

Olga, this is what we have so far. Very rough, of course.

Story essentially about two brothers who come to the United States under the Braceros(sp?) Program (Ck actual name) and arrive in Longmont where they stay and raise their families.

January 23, 2009. Just met with Olga Melendez Codero, a delightful young woman who is a counselor at Skyline High School. We met in her office at the school. There are pictures of her two children on display and a couple of _____ prints on the wall. Olga is very proud of her family. Their story is the stuff of the Great American Novel.

Her folks and an uncle arrived in Longmont in about 1967 or 1968. They lived in Firestone until her dad and uncle could find jobs at Longmont Foods. Then they moved to a house, 15 East 5th Avenue in Longmont. Her folks lived in the basement of the house with five girls. Her uncle's family lived on the main floor with six kids—2 boys, 4 girls (?).

Olga's story:

Before they bought house they lived in house that doesn't exist anymore. They lived in a little house, I don't know if you can call it a house, there's a gas station there, on Rothrock and Martin. There was a neighbor person named Mary(?). We had no running water in the house. It was the year I was born, so 1971. The neighbor woman would wash my parents' (family's) clothes and help with the kids. My dad refers to that as "a time of innocence", when people trusted each other. It was a genuine, unconditional giving on their part; they didn't expect anything back because they knew it would come back to them. Before my dad and my uncle could buy the house on Fifth, we lived in one room on Rothrock. I have a cousin who can elaborate more on that. He talks more about walking to school and how it was back then. Dad talks about Longmont and how Lashley was the edge of Longmont, and there was nothing east of Lashley, except farmland. Then the houses would come up, the beautiful houses.

We lived downstairs, my uncle and his family lived upstairs. They wanted to stay together, so they asked the neighbor if they could buy his house, and they did. So we were actually 19 Fifth Avenue. We were neighbors. They had the big green house, and we had the house next door to them. I think the house cost \$12,000 and he could not imagine how he was going to make that mortgage, \$120 per month. We didn't have a lot of things, and we didn't need them, and we never felt poor. We felt like we had it all. We were eating, our teachers loved us, and we knew how to behave and how to treat people because our parents had taught us how to be. And they were wonderful examples.

Five girls: Two oldest have their own businesses. One is a teacher. One is an International Business major (didn't get what she does). I am a high school counselor.

Discussion on Uncle's eightieth Birthday Party.

Uncles kids: Two had a bail bonds business, but they both went into the Marines. One cousin works for school district. One is a physical therapist. One is a physician's assistant. The youngest one is a speech therapist. One on the east coast, one in Texas, one here in an OB-GYN clinic.

We have an amazingly beautiful, strong family, and we love each other and respect each other.

Conversation turns to me. Sorry. This is NOT ABOUT ME!

There will be a birthday party for uncle January 31. Olga will get some information then. She will translate as necessary.

Questions:

1. Where, in Mexico, did they come from?
2. Why did they decide to come to the United States?
3. What was involved in getting into Braceros (sp?) Program?
4. Who all came with the brothers?
5. Did the Program bring them to this part of the country, or elsewhere?
6. How is it they decided to live in Longmont?

Whatever they talk about after this point is the true gold of their story.