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# Guadalupe Speaks Oral History Project

Title: *An Interview with Helen Galvan*

Interview with: Helen Galvan, Guadalupe resident

Interviewed by: Stevie Ruiz, Cal Poly Student

(affiliation) Cal Poly Ethnic Studies Dept.

Edited by: Janet Crabaugh

Date: November 22, 2003

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## About the Guadalupe Speaks Project

Guadalupe Speaks is an oral history project that is part of California Stories, a multiyear initiative designed to strengthen communities and connect Californians by uncovering personal and community stories that help document multicultural communities in present day California. California Stories is funded by the California Council for the Humanities.

In 2003, the Guadalupe Speaks project began recording and transcribing oral histories of the residents of Guadalupe. The stories reflect the history and culture of the town, capturing the residents' impressions of their community. The stories represent the multicultural backgrounds of the residents including Swiss-Italian, Portuguese, Filipino, Chumash, Mexican, Chinese, and Japanese ancestry.

Situated approximately ten miles west of Santa Maria on historic Highway 1 on the border of Santa Barbara & San Luis Obispo counties, the City of Guadalupe was founded in 1843 as one of the earliest communities on the Central Coast. In 2003, the city has a population of 5,700, mixed with long-time and native residents, recent retirees from outside the county, and a large Latino population.

Guadalupe was once the principal agricultural center of northern Santa Barbara County, at one time providing one-third of all lettuce grown in California. Although it is still primarily an agricultural community, the crops have changed to include broccoli, cauliflower, carrots and other vegetables. However, Guadalupe is no longer the central distribution point for the area, and communities such as Santa Maria have surpassed it in growth by almost 2,000 percent. Guadalupe has remained at a standstill, much as it was 50 years ago, while the rest of the Central Coast has grown at an astounding pace.

Today, Guadalupe is a town poised between its past and its future. In 2003, the inaugural year of the Guadalupe Speaks project the small town is on the cusp of modernization and large-scale development. Through the Guadalupe Speaks project, the community will be able to document its history and unique, multicultural way of life.

## Using the Guadalupe Speaks Oral Histories

**Guadalupe Speaks**

**Narrator: Helen Galvan**

**Interviewed by: Stevie Ruiz**

**Date: November 22, 2003**

**Location: Guadalupe Cultural Arts and Education Center**

**Edited by: Janet Crabaugh**

Ruiz: Please state your name, date of birth, and ethnic identity.

Galvan: Helen Rivas Galvan. I was born January 4, 1943, in Santa Maria. I am Mexican.

Ruiz: Where did you grow up throughout most of your childhood?

Galvan: I spent the first seven years of my life in Betteravia. I went to first, and part of second, grade there. Then when I was in second grade my family moved here.

Ruiz: What year was that?

Galvan: 1949, I think.

Ruiz: Describe your middle school and high school experiences, as far as the economic status of your family, and what type of dynamics were going on in school.

Galvan: One of the things that I really really loved about growing up in Guadalupe, was that we could walk down Guadalupe streets and hear all these

languages - I could hear Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, Japanese, Chinese, Filipino dialects. And English, sometimes (laughs). To me that was really neat. School was really diverse. There were a lot of Mexicans kids, a lot of Anglos, a lot of Japanese, kids that were Portuguese, Italian...I used to hear the same thing in church - we'd come out of church and hear all these people talking in all these different languages.

My parents - what happened was that when we lived in Betteravia it was a company town. All those houses, I don't know why, they got rid of all those houses. That was the house that we brought here to Guadalupe. My uncle continued to work at the sugar factory but my dad was more of a free spirit - he didn't like being in one place all day long. He just preferred being outside and working in the fields. So he did that.

We grew up in what they called "Tijuanita" - well, it was called a lot of things. It was actually Galardi Tract but most people called it Tijuanita. We called it Tortilla Flats. There were eleven of us. My mom stayed home - she had babies at home - but when we were all in school she worked in the packing shed.

In a lot of ways we were kind of isolated in this town, so as far as recreation went - I think there was a lot of recreation for boys. All my brothers played baseball. But for girls: I remember just one year we had a softball team - I think that was when I was in junior high. I thought it was great, I was on the winning team. I loved it. We had enough people at our house for a team. We would play against our neighbors, who also had eleven kids in their family. Each household had its own team. We were always doing things like that, playing baseball or hopscotch or something. A lot of our recreation was going to the sand dunes. We would cross the field in front of our house, go down the riverbed and go out to the sand dunes a lot.

There was no bus service and we didn't have a car. We couldn't just go into Santa Maria any time so we couldn't go swimming, or anything like that. The one thing we did have, we had Girl Scouts and that was run by the Maryknoll Sisters. I think my dad was really traditional [but] because it was run by the nuns he let us join it. If it was a Boys and Girls Club or something like that, that they have now, I think he would have said, "No, I don't think so."

The nuns would take us to Oso Flaco and the sand dunes. In the summer or on weekends, sometimes they would take us down to Santa Barbara when they had to go down there for any reason. (They were kind of our [unclear], other than being able to do things with our family.)

Ruiz: How do you think having those women in your life while growing up affected you?

Galvan: When we were growing up, we could never stay at anybody's house, like at a sleepover. Three doors down was one of our best friends - we couldn't even stay there. She had more room, there were only five in her family, but we weren't allowed to do that. With the Girl Scouts, we had sleepovers then, for the different troops. I was allowed to do that because it was there.

The nuns really did a lot for us. They taught us how to run a meeting, and how to get badges. They let us use their little clubhouse to do things like sewing or cooking. We learned to go out into the community and do fund-raising. We did things like that. I think a lot of what I learned about community service and other things - even like learning how to make a hospital bed, I think that was one of the badges - they really took over teaching us social things. I remember when we would sleep over there,

we learned how to set the table, and how to take the napkin and put it on your lap (laughs) - little things in etiquette. They taught us a lot. Those are things I wasn't learning at home, that were important to survive in society. Social amenities, graces.

Ruiz: You said your father was a traditionalist - could you describe a little more about your family's interaction with the Church?

Galvan: OK. I'll tell you this, while we were growing up our parents never went to church. We did. They didn't. When we were in Betteravia, the nuns from here, from Guadalupe, would go up there and give Catechism. I did go to Catechism there, I think in a little tiny church that was right next to the [unclear]. It wasn't the Catholic Church, but they lent it out to them for Catechism.

Of course I loved Catechism because I liked getting prizes - I was always the good little kid who behaved and listened and gave answers. I remember that I and my brother Charley, the one that was before me, would always come home with prizes. We loved that he loved going there.

On Sundays they would send a bus from the church in Guadalupe to Betteravia to pick us up, and we would come to church here. My mother would never come, she always sent us, she never came. My dad I think was religious in his own way - but he was always speaking out against the church because to him the church was just an establishment. It was a man-made institution. He felt that he could pray to God any time and he didn't have to go to church.

One of my older brothers - when we were still in Betteravia it was time for him to make his confirmation. He was in high school, or junior high

school. He would miss a lot because we lived out - it was kind of open. Betteravia was just a row of houses. We had animals, pigs and chickens and rabbits, so my brother was always busy. The last thing he wanted to do was go to Catechism. Sister came by one day and she was talking to my dad, telling him he really should encourage his son to go to Catechism because he won't make his confirmation if he doesn't go. My dad was probably biting his tongue. My brother came by and [my dad] said, "Well, if my son wants to go, he can go. If he doesn't want to go he doesn't have to. Just ask him. You ask him."

I was there, I remember Sister asked him, "Do you want to go to Catechism?" He said really he didn't want to, so my dad said, "There you have it. He doesn't want to go, he's not going." I don't remember if she tried to argue with him or what but my dad said, "You know, ultimamente (ultimately) none of them have to go - you know what, I'm not sending any of them to Catechism anymore." I was standing there worried, "Come on now, that includes me!" So the rest of the time we lived in Betteravia, we didn't go to church or Catechism. That was heart breaking.

When we moved here to town, at that time the sisters used to walk to the school in Guadalupe and pick up the kids. We would have a release - it was late afternoon - the parents would sign a paper saying yes, we could leave half an hour early or so. [The sisters] used to walk us to Catechism. When we moved here my dad said, "OK, they can go."

Growing up, my dad never went [to church]. My mother did later, when we were older. That's how religion was at my house.

Ruiz: During high school, did you ever work?

Galvan: No. Well, I had one sister three years younger who quit high school, because she never really like school. I think a lot of it had to do with the language. She was caught ditching one day with some of her friends, so my dad said if she didn't want to go she could go to work. So she said, "OK, I'll go to work." She went to work at the shed with my mom.

I did work during the summers. We worked topping carrots. My dad, since my brothers were small, would take them out to the fields during the summer, but since they were working then with the short hoe, thinning, he would never let the girls do that. It was too hard. He said it wasn't women's work. My mom didn't do that either. We always wanted to do something, to make extra money. So during the summers, depending on who he went with - there were a lot of contractors who would pick us up at the house - my dad would take us, usually one of my older sisters, there were four more after me. Maybe my brother Charlie would go. Six or seven of us would go with the contractor and we would go top carrots. My dream was to work in the strawberry fields, believe it or not. [Laughs]

There wasn't that much sharecropping then by Mexicans, [but] my mom had this good friend who wasn't a sharecropper but was a foreman for someone who was. She lived in Santa Maria. She used to tell my mom that she would let us work for her if we could get to Santa Maria. She would tell us who would pick people up. We begged and begged our Mom, "Let us go work in the strawberries" and finally one year we got to work in the strawberries. I think I went for, maybe, two weeks at the most. I just remember it was a week - a LONG week - that was the hardest job I have ever done. That's a hard job.

Ruiz: How did that affect you?

Galvan: I never worked in the strawberries again. I feel for people who work in the strawberries all day. I know they work from morning til night in the summer and it is the toughest job there is.

Ruiz: Did that sort of change your outlook on your goals in life?

Galvan: Well, definitely, I wasn't going to work in the fields. But you know, the reason that I said I never worked because I always wanted to work in the packing shed. I knew that it wasn't what I thought but it was not as hard as working the fields. My mom was working in the packing shed, so I would ask her if I could go and she would always say no. I'd say, "Why can't I go? I'm old enough." I was in high school. I thought her boss would give me a job. They had the carrot packing shed here and she worked here for a long time and then she worked in Santa Maria. I can't remember [what] she told me one day, but it was something to the effect that if I started making money I wouldn't finish high school. Her goal for me was not to work in the fields and not to work in the packing shed, but to get an education so I could work in an office - I thought that was a real good job. That was a goal for me and she said, "You're not going to work there [the packing shed]." So I wasn't allowed. But my sisters were.

Ruiz: Can you describe what role the Royal Theater played in Guadalupe?

Galvan: Every Sunday we went to the Royal Theater. My mom and dad would send us off. I think that was their time alone. Just get the kids out here, go to the movies. They were just family movies. It was like everybody in town went to the movies on Sundays. On Sundays they had movies in English. Then during the week they had movies in Spanish. Later on I worked there for a while. They had movies on Fridays in Filipino. I don't know that they ever had any in Japanese. I don't think so.

When we lived in Betteravia I remember my aunt and uncle used to come to the movies a lot. My mom and dad not so much. They did once in awhile. We would stay at my aunt's house. I know my aunt and uncle did [go to the movies], and they would take my sister with them, because she was older and well-behaved. Actually my uncle was a real technology buff. He used to fix radios and TVs when they first came out and he loved the movies. I think since he wanted to see the movies he would take us along with him. When we lived in Betteravia, every weekend he would take my brothers one day to the movies, and the girls the next day, so he could go to the movies all weekend. When we moved here we went to this theater.

When I was older I worked there - I was out of high school. It was at the same time that they had a lot of braceros - they had a lot of camps. One of the things I remember, I used to work in the lobby. My dad was a friend of the owner so I think that was the only reason I stayed there so long, because I burned the popcorn machine - there was smoke all over. He said, "You only put in this much oil…" I don't know, I think I was just flighty - I think I was not focused. I was just young. I burned the machine a couple of times. I worked the lobby and a friend of mine worked inside. I always thought, "Gee, that would be fun, to be inside." So one time when she wasn't there, I remember my boss sent me in with a flashlight because the bus would let the braceros off and then they would come back and pick them up. He gave me the flashlight and said - this was in Spanish - "Go inside and tell the braceros their bus is here." I said, "How do I know which is which?" He said, "Well, just look at them!" OK...so I went in and I would go up and tell them, [Ms. Galvan speaks softly] "Senor, senor, the bus is leaving."

A few people got offended - they would say, "I'm not a bracero!" and I'd say, "I'm sorry, I'm sorry." I sometimes wonder if I should have

known...it's like they say, "You stop everybody that looks Mexican because they could be...whatever. A terrorist or something." Sometimes people say it's because of the way they dress, or the way they put their hair...I don't know.

Ruiz: What do you think distinguished or isolated them?

Galvan: I don't know - if they had a hat on, or...at that time, you didn't have that many people coming in to work if they weren't a bracero. It was either people that lived here or people that came in just to work in the camps. I don't know what I was looking for - a lot of them wore hats, which wasn't done by the people who lived here.

Ruiz: You were born in 1943, so you were too young to know about the Japanese internment. However, you were in Guadalupe to see the stuff that happened afterwards, in the early 1950s. What impact did the braceros' movement have, as far as economics in Guadalupe [inaudible]...

Galvan: I don't think it was because of the braceros, but in the 1950s I think the perception of this town was that all there were in Guadalupe were bars, prostitutes, gambling halls, vice. Vice of all kinds. Some people wouldn't even drive through town. They had drugs...I think there was a perception of the town, and I think the braceros came to town to spend money, I guess in the bars...I don't think all of those things were caused because they [the braceros] were here - It wasn't just them in the bars - a lot of people came from out of town.

There used to be dances at [inaudible] Park maybe once a month. There were always a lot of dances and stuff. They came to the dances, they came to eat. there were a lot of different restaurants. I don't know where else they would have spent money. There were no grocery stores here. I

guess they didn't have much need for groceries because they were fed in the braceros camps. But for clothing and things like that I guess they spent money here too, because there were a couple of clothing stores where they were catered to, clothing, boots, things like that. I'm sure that helped the economy. I don't remember thinking at the time that the braceros helped any of the vices along. I'm sure they helped the economy.

Ruiz: What impact did they have on agriculture?

Galvan: Oh, wow...I think that without them nothing would have been done.

Ruiz: Were you able to observe any of the working conditions of the braceros? You talked about your father, and working conditions. Could you talk about that a little more - about how hard the work and how the conditions were?

Galvan; That was before Cesar Chavez, the movement started for the agriculture workers. We never had bathrooms out there. We didn't have water unless we took it. I know that my dad had favorite people that he worked for, because they treated them better. I think my dad was a good worker, because he used to brag about that. My brother will still tell you that he [dad] was the best.

There were my three brothers that went with my dad, my brother Charlie was maybe one and a half years older than me, he was the youngest of them and he was small. All of [my brothers] were tall when they were adults but Charlie was the smallest when he was growing up. When they used to go out to work my dad says one of the farmers used to follow them down the row because my brother Charlie would tell jokes so they wouldn't get away from him. [Laughs] He would be telling jokes all day

so they wouldn't leave him behind. The farmer used to go behind them all day, listening to them. He always treated them with respect.

One of the contractors my dad worked for, for a long time. When my dad went to retire, he went to Social Security. [They said he couldn't get Social Security.] This was before they started taking Social Security out. My dad had a box full of records, he had every hour he had ever worked marked down in a little book, just to make sure he got paid right. He had a boxful for all the years he worked. So he took it to Social Security and he said, "Hey, look, he's been taking Social Security out since I've been working for him." 20 years or something. They said, "Well, he's been keeping it" because they didn't have to pay into it for farm workers. So what they did was, they gave him Social Security based on what he had. But they told him "You could probably sue him." So my dad went home and burned all these papers that he had kept for years, because he didn't want to be tempted to do that later on!

Ruiz: What type of a man was your father?

Galvan: He was a really strong character.

Ruiz: How did that take you to becoming where you are today?

Galvan: Some of the ways my dad influenced...my dad and one of my older brothers every day after school - because we never had books so much at the house - but we always had a newspaper. The minute the newspaper would come in the afternoon, it was one long argument all night about politics and it was...was it Ho Chi Min, the Chinese person who was "ruining the world"? I don't know - I should have listened to them! Every day, every day. That was something that my dad loved.

My dad never spoke English, although he could. In fact, one of my brothers had a little store down here, and my dad would go in there and help him out a little. He used to like to read U.S. News and World Report. He was standing there at the counter one day, reading this magazine. One of the salesmen walked in. I was sitting at the typewriter, helping my brother do something. The salesman walked in and went up to my dad, and I guess asked for my brother, and my dad said, "No habla Ingles."

I looked at him [the salesman] to see what his reaction would be, and first he looked down at the magazine he [my dad] was reading, then he looked at me and said, "Is that true? He doesn't speak English?" I said, "That's what he said." The salesman probably thought that he was looking at the pictures [in the U.S. News & World Report]. But my dad just refused to do it.

I think my dad was really strong in what he believed. He was really opinionated. I remember when I was about ten, one time he asked me, "Helen, what are you?" I said, "What do you mean, what am I?" He said, "I mean, what are you?" I said, "I'm Mexican." He said, "You think so? You think that if you went to Mexico they would treat you the same way they would treat a Mexican citizen?" I said, "Well, I don't think so." He said, "Then what are you?" I said, "American?" And I thought, "Mexican sounded natural. When I said "American" it didn't sound like me. I thought, "That's what he means because I was born here and I live here." He said, "You think so? You think they look at you and they look at you the same way as other Americans?" I said, "I don't think so." He said, "Then what are you?" I said, "I don't know."

I was thinking, "Come on, TELL me!" I think it was his way of making us think about what we really were. He never became a citizen, even though he lived here more years than he lived in Mexico - and he knew he

was never going to go back. He knew we were all - bicultural - but I think he knew that some time we would have to deal with that so maybe that his way of pushing the little button. He was very philosophical - he would never necessarily answer questions for us, it was "You figure it out."

But that was good. My dad did the same thing my husband does to me. He would always say that we argued with him. But he's the one who taught us to do that. On one hand it was "Don't believe everything you read. Don't believe everything you hear. Just because they tell you that, how do you really know?" It was the same every day! But yet, when he told us something we couldn't question him.

Ruiz: Now we're in more the 1960s and 70s. Did you go into any activism - did you have any interaction with activism, and if so describe your role [inaudible]...

Galvan: I don't think so. All right. My brother Charley had this little shop called The Hub. It was where the Chamber of Commerce is now. The reason he got that was that he was at Cal Poly and he developed diabetes. He was really, really sick for a while. Then when he finished he had his senior project to do. He went to live with my sister in LA for a little bit and was looking for a job.

I think my parents kind of said, "We have to take care of him." They asked him if he liked this little shop because [it was being sold] and that way he wouldn't have to worry about finding a job. So he went into the clothing business. It was men's clothing. He had work clothes and just clothes - he did pretty well with that. He wasn't a businessman though. He was an activist. His heart was in the community, with the people. He never cared about money, about making money.

I don't know why it was, but I'm just guessing somebody probably had a problem with immigration or something, so they probably asked him to write a letter for them. So then he started doing paper work for immigration problems and then he started doing income tax also. So he had the clothing store, but that wasn't what he really liked to do. He really liked doing other things.

While he was there they had a group called Guadalupe Community Action or something. It was just a group of people who came together and were just talking about what things could be done in Guadalupe to change it, and to help it out. I guess we had somebody who was a representative to the Community Action Commission that had just formed. The person who was working here in Guadalupe, I don't remember his name, got the Community Action Commission started. Between 53 and 56 or so. From there they opened a sort of satellite office and they wanted my brother to work for it. That was always a kind of bone of contention between my dad and my brother. My dad felt like he should spend more time selling clothes and my brother felt like he should spend more time in the community. It was like "You haven't been here long enough."

My brother was actually doing both things. But he loved community work better. He got involved with a lot of things, with getting that Center going. I don't remember, they had about six people working there full time. I guess it was just services they were providing, it wasn't any kind of training or anything. It was just people who were kind of liaisons between county agencies and people [in] need. He was doing that and then he and I and one of my other brothers got really involved with [Spanish titled group, can't translate]. He started doing that.

It was when they first started bi-lingual education. I was sitting on the Advisory Board for the program, and we were involved with things that

were happening at the high school. Every night there was something exciting going on. At that time we had a mayor who had been here for [what seemed] decades. I guess we felt that he was impeding progress, allowing racism. Everybody who worked for the city was white, and they had all been here for years and years, the police chief and most of the officers. I guess just because of the climate in the country, people felt like they could start complaining now. Starting to say, "This is what's been happening for the last twenty years."

We started a petition to recall the mayor, and he really didn't like that. One of my brothers who had never got involved in anything, was a policeman at the time. I guess because of what was going on in the department he decided the mayor needed to go, so I guess the mayor knew who this little group was that was trying to recall him. One day my brother was off-duty and he went to dump something in the big bin, and they found out and they fired him off the police force. Then we were really determined. So we carried out this recall petition and had an election and my brother ran for mayor. There had never been a minority mayor. I think he only lost by less than a hundred votes. But it was exciting. It was not just because of us, but because of the times, too, it started to wake people up.

END OF SIDE ONE
SIDE TWO STARTS

Ruiz: ...on the part of the administration, of the authorities?

Galvan: Yes, I think there were a lot of things that the police did...I think they used to take bribes. I don't know it for a fact. One year, I can't remember which year but I know it was before 1967 - between 63 and 65 or so, the County started getting a lot of pressure about Guadalupe being a town of

vice. They sent the Sheriff's department one night. I was working at the theater. So I saw it all from the lobby of the theater. It was like this blitz: they just came in and lined down the middle of the street. Guadalupe Street. The whole block from the theater down to probably the Far Western. Sheriff's Department lined up cars bumper to bumper. Everybody spread out at once. They just came out in force, ran into the pool halls and found thousands [of dollars] in money on the tables. That was the big raid.

What came out of that was then the Sheriff's Department got slapped because they hadn't let the Guadalupe Police Department know that they were going to do that. They [Sheriff's Department] said that they didn't because they felt that if they did let them know maybe they were in on it and maybe they wouldn't find as much. What I understand is that the next time they did that a few years later, they had to let them [the Guadalupe Police] know that they were coming in.

This is the perception that so many things wrong were coming from the top - that things were sanctioned. That it was OK. I felt that maybe people in Guadalupe felt betrayed because you lived here all your life, and tried to make a living, and the place where you lived was in a den of thieves, and nobody's doing anything about it, and in fact all these people think it's OK.

Ruiz: We talked a little bit about working conditions in the fields - I want to talk a little bit about the UFW. What was occurring in Guadalupe and what kind of impact they had as far as different dynamics then - were the people polarized? Did they come together?

Galvan: I think they polarized. Even people that worked in the fields. One time it was so embarrassing, when they first started picketing here, the stores. I

would take my mom every Saturday to get groceries in Santa Maria. I took her to Williams Brothers then, and Safeway or Lucky on Broadway. A lot of the people that were picketing there my mom knew, because she worked with them in the packing shed.

One time this lady came up to her and said "Ay, Lona, you're not going in here are you? We're picketing. The farmers, we need to have these conditions changed. Please don't go in there." My mom is saying, "Well, I have to get my groceries. I feel sorry for them but I have to get my groceries."

We went in and she gets this big head of lettuce and sticks it right on top of the bag, so that they can see when we're going out that in fact she even got a head of lettuce! I was thinking "Oh, my God!" I was so embarrassed. My mom never used to buy lettuce because we lived across from the lettuce field, and to her it was a sin to buy lettuce when we could just go pluck it up. I said, "Mom, why are you doing that?" And she said, "Oh, you know these people...they don't have to be doing this." I said, "Mom! I am not ever crossing that picket line again. Don't ask me to do that."

Ruiz: And have you, to this day?

Galvan: No. I don't do it now - I wouldn't. Anyway - since my brother was right in the middle of town he used to have a lot of people come in and shoot the breeze, so he knew a lot of the people involved with the movement. We have a lot of pictures, but I can't ever remember marching with them. I don't know why. I did go to the rallies and stuff that they had. I don't know if I was here...I went to Santa Barbara in 71, to school. I missed some exciting stuff. All the people that were in the movement my brother knew really well. He considered himself a farm worker, and I know he

was sympathetic to the cause, but he didn't choose that as his priority I guess. He didn't choose that as his way to fight discrimination. I did go to the rallies. In fact one of the ladies - I worked for Wallace Flower Seed Company which had people out in the field and one of the ladies that worked for us was a foreman, and [she] was one of the first that walked out of the fields to join the picketers. I remember that was a big deal for us in the office, everybody was talking about it. She was a real supporter, and was always fully involved.

Ruiz: How did your father respond?

TAPE BREAK

Galvan: I don't know, I guess it's the only recourse you have left. When nobody else is listening you just have to slap them in the face. [Laughs] You have to go right up to them and say "Hey!"

Ruiz: I was interested in how your father responded to UFW.

Galvan: Let me say first how he responded to the mayor's recall, because the mayor at one time had written a letter for my oldest brother, I don't know, maybe the other one too, so that he wouldn't have to go into active duty because he was helping the family. (My brother was in the National Guard but he didn't have to go to active duty.) So when we started the recall my dad kept telling us, "I don't think you should do this. He really helped us. You know the saying 'Never bite the hand that feeds you'." But I think in his own way he was kind of proud we would stand up for what we believed in, because that's what he always taught us. But if the mayor asked him he probably would have said, "I told them not to do this, but you know what kids are." That was my dad's way, anyway. He

always told us. He would give us advice til the day he died, but what we did with it was up to us.

When the movement came, he knew a lot of people, too. My dad was hunch-backed because of stooping over all day - he knew how hard it was. So I'm sure he thought that all the changes that were made were good. And I'm sure the day they did away with that short hoe was probably the happiest day in his life. He wasn't working any more - he didn't march with them - he was in his sixties. He was born in 1900. In fact, he used to go work every year in Delano, in the grapes, during that season, so he knew that work too. He said one year when he was there he met Cesar Chavez. He had a lot of respect for him [Chavez]. I think that my dad (in the 30s?) - they were trying to organize a union here - my dad was involved with that. I think my dad respected authority but he knew that change was good. I know he had a lot of respect for Chavez and what he was doing.

Ruiz: What type of change did the UFW provide for the workers as far as working conditions...[inaudible] the braceros program.

Galvan: Let's see. The braceros - I'm not sure if there was a specific time limit as to when the program was over...I know a lot of the braceros stayed here and they married people from here, and just stayed. I think that because of that program maybe a lot of siblings and others [came here] - and that contributed to more people coming here to find work. I think the movement forced farmers and contractors to be more accountable as to what they were paying and when they were paying it - I think there had been a lot of abuses. Contractors charging for what-have-you...for lunches...I don't think there was as much accountability then as there was later, after the Fair Labor Board mandated that they have to do certain things. And the pesticides: there is still a lot of it out there.

Ruiz: ....is there any less now after regulation?

Galvan: I don't know about during that program, but after the movement started they started saying, "Hey, wait a minute, what about the pesticides, and how about providing bathrooms...?" It was just basic things. To me it's just sad...if people are working under you and you don't even provide the basic needs...that's pretty...it's not kind. It's so much detachment from the people who are doing something for you.

Ruiz: I want to talk a little bit about [inaudible] the John Birch Society in the Santa Maria Valley.

Galvan: OK. What I know of the John Birch Society is that it is an extreme right wing group. I don't even know how I had heard of them. I guess just reading. At that time there was a lot of conservative things going on. At one of the rallies for Cesar Chavez, they brought the Theatro Camposino. That was the first time I had ever heard of them so I went. They had two or three different plays. In one of them one of the actors wrapped himself around the American flag - I guess they threw themselves on the ground...anyway, it was quite a play.

When I got home my brother called from the store and said, "Did you go to the rally today?" I said, "Yes." He said, "Did you see the Theatro?" I said, "Yes, they were great." He said, "What did they do with the flag? Mel Ocampo called and said they defamed the flag and it was really bad." I said, "It was just part of the play." Mel Ocampo was a DJ on the radio, and would have people calling in and he would take comments. He was at the rally, supposedly as a supporter, but this thing just hit him - it was like "this is Anti-American." He was a friend of my brother's, and he called

him from the radio station. That's why Charlie wanted to know exactly what it was, so I told him.

A couple of days after that, Mel Ocampo called Charlie and said, "Could you bring some people to Santa Maria? We're having this meeting about this issue." Charlie said, "I guess so." We went. The meeting was at one of the schools at Santa Maria. We walked in the cafeteria with signs all around that said C.A.C. We thought, "Community Action Commission? What is this?" In smaller letters underneath it had "Concerned American Citizens". They were handing all this stuff out at the door. We went and sat down and started reading it.

I turned it over and saw that it was the John Birch Society! I thought, "Oh, God." So I said, "Look who wrote this!" We're sitting there - we just sat. They had high-powered people come in and say how un-American it [the play] was, and why should they be allowed to get away with this. They were associating anti-Americanism with Cesar Chavez. We just thought, hey, forget this guy. We left. The next thing we know Mel Ocampo is going all over speaking against Cesar Chavez, against the movement. He got to be the poster child for Malichi - you know, The Traitor. Wherever Cesar Chavez went, Mel Ocampo was there. It was this thing all the time. I guess he was backed by the John Birch Society.

Ruiz: What did he mean by un-American? What was going on at that time? On a national scale?

Galvan: I don't know if it was at the same time that the anti-war movement was going on? I guess like now, this thing about if you're a real patriot you can't be anti-war because the United States is in it. If you were a real patriot you wouldn't be opposing the United States' action.

Ruiz: Can we talk a little about the Guadalupe [inaudible] and what they were and your knowledge about what had happened.

Galvan: I wasn't here in town when that happened, I was at UCSB, but I knew about it. I knew all the people who were involved with it. I guess what they did at a board meeting was that they complained about things that had been going on for years and years, and they just demanded a change in their policy, to disallow certain things - I think pretty much what they were asking for was just either a policy that you can't hit kids or you can't say they can't speak Spanish - things like that. Basically I think that what was pretty much it.

There was a lot of other discrimination I guess. One of the things while I was growing up - I always felt that I should have been an A student, because I studied - always got a hundred in spelling. I remember one time - I don't remember what grade it was, maybe between 5th and 7th - I remember this guy sitting next to me and he was the son of a farmer and showing off his report card. I looked and thought, "How in the world did he get more As than I got? I'm smarter than he is." [Laughs] I thought I was. I thought that I had produced better work than he had, in class anyway. Just from what I could see. A goof-off. I'm thinking he doesn't deserve all those As. I've got Bs and a few As.

One of the things I remember about this kid was that in Science he had brought in this little collection of rocks, and they were in a little display case. He had the names of the rocks on there. I couldn't for the life of me figure out how he knew the names of these rocks. We never studied that. I had no clue where he could have learned the names of these rocks. I just couldn't figure out how he had access, that I didn't have, to this and maybe that's why he got the As.

I guess just the opportunity to do something like that - I had no idea where to go look for that. That was not something that they encouraged us to do, as a class or individually, to go do research. To me it wasn't equity, but if somebody had asked me I would have said, "How come I didn't get all As? I've been doing all my work." I don't know if it was because teachers looked at us differently, like "He can do this but you can't." I don't know if they asked him if he wanted to do a rock collection, for extra credit - Now, I know, it was because he had access to [materials] to be able to do that kind of research. Maybe his parents helped him too. Labeling [things] and like that...for a nice presentation.

Ruiz: What was going on...

Galvan: Then there was a lot of hand slapping with rulers. (Of course I never did because I was so good!) I know kids did - they would do that all the time, it was just part of school. Some people got punished more than others. There was a guy that had a hook for a hand, Mr. [?] - this was in the report. I don't know what he did with it - I guess he would grab kids or maybe...I don't know. I hope he never dug it into anybody. I don't know.

We had a little library and my brother said that one day he and a friend of his had their heads shoved in and knocked up and down between the shelves. I guess they [teachers] had pretty much license to discipline the way they could.

Ruiz: ....[inaudible] certain languages?

Galvan: I don't remember them ever telling me I couldn't speak Spanish. A lot of times when we had new students they would ask me to translate for them. To kind of help them out. So I never got that myself. I know my oldest brother, when he started school in Betteravia, had to go to the Mexican

school first until he learned enough English to go to the big - the big two-room schoolhouse! I think I read somewhere that in 44 or 45 they passed something saying you couldn't have a separate language school. I think he was the only one - I don't think my other brothers did.

Ruiz: So the parents were just complaining about...

Galvan: At that time I think - I know with my parents, if I went home and said, "The teacher hit me," they would say "Why?" Then I'd be hit again. I think a lot of kids didn't complain because they knew they'd be in a lot more trouble then. I think they just didn't complain to their parents that much. It was almost like part of school. If you were bad, you got your hand slapped with the ruler.

Ruiz: What ended up happening to the parents? At that Board meeting? What were the Guadalupe [inaudible].

Galvan: I guess it was ten people that went and said, "We're tired of this and we want some kind of change." I am not sure what happened there. I guess they started shouting or whatever it was, and then they called the police in to calm them down or take them away. I think they were arrested. I found that report the other day - the original report, the original binding.

Ruiz: OK. I'm going to go to the personal questions. How has Guadalupe shaped you as a person - the person you are today?

Galvan: I think it's made me appreciate diversity. I guess to really love it - to really feel it's a part of your life - you're really a part of a diverse community. To see that people live differently, but that's OK. To live together, that way. Also I think that cultural groups ARE different.

I know that when I was in 6th or 7th grade I had a really good friend that was Japanese. She would go to Japanese school at the Buddhist school, one or two days a week. She used to invite me. "Why don't you come with me? You'll learn Japanese. You'll like it." You want to know my dad's reaction to that? [Laughs] I got all excited, so I said I'd ask. I asked my dad..."Japanese! You don't even want to speak Spanish and you're going to learn Japanese?" So the answer was no.

I know that Margie said that one time she went with a friend and I guess the Buddhist priest asked her what her name was, and he said he knew the family. She said something about going to the classes with her friend and he said no, she couldn't.

I think every group had their own cultural upbringing. I think everybody really fostered their culture and they lived it within each group. I remember for the 15th of September the whole town would go down there, whether you were Mexican or not. For the Oban Festival everybody would go whether you were Japanese or not. The Filipinos would have the Cardona Picnic and everybody could go. The Portuguese would have their day and everybody could go. And they FED everybody. It didn't matter. You were a guest, but you were welcomed, you knew you were. And even though you knew it was different because you didn't eat that day everyday or didn't recognize the foods, or didn't have a real taste for them, it was OK. You were still welcomed. I just like that, that diversity.

Ruiz: Where do you see Guadalupe going in the future? As far as where the town's going - economically, politically, socially.

Galvan: This is one of the things that worries me. When we had the opening here, there weren't a lot of people from Guadalupe. I mean, there's, what?, six thousand people here now? And I don't know even half of them. Maybe I

just know the 2000 that were here when I was here. But when you have an event in Guadalupe you have people from outside coming. I think there's always been a connection to outside, because we needed services and that kind of thing. I think we always have like "Friends of Guadalupe" that will show up and be supportive. Sometimes I think they are more supportive than the town itself. I'm not sure why. I know that being from Guadalupe, all the time the Community Action Commission came in and stuff, it was always this feeling that they're outsiders. "Yes, that's fine, but it's not going to work." "Yes, that OK but don't tell us how to do things."

I don't know if it's still that...I'm sure there are things going on here that I don't come to. Like when they celebrate something at the Vet's or whatever. At the opening last week I would have expected more people. I have friends that live here, and I never see them when I come. A couple of days ago I talked to someone who lives here, and today when I was coming over here I was thinking I should have called her and - she wasn't here for the opening. I don't know if it was two different things going on or what. I was thinking that if this was here in town, why wouldn't the whole town show up for it.

Ruiz: Do you think they have sort of lost that intimacy that it had in the past that made you love Guadalupe? Or do you think...

Galvan: No, I don't think so. When we come to eat here at the restaurant I still see people we know. In a way, I still imagine myself living here. Going to a restaurant, not only would I see these people, I might see so-and-so. I don't know if it's lost the intimacy or not, because I don't live here. I'm not here every day. I guess when I come here I want it to be like it was. For a long time, it made me really sad when I would come here at night and I would see nobody on the streets. Because when I lived here there

were always people on the street, any time of day or night. That really makes me sad when I see that. It's not the same town in that respect.

Ruiz: Where do you think it's going economically?

Galvan: It hasn't grown economically for a long time. But I think it has a lot of potential. I think it still has charm. Other people just say, "Oh, Guadalupe." But I think it still has charm. I think it could be like San Luis, with more people on the street.

Ruiz: What do you think about the possibility of tourism or increases in tourism in Guadalupe? What do you think could be the advantages and consequences of that?

Galvan: For the town it would be good. I think it would be a good idea. One of the most beautiful sites in the state is our beach. I think it's beautiful, I've always loved it. I still love it. I have cousins and step-daughters in Arizona. I say, "Have you ever been to the beach in Guadalupe?" My husband will say, "What do you mean? You just drive up and it's just sand! What do you want them to see? There's nothing out there - it's not like they're going to go on a boardwalk or something." I said, "Yes, but it's beautiful. It's a beautiful beach." So they come out and they go, "It's pretty." It's a nice place but there's nothing to do out here.

And Oso Flaco Lake is beautiful too. I don't know if having tours through there would muddy it up or ruin it. But it's nice for people to know that it's there - if you want to go for a drive somewhere where it's beautiful, quiet, nature. I don't know if you want loads of people coming.

The Far Western is known throughout the state and they have their own busloads. I think it could be a place for people to come to the Far

Western, and people could walk up and down the streets, and visit the museum. I think this is a really interesting place. There's a lot of history in this town. The diversity, the different groups and how they happened to come here. John Perry has an interesting place. Even if there was just a little plaque [to read] - if you fixed it up and [people] just walked by...

Ruiz: Thank you.

END OF TAPE