

July 25, 2004 – Magee House Gastelum Family Reunion

Interviews with Herbert Chavoya and Fidel Chavoya , sons of Guadalupe  
Gastelum. Interviewer: Marge Howard-Jones

#### TELL ME WHERE YOU WERE BORN AND WHO YOU ARE

I am Herbert Lorenze Chavoya, descendant of Angelina and Stephan Chavoya. Pioneer family here in Carlsbad. I was born here in 1927. I was born on Pine and Chestnut...the home don't exist anymore. We lived next door to grandpa, Bibiana Gastelum and Josepha, and they don't exist anymore, but the house is still there and everytime I come here, I have to walk by and look at that house. So many memories here, so many memories.

I have a lot of cousins here, some of the original uncles and aunts have passed on now. But everytime I come here, it's like coming home. I was born here and I lived here until I was about 13 years of age. That would be because my dad, who was from San Jose, California, met my mom, took him 3 days to come down in a Model T, and marry her. He couldn't get her to leave this town because the Gastelum family is very close to each other and my mom wouldn't even think of leaving Mom and Dad, my grandparents. So gradually, little by little, he had a business of a wood yard, he sold it. The home, he sold it, and told my mom he would work for the Forestry Service, building a geyser plant over here by San Onofre, so that was the first step out of here, about 20 miles. And we lived there, well my brother Oscar left and went into the army in the South Pacific, got injured and came home, and I left and joined the Merchant Marine. And when we both came home after the war was over, they had already moved back to San Jose because the geyser plant was not needed anymore. They had bulldozed it all down and the whole family of us, the Chavoyas, went back to San Jose. But all of my mother's family is still here.

What I remember most of Carlsbad, of course, is the Gastelum family. So many relatives here, so many cousins. But the highlight of my living here in Carlsbad was...when school was out, we existed everyday on the beach. We loved the beach. N fact, when my older brother Oscar passed on, his last wish was that his ashes would be put back on the beach at Carlsbad. And I come here, every time we come, I'm amazed at how things changed, but the original things are still here. And the memories will always be here. I come down, like now were having this family reunion and I see the old Magee barn there, the old Twin Inns building I remember, there was two Twin Inns buildings, now there's just one. And I remember walking to the beach from our house which was just two blocks away, or three blocks away and there were just open fields and a house here and there. Now it's full of apartments, condos, you name it. Now I don't think you could even cross it, it's probably illegal, private property now, but at that time it was wide open. We used to walk downtown to the movies and we could sit through a cartoon, a movie, news, a comedy and a main feature for 25 cents. And that included soda pop and popcorn. And we'd walk home with maybe a nickel in our pocket yet. It was amazing what we could do at those times. Everything was open fields, very few homes. The grammar school was just two blocks away from the house. We very seldom saw a school bus. The school busses were for the children who lived up on top of the hill or beyond, the Marron(e)s ranches. There was a eucalyptus grove up there and I

think it's all homes now. Where the Marron ranch was, there's a great bit shopping center now. And I remember Sylvester Marron, he was in my class, with Joyce (Smith) and all these people here from the little barrio in Carlsbad. Which to me is very dear, because that's where all my memories really are from.

Going to the beach with all my cousins, we never had a life guard, my older uncle or cousins, they took care of that. They saw that we didn't have problems crossing the highway, because the highway at that time was a carevery five minutes. Now it's a solid string of cars. So we'd just walk across the highway, play on the beach, get hungry and come home and eat, then go back again. We were there all day long, just scorched with the sun, we looked like little black kids, but we had a lot of fun. And things were so simple then. The basic thing was to just enjoy life, really.

My father come from Santa Clara Valley, up north. His descendants wer the pioneer settlers over there. In California they had the land grant from Spain. Big land grants. The one my dad came from was Rancho Yerba Buena. It was 325,000 acres. Bigg pices of land. They were land grants from the King of Spain, for there services because they provided food for the Presidio in San Francisco. Anyway, that valley became an agricultural valley. They grew all kinds of fruits, vegetables and, naturally the canneries came in. That's were my dad met Mom. They migrated over there in the susmmer to work for the canneries and then migrate back to Carlsbad. Well, my dad met her up there and he liked her so well he got her address. And it took him 3 days in a Model T because the highway was El Camino Real and it was just a narrow road. And he finally asked Grandpa for Mom's hand and he married her and we settled here in Carlsbad. He opened a wood business...at that time, everbody had wood stoves, wood-burning stoves. Those butane or propane or gas stoves were unheard of. Everybody had wood burning stoves so he supplied fire wood for all the homes in Oceanside, San Marcos, Vista and all over. And then he went a little further and went into the tree trimming business and clearing land, taking the trees out, for what ever they wanted to grow. He would take money, contract to clear the land, and at the same time salvage the wood and sell that, too. So he had a pretty good business going.

#### WHAT KIND OF WOOD WAS IT?

Whatever was available here. He loved olive, because over here by Bonsall, there was , called it Olive Hill. It was an Olive grove up there and they wanted to terrace it for easier agriculture and my dad took the contract to clear all those olive trees that had to be dug out and that olive wood was like oil, very good burning, even the roots. He'd take the roots out and break them up and they were like chunks of coal. They were very popular for firewood. So he would sell all of that. Other times, at Kelly ranch they had a bunch of eucalyptus trees. He cut those down and eucalyptus trees, a lot of people liked them because they had a nice mint aroma for burning. It was good wood but it was hard to cut a lot of fire wood. I remember my Dad, man, he worked so hard to split those logs.

He never really like to live here because his roots were in San Jose. And he wanted to go back. A lot of little things were happening. The whole Gastelum family was there and he felt like he was an outsider. One man, LeBac, Le Betta, from San Diego. He had real estate here. And he approached my Dad one time if he would buy all the barrio because a lot of people there, it was the Depression, they wouldn't pay the rent, they couldn't pay the rent. So he would come up to collect the rent and people couldn't pay, so he approached my dad, he says: "You want to buy? This is a good ten acres of land

here and I'll let you have it real cheap. Buy it...it's a good investment, Steve," (my dad was Stephano)) "It's a good investment." And my dad said: "You know those people that aren't paying the rent? My wife is related to all of them. If you can't get the rent, what makes you think that I'll be able to get it? I'm married into the family." So he passed it up which would have been a bid opportunity for my dad, but he just felt like he was an outsider. Eventually, he sold everything and talked my mom into leaving. By that time, we were already big kids and we helped him. We wanted to move on, also. We just saw no future here. So we wanted to move further up towards northern California because we'd heard so much from what our dad used to tell us.

WHAT YEAR WAS THAT?