do that?

Carmen: No, no, it was only when we lived in Belpre.

Joan: That was nice.

Carmen: I thought it was very nice!