

Ramona Cleaned and Combined.wav

Audrey Maier [00:00:00] Today is Tuesday, June 6th and I am at Ramona Arranda's house in Highland, California. So.

Ramona Arranda Genamaras [00:00:08] Yes.

Audrey Maier [00:00:09] Ramona, thank you so much for your time today. I'm really excited to talk to you more about Colton since my family was from there. I actually brought some pictures on my phone we can maybe look at too. Um, but why don't you, just for the record, I know, just tell us, uh. Introduce yourself.

Ramona Arranda Genamaras [00:00:25] Oh, my name is, uh, Ramona, A Genamaras. My last name is Genamaras from my husband. My second husband. My first husband's name was Trinidad R Mercado M-E-R-C-A-D-O. Mercado, a typical Spanish name. So we were, where do we go from there?

Audrey Maier [00:00:53] No, I'll go ahead and just start, um, asking you questions. So I'll start with, uh, where - where were you born?

Ramona Arranda Genamaras [00:01:01] I was born in Victorville, California.

Audrey Maier [00:01:04] And who were your parents?

Ramona Arranda Genamaras [00:01:06] My parents were Lorenzo Aranda. And my mother was Epimenia Hernandez.

Audrey Maier [00:01:14] And can you tell me a little bit about them?

Ramona Arranda Genamaras [00:01:16] Oh, well, they married in Mexico. And my father was, um. Uh, a local boy in, uh, uh, in the Republic of Mexico, but, uh, uh, he traveled back and forth to Leon Guanajuato. That's where he met my mother. And, uh. But he lived in Mexico City. With his mother. Now, I can't figure out how he came about because he, uh, used to come to the United States. In the summertime when they had vacations. Summer vacation. And his father was in, uh, in Northern California, and he would come and visit him. Now, how my grandmother, and, uh. Her. Um, partner got together, I don't know. But anyway, he was born. Uh, so that's as far as I know. I can't figure it out how. How they ever met or what the occasion was. So anyway, the the deal was that as he grew up, he would come in the summer time to visit him, his father, and he stayed through the summer in Northern California. And then he went back to Mexico where he got his, uh, Mexican, uh, schooling. And then as he grew up and became an adult. He, um. owned a liquor place where he sold the liquor like a bar and, uh. This was during the Mexican Revolution with Pancho Villa. And the, the and the country of Mexico. They were wanting to eliminate the, um, the way I understood it, uh, they were wanting to free the, the people of the poor people and give them more opportunities to survive because they were suffering, uh, depression, just like we were, but in their own, in their own system. Uh, that's, uh, that's as far as I can go with, um, um, knowledge that, uh, he he came to visit Leon because he had some relatives there. Um, I really don't know the whole who the relatives were, but I know he became very acquainted with people in Leon. And that's where my mother was born. Leon, Guanajuato Mexico. Uh, so it's, uh, very interesting, uh, life. And then he used to ride a bicycle. So they used to call him, uh, Lencho the bicycle boy. Uh, there, that the one that was really funny, but, uh, and then I guess they they decided they they were

going together, but they never, uh, were able to date, uh, as what you call dating. Uh. So where do we go from here?

Audrey Maier [00:04:58] Well, I was going to just keep asking questions whenever you're done. And sometimes I usually let a pause just to make sure that, you know, you're ready to speak more.

Ramona Arranda Genamaras [00:05:07] Go to the next level. Yeah.

Audrey Maier [00:05:08] Um, but I was wondering, how long did you live in Victorville? So you said you were born there did you live there long?

Ramona Arranda Genamaras [00:05:13] I was. Uh, my my father and my mother immigrated to the United States because, uh, the United States was bringing people to work here in the United States. And, uh, even my husband, my my deceased husband and, uh, I lost not too long ago. He, uh, his father. Came from Greece. So he became a foreman for the railroad. And, uh, he, uh. That's how he and his, uh, mother. Uh, his name was Pete. Uh, Pete's mother and his father met, and, uh, eventually they hooked up with each other and married. And, uh, since he wasn't married when he immigrated to the United States. He immigrated to the United States from Greece. So he was part Grecian and American, but born he was born in here in the States, in Kansas City, Kansas. Mhm. So all of that is part of his history. Uh, matter of fact, I was just going through some papers that I had to discard because there are old papers no more. Having anything to do with me. Uh. All right, let's see what else.

Audrey Maier [00:06:48] When did you move to Colton, or did you live in somewhere in between living in Victorville.

Ramona Arranda Genamaras [00:06:52] Uh, well. Uh, well, uh, but my, uh, my father got hired at the cement plant in in Oro Grande. Oro Grande, which is just right off, um, Victorville because, uh, they only had a hospital in Victorville. Most of the others were home. And, uh, I was the first one in my family. I went to be born in a hospital. And even at that, at that point, uh, my mother was only 15, so she was real young. And they when she was in labor, they called in my father and told him that, uh, she was having a very hard time and that they didn't guarantee that she or the child would survive. I was the first one. So there, uh, the when the doctor just called him in for a confer, they asked him, who do you want to live? Your wife or the new child? Of course, he said the wife. Uh uh. Let the child go. Uh, well, so, what is so strange is that. After I was born. Uh. Uh, my name was, uh. My mother picked the name Ramo- Ramona. There's a Saint Ramon. And of course, being very religious and each everybody has their favorite saint. And I guess my mother had him for, for his, her helper. And, uh, I finally made it out. So. So when when I was born. The years afterwards, I found out that there was a mistake on my birth certificate. I was born a boy. [Laughs.] All this went on, but I didn't find it out until I was already a teenager here in Colton, we had moved from from, uh, Victorville to, uh. San Bernardino. No door. Well, no. My my brother. My first brother was born in Victor[ville], I know. And, uh, Oro Grande. And then, uh, the winters were pretty nasty there and all of it. So my mother said, I don't like it here. And, uh. So. What happened was we had a relative. A cousin and had already been established here in the United States. He was. Uh, what would you call him? Uh. He ran a little store for the company. It was a company store. And there that was the mail. The post? The post office. They had everything there. They had, Yeah. They had a little store with food and clothing and, uh, fabrics, everything at that little store. And he ran it for the company as a worker. So he, um, that he, he wrote to my father that there

would be hiring people because they called the this signing on. They called it, uh, "renganche" and "renganche" was hooking together. That's what it means. And, uh, uh, the the person that was signing them on had told my father that, uh, uh, how many children do you have? And she said, we don't have any. Why? You can't sign on. You can't sign on. You have to be able to prove that you have your children with you because they need families, uh, established families. And so he was very depressed. And then the the the people, that were writing him up for the permit. But, uh, and they said, no, we can't take you. So my father as tricky as he was, uh, pushed my mother on to the train. It was starting to move. So he finally told the fellow, uh, well, I'll have to go after my wife. And the train is moving. So he ran to the train, got the paperwork there. He had they had started with and he ran in and got on the on the on the train with my mother and looking for her to to, um, find a place because, uh, and those days and they were they set up trains for, uh, moving people around. What is what is so coincidental is that, um, Pete's father was a foreman in uh a railroad in Wisconsin, and he was also he was also sent to Mexico to bring back people. Signing them on.

Audrey Maier [00:12:44] That is so interesting. What a coincidence?

Ramona Arranda Genamaras [00:12:47] Yeah, what a coincidence. But they never met. They never met, but I that was that was part of the history that I found out.

Audrey Maier [00:12:55] Wow. So your relative, he was working for the company store. What company was that for? Was it for the cement company?

Ramona Arranda Genamaras [00:13:00] O- Oro Grande cement company. Yeah, they had their own little store and he he was the one that ran it. My, my cousin and my cousin was about a few years older than I was. So he was. Well, no, he was a teenager already, but he was established. Yeah. He was a little about ten years older than me, but, uh, they, they trained a. Um, workers. At an early age. You know, you started to work, uh, ten years old. You you didn't have a, uh, a job. And they could they were they were shoeshine boys. They were, uh, errand boys. They were mail- mailmen, whatever. And then, of course, uh, they also had a, uh, living quarters, little partition. Uh, what would you call.

Audrey Maier [00:14:01] Like a dormitory?

Ramona Arranda Genamaras [00:14:03] And, uh, well, they had, uh, a little, uh, uh, um, residential areas and they were partitioned off. I don't remember now what they call them, but they were they were, uh, little private homes.

Audrey Maier [00:14:18] Oh, really? So, when your mom and dad moved and they were working there, they had their own little private home that they lived there within the company, but it was owned by company?

Ramona Arranda Genamaras [00:14:27] Yes it was company residence. Mhm. But then uh my mother insisted she, she was very uncomfortable in the cold weather and uh, and uh also uh things, things happen. Uh, my, my, uh, well, my mother was taking care of me and I started to run around crawling. You know how I have the baby start crawling and getting into everything? And my mother had, uh, uh, wood stove cause they didn't have the, uh, the other stuff, and, uh. Uh, uh, there was a knock on the door. There was a salesman, and my mother went to the door. And in this little must have been a little cubicle about this size. And, uh uh uh uh, when she was, uh, answering the door, I was crawling

around. And in those days, they used to have a container of, uh, uh uh, pet- petroleum. Oh, yeah.

Audrey Maier [00:15:37] Petroleum?. Or kerosene?

Ramona Arranda Genamaras [00:15:38] Kerosene. Kerosene is what, uh, the word I was trying to work to say. Uh, and, uh, I took a good swallow of that. It burned my insides. Yeah. And, uh, uh, that was my first experience in and doing things that I shouldn't do. Anyway. So the. My cousins. My cousin was dating a lady. Uh, in in that same area. I don't know what he was. I guess probably just, uh. Uh, daughter of, uh, family and, uh, uh, he he they were pretty well off that family. She was driving around and, uh, the best automobile. And she she drove my mother to San Bernardino to get me treated for, uh, for the burns because I burned my esophagus. So, anyway, that was one of my bad things that I did beside a lot of other things. I know I'm going to come by and tell you, uh, tell you something.

Audrey Maier [00:16:56] How many, um, how many siblings do you have? And were you, like, on the the older side? Younger side?

Ramona Arranda Genamaras [00:17:04] I was the older one. I was a firstborn.

Audrey Maier [00:17:07] Oh so you were first born? Ok.

Ramona Arranda Genamaras [00:17:09] My my youngest brother is the baby, the family. And he takes care of me. He just took off as you came in. He just took off. You really met at the gate? Uh. Right here. You came in here? He went out the back there. We have an entryway and a rear end. So it says, well, here's a telephone in case she called a ticket or whatever. So whether that's referring to you because, you know, things happen. Anyway, let's see, how.

Audrey Maier [00:17:43] How many siblings do you have?

Ramona Arranda Genamaras [00:17:45] I- my mother had 11 children. Yeah. She, minus one to make a dozen. And it's it's really something. And I was the oldest, and so I went to school. Well, uh, we we lived in San Bernardino, maybe just for a few months.

Audrey Maier [00:18:09] And that was after you, swallowed, kerosene?

Ramona Arranda Genamaras [00:18:11] Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. And, uh, that, they were bringing me. They came. We-- They moved to San Bernardino, and the doctor kept on treating me and doing whatever was being done. And then, uh, my father got hired at the PFE as, at the Santa Fe. For, of course, this was still the depression. And so he got hired temporarily. And when the layoffs came on, he was, one of the ones that was, uh, laid off. But then he decided to move to Colton because there was another, the southern, uh, Southern Pacific in Colton. Was it the Southern Pacific? Yeah. And uh, he hired in over there, in Colton. So he moved to Colton, with me. Uh, but by then, my mother had my brother, my first brother. And so, that was just me and my brother. No, it, and my sister, my first sister. Uh, she was also born in, in San Bernardino. Yeah, she was born in San Bernardino while they lived in those few months in San Bernardino, and he, he, got hired in, at Santa Fe.

Audrey Maier [00:19:44] Do you remember where you lived in San Bernardino?

Ramona Arranda Genamaras [00:19:46] On Union Street, but I don't, and I barely remember the house. Just barely. It's probably been rebuilt, cleared out, started all over again. And, yeah, but it was a, I remember it was Union Street. I don't know how I remember it, but. And we had a record player, a little box record player. My father used to always liked music. So he, uh, bought that with probably some of the money that he had earned, at that time. Of course, money was, uh, a given. I mean, if you had a little money, you could do a lot of things with a little money. Not, not, not like now. It takes millions of dollars now to get along. So, anyway, uh, mm, when my father and my mother moved to Colton, it was another experience. My, uh, the movers there were moving them. They hired a little truck, or a little something to move them, a little, uh, and, uh, they went in there and started moving a little bit of furniture that they had the beds and stuff. Well, my little sister was born in those, during those days, that they moved. And all of a sudden my mother says, "I'm looking for my baby. Where did it go? Where did it go?" They had taken the mattress, because they were just mattresses that were laid, they weren't springs or anything. And, uh, they had wrapped it up, and wrapped a little doll that a baby in there, is uh, so they went looking for him. "You must have wrapped the baby up in the," uh, because they were taking, disassembling, the beds and everything. That's where she went. That's where she was, in there, something. There are so many things that happen that, that uh, are part of my history.

Audrey Maier [00:22:00] But she was okay?

Ramona Arranda Genamaras [00:22:01] She was okay? Yeah, she was okay. They found her right away. They said, well, we just tore up the bed. What are you doing? (unclear) had been ripped away in the wind. Oh, boy. Anyway, is that, uh, going back to. To, uh, the movie. Uh, in San Bernardino, you know where the big stacks are? The smokestacks. Uh, there used to be a bridge, but the bridge was, uh, starting off from, uh, San Bernardino. It used to go up at the very top it would make a U-turn, down. Yeah, that's how it was. I'll have to go and, and look at their history, uh, picture, and see if I can re-- again. Uh, remember? But that that's how we used to go, go to Colton, or any, any place in, uh, in the, uh, southern part of San Bernardino. Mhm. So that's how we got over the, uh, the railroad tracks. So it's, uh, it it was quite an experience. I used to always pray "oh please, oh please don't go over the railing", because it used to be those little Fords that used to crank with, uh, from the front to get them started. Yeah, those the, there was uh little Fords. And when my father always wanted to be able to own a car, in those days, very few people own cars.

Audrey Maier [00:23:46] And did he have a car at that time? You mentioned your aunt did.

Ramona Arranda Genamaras [00:23:50] Mhm. Mhm. Mhm. Oh yeah. She, they came from uh uh wealthy to do family. Mhm.

Audrey Maier [00:23:57] But your father at that time he had a car? Do you remember what type of car?

Ramona Arranda Genamaras [00:24:00] No no no. Uh after he came to San Bernardino that's when he bought a car. Yeah. And of course, they were practically giving away the Fords. Uh, yeah. So all that was before we, uh, we as a family, uh, moved to Colton. It was three, three of us already. Mhm.

Audrey Maier [00:24:24] And where did you move in Colton?

Ramona Arranda Genamaras [00:24:27] South Colton. I was in the area of uh, of the Catholic, uh the Catholic Church in Colton, San Salvador. Mhm. In that area. Mhm. And most of us lived in that southern part because we were segregated. We lived a segregated, uh, life. So anyway, uh, and they build us a school, we went to, um, gra- uh, Garfield School as the one that they built for us. And I got to be, to go to the, to the brand new school. So.

Audrey Maier [00:25:08] When, do you know if there was a moment that you realized that you were segregated from, you know, other people?

Ramona Arranda Genamaras [00:25:16] Uh, no, because, uh, the, uh, the theater, um, did the segregating because, um, many of the, uh, of the um, us people didn't know how to get along with other people, so they segregated us. And, uh, we got along alright. I mean, it was just a thing that had to be done. Just like when they assigned you a seat. Wherever you, you went. Uh, and uh uh, we, we didn't, uh, actually feel segregated. We knew that we didn't belong in North Colton. That was for the white people. Uh, then. So the uh, the, uh, segregation didn't bother us. And the only recreation we had was baseball. We had a park, and, uh, the park was in South Colton, and then, uh, um, there there was a family by the name of Caldera. Uh, yeah. Go there. Yeah. And they, they were business people. And he built, uh. A plant. And that's where we used to go on weekends, to, in the summertime, to go swimming.

Audrey Maier [00:26:47] Do you remember how much it was for admission?

Ramona Arranda Genamaras [00:26:50] \$0.10, I think. I think, I think it was \$0.10. And then he had a ballpark. He. He was a businessman. And he was in the in the Agua Masa area where the Agua Masa road starts in from Fifth Street and uh, it was a plant and then he, he build a, um, a baseball field. They had it all cleared off, for baseball and on Sundays' afternoons or Saturday, Yeah, well, we used to go to the plant on Saturday and, uh, on Sundays with, uh, baseball. The, uh, the cement plant had a team. Uh, and they would play the other teams from the area. And, uh, that's how we. But we never felt, I never felt segregated. Um, so. And it it was just part of part of, uh, uh, the fact that you belong on this side of the tracks and, uh, the other people belong in the North white. And, uh, although, uh. There was a fellow, uh, a man that, uh, owned, uh uh, El Sombrero. He lived next door to us when we were living in South Colton. And when I was going to, to, uh, baseball, it was, I was about, uh, 15 years old at the time. And, uh, he had this, uh, uh, you would call it, uh, a nightclub, thing. And they used to make, uh, real good tacos. I remember that we used to go and buy tacos. I think we only paid a nickel or something like that. Uh, and, but they were the best. The best tacos I could remember. So that's, uh, when I was growing up, and, uh, and, yeah, the, uh, the at the time, also my, my father, uh, to, um, to get, uh get some money for food and stuff like that, he was a boarder. He used to boarder with people for, uh, this and then get a get himself some money to to feed us, because how could how could you survive without money? You had to buy something. And then my mother made us, uh, all the clothes. I remember when my father got a job in Colton at the, at the railroad. They had a free trip. From the company, the company was putting the train was, uh, setting up the train. No, no, no payment or nothing, I think you got a lunch on on the a beggar, a beggar, uh, at lunch on the on the train. And it took you down to. What is it? Uh, Redondo beach. Redondo beach. And then, uh, loaded us there for the day. And my mother had made, made us, my daugh-, my sister and me. Because there was two girls and the one boy, uh, made, uh, um, and some real cute little dresses. It was made out of voile. You know, the thin stuff? And, uh, they were yellow. I remember I

was so proud of what my mother was and, uh, to track back now. Uh, my mother was very, um, a very good, uh, manager. Uh, and, uh, she was able to buy some fabric cause my mother always tried to save a little money. And, uh, in those days, everything was so, so cheap, you could buy fabric for, for a dollar for the whole family, for there was uh, all girls. And anyway, the, uh, that time, uh, we went, uh, to Redondo Beach, and then we came back to. And like I say, I was so proud of my mother, but my mother was blind in one eye. And she sewed. She crocheted. And all this stuff. And, uh. It's amazing. Even my brother that is living with me now, he's 77. He uh, he never knew, that my mother was blind from when I had. And, uh, when I was talking to him about my mother's, um, life, I said, "did you know that my mother was blind in one eye?" Mhm. When she was, uh, um, in, in Mexico, in Leon, she was about, she must have been about between ten, ten years old and maybe 10 or 11. So. And, uh, the boys were boys, you know, they'd pick up a rock and throw it, not throwing it at anybody in particular, but just throw it. And those days, they, they just lay the, laid the roadways, uh, the roadways, because very few people had cars anyway. And, uh, they were throwing rocks. And one of those chips of rock, went straight to my mother's eye and completely blinded her in one eye. And they never were able to fix it because the whole eye was gone. So, uh, that that's been, uh, that's, that's, been revealed just lately, that my mother was blind in one eye because some of my family didn't even know.

Audrey Maier [00:33:13] So she just led her life like nothing, you know, had happened.

Ramona Arranda Genamaras [00:33:17] Mhm. Just. Went on ahead and did what she could. How is she ever, was able to, feed all of us? Uh, and, uh, do what she did. And, uh, it's, it's amazing. So, uh, I had an amazing mother. And you can see her her on there. And there's a couple. That's my dad and my mother. Uh, I celebrated their, uh, 45 years of marriage. Of course, they passed away. Um, within the last 20 years. First he, he, he, um, fell and he had a real bad fall, and he never recovered. So he died. He passed away. And then my mother died after that. So I have albums, her pictures and stuff. But, uh.

Audrey Maier [00:34:13] Can you tell me a little more, actually, about your mom's, uh, her sewing because you mentioned she sewed and crocheted, she made you some outfits. Can you tell me a little bit about, you know, how much she would sew or what you remember about her sewing.

Ramona Arranda Genamaras [00:34:27] Mhm. Well, anytime that there was, uh, some festivity or something like when I was, uh, in school. And none of us had more than two outfits to wear. And, uh, she had made me, um, uh, a little, uh, a little dress. I remember it with a big collar, and it didn't have a sleeve. It was just a big collar. It went around this way like a shawl. And, uh, I was, uh. Uh. I guess I was a favorite of, of the principal. A principal took a liking to me, or something, because he, uh. He was of the, uh, new modern era when he was a principal, and he had a movie camera and he had uh, and he hired a photographer to take those pictures that go around like, like this in uh, in uh-.

Audrey Maier [00:35:31] Panorama.

Ramona Arranda Genamaras [00:35:34] Mhm. Of the school. I was at school and the school was uh, from uh kindergarten to sixth grade. And I went to all of that. I graduated. I graduated from sixth grade. And, yeah. So, uh, and, uh, and Mr. ? was his name. He was German and we were at war with Germany, right? Right. During the era of my my schooling, and, uh, after I thought about it, I said. You know, this, uh, uh, this, uh. Uh, person that that, uh, uh, built the rockets. Uh, I'd say his name anyway. A scientist. Uh, he

looked so much like like the, you know, the my principal. So I have a lot to write about my happy days at school. And I guess I also became, um, a favorite of my one of my school teachers at, at the fourth grade. Fourth grade teacher, Miss Williams, and, uh, and the music teacher. And they had me and she had me study, uh, the, uh, the Christmas song, uh, Santa Claus Is Coming To Town. He bought, uh, the the notes. Because in those days, you just bought a paper. A paper, uh, music. And she played it on the, on the, and I said, well, why are you picking me there are, uh, 2 or 3 ladies, girls that have such beautiful voices? No because I want you to do it. And she played it. And even through the years, there was a boy that was always teasing me about, about how you better watch out you better not cry. So anyway, like I say, I must have been the favorite of some of those, uh, teachers.

Audrey Maier [00:37:53] When you were at Garfield, was it only Mexican students, or were there black students and white students there?

Ramona Arranda Genamaras [00:38:01] Uh. There was one, uh, um, white, uh, uh, one white, uh, family because they lived in South Colton, you know, do you know, uh, South Colton know you know, where the laundry is next to the, uh, the Wilson School. They lived in that area, and they were, uh, they raised goats. And, uh, I think and if it wasn't the some Saldivar. What was her name that you told me?

Audrey Maier [00:38:34] You know, Saldivar and Columbia are my family name. But they weren't. I don't remember them owning goats. And they did come from Mexico. Mhm.

Ramona Arranda Genamaras [00:38:44] Well, uh, the, the and the there was a Saldivar family I think that was uh raising goats and I don't know whether they breded them or just had them, but, but some of the boys would, uh, kid them, you know, about being uh, uh, goat people and uh, anyway, the the fact was that, uh, there was this, this white, white family, actually, there was maybe 2 or 3 white families, but the white families sent their kids to the north part of, of uh, Colton most of them and like the, like the Noriega's that were, because of their, uh, their uhm being businessman. They were talking to the principal. My kids want to go. I want them to go to the school.

Audrey Maier [00:39:43] So they were Mexican, but they had light skin. So they were able to go?

Ramona Arranda Genamaras [00:39:47] Yeah. Oh yeah. Mhm. And then there was another family that uh. A it was funny this one uh, that uh, uh the, the fellow that uh was at my, was white skinned with red hair. And we called him Red. Or he called himself Red. Yeah. And, uh, I don't even remember what his name was. And, uh, uh, it, uh, it it was a preference, because if they knew they were in, in some business or something, they, they could go to to the Lincoln School. It was the Lincoln School, which is now where, uh, the city hall is. They tore that down and made another one. Uh huh. And the library was paid by, some millionaire back east. Um. I can't think of his name. Anyway, uh, they they donated money and they built it. In several places here in San Bernardino, things here in a building that he built and the one in Colton, it was a library. And the new library, no, the old library is still there. But they built a new library is, uh, is now a museum.

Audrey Maier [00:41:27] Yeah. Okay. Yeah, I know what you're talking.

Ramona Arranda Genamaras [00:41:29] Across the street, uh, from the banks.

Audrey Maier [00:41:32] Yeah. I went to the new Lincoln School when I was a kid.

Ramona Arranda Genamaras [00:41:37] Mhm.

Audrey Maier [00:41:37] And then I remember because the new library is, uh.

Ramona Arranda Genamaras [00:41:40] Other ways down.

Audrey Maier [00:41:41] Yeah, a little ways down, okay, I know where.

Ramona Arranda Genamaras [00:41:44] Yeah. And they were all on the same street, um, because uh that was a main street, and, and so that's that's, uh, that's how you can remember all those places. And that's where Stater Brothers started. You remember Stater Brothers? Starting--

Audrey Maier [00:42:03] Aw I still shop at Stater Brothers, yeah.

Ramona Arranda Genamaras [00:42:04] Mhm. Yeah. And I remember uh, uh, being um, going there, but uh, we never bought anything, but we used to go because we came down from the school, from the high school, walked down and then down the main street to Colton. You know, where the Baptist church is. Okay. Yes, I would say corner south of the Catholic church we lived in right in that area. And that big old building that it used to be there, uh, we used to call it, uh, the ghost house. It was two stories, and my, my son happened to, uh, while he was going with a girlfriend that they, he has two, two children with with her. Uh, they they, uh, rented a room and then, and, uh, she said they they heard chains coming up the. He's, he's uh, he and, uh, the the fellow that bought the place, he lived there and but he never told us anything. My son says that that he was, uh, living there just for a short few days or so. And, uh, at night, they would hear chains going up the steps. And one of the times when one of his buddies came over to visit and, uh, he started to hear noises and stuff, he flew out of a window. He was so scared, he flew out of a window. And, you know, you get used to those noises when. When you're growing up, uh, if nobody tells you what it is, you just take it. Take it as it is. Yeah. So. That, uh, friend of his came over to visit him, and he, he, he started hearing noises, and he flew out of there. And also something strange. I mean, uh, that, uh, happened when my when my husband died, my second husband died, uh, um, and the immediate family was there with me. He passed away at home. And my grandson. Uh, is, uh. My grandson and my son and, uh, Pete's the, Pete's the adopted daughter. And who else was there? Their niece. And me. And who else was there? I think that's about it. Uh, uh, they were all there around him, and, uh, he passed away very calmly. And, uh, and my gran, my grandson, um, put a mirror up to him to see if he was breathing, that's how he noticed. So, uh, and then his, his step daughter was going to stay that night. Was going to take turns. We we were going to take turns. It was a Saturday, and she was going to stay. Uh, the couch was we had ordered and, uh, long, a long boy bed because he was so tall. He was six, six footer. Mhm. So and uh, the bed that they had ordered for him was just too short. So that's, that's how he happened to wind up in the front room. He wound up in the front room and his uh and my grandson and I, uh, stood by him while, while, uh, all this process was going on and, uh, uh, all of a sudden we had some back, uh, some back doors, um, patio doors and then the main door in the front. And they were open because it was summertime. And, uh, all of a sudden there was a whirlwind, a whirlwind that just came through. And I said, that was a spirit. And that that's, uh, so, uh, it's heartwarming but it's kind of scary because we don't understand it. Mhm. Anyway, that's how we said goodbye. Mhm.

Audrey Maier [00:46:47] I did have some more questions about Wilson, or sorry, about Garfield School. And, were you allowed to speak Spanish at school and did you grow up speaking Spanish or do?

Ramona Arranda Genamaras [00:47:01] Mhm-- Uh we were told not to but we, they didn't really emphasize it because uh, we ourselves uh, took it upon ourselves to, to speak the, uh, English language. At least I never got told, uh, not to do it, but we it was understood you speak English. I went to a Spanish school before I went to Garfield. And I had a Spanish, uh, Spanish speaking, um, teacher that came from Mexico. And he was also immigrated, and he was Spanish speaking for the kids that were, that were just starting. So I know my ABCs in Spanish and English.

Audrey Maier [00:47:51] Where was this at?

Ramona Arranda Genamaras [00:47:52] And, uh, this was, uh, on Seventh Street. Um, uh, there was a building that used to be a theater on Seventh Street.

Audrey Maier [00:48:05] Is this in Colton?

Ramona Arranda Genamaras [00:48:06] In Colton. Mhm. Uh, let's see, it was between, uh. They used to have performances there, but then I think they had a fire and just the front was left. And I remember the first time I performed there because I was supposed to be this big speaker. Uh, on the 16th of September Fiestas. Yeah. I was, uh, well, I was one of the speakers and one of their orators that did all this. They trained me for that. And it was, uh, uh, English and Spanish. It was a combination.

Audrey Maier [00:48:55] And so how old were you when you went to the Spanish classes? Must have been before kindergarten.

Ramona Arranda Genamaras [00:49:00] Yes. Before kindergarten. I went one year to kindergarten. And there was, uh, newly when we had come a San Bernardino to, to live in Colton. And my father always wanted us to learn the language.

Audrey Maier [00:49:17] And so this wasn't like in uh, was it an official school did, were the, were there other students or was it just sort of like a tutoring?

Ramona Arranda Genamaras [00:49:23] No. It was other other students. And they get, they checked in and as a matter of fact, uh, um, some of them, uh, still graduated with me in that 1943, uh, that we used to go to, to the, to that little school. It was a little, um, uh, kind of, uh, I think they did it, uh, because there was a pre-training and we would, uh, and learn the Spanish, uh, alphabet and sing the Spanish songs and stuff. And then we, we would pledge allegiance to, to the United States, but we would also respect the Mexican flag because we were of Mexican descent. Mhm.

Audrey Maier [00:50:17] I never heard of a school like that in Colton before.

Ramona Arranda Genamaras [00:50:20] That's the way it was. And then. And then, uh, that teacher, uh, I think he only he only taught two years, two uh summers and, uh, and he was, uh, from Mexico. Uh, what was his name? Professor. Uh, I can't.

Audrey Maier [00:50:43] I would be very impressed if you did remember. So was it only during the summer that the class?

Ramona Arranda Genamaras [00:50:48] Yes. Mhm. Yeah. Because some of the kids were already, uh, upgraded and so they're actually pre- preschool English. Mhm. So they were trying to prepare us to, to go right in even if we knew how to speak Spanish. No, we were uh, we were supposed not to speak Spanish but English and uh, we abide with it. I mean, I did I don't know whether anybody else, although, uh, at home, we spoke Spanish.

Audrey Maier [00:51:29] So going to Wilson, was that your first time speaking in English if you spoke Spanish at home?

Ramona Arranda Genamaras [00:51:36] Uh, we did both.

Audrey Maier [00:51:39] Oh, so you spoke both languages at home. And then when you went to Garfield, so you already knew English by the time you started at Garfield?

Ramona Arranda Genamaras [00:51:47] Mhm. Yeah. Yeah. Uh, we were all, um, uh, as you would say, uh what's the word I'm trying to use? We were all, um, uh, supposed to speak English, and if possible, Spanish too, but just for for, uh, conver for conversation. You could speak both of them, and then you can decide for which one you want to, where, use to express yourself. So, that that's, uh, how it was. But when you were growing up, uh, even before school, it was just Spanish, because that's all our parents knew. Yeah. Even my father, when he started to work for the railroads, he had to learn, uh, phrases and stuff like that because he was a boss, so he had to know what to tell them. Well, uh, his final job was Iceman with, uh, the cars that he used to come in had an opening at the top. They would, They would get the ice cubes, 'bout this big and put them through the hole to ship the oranges back east. Mhm.

Audrey Maier [00:53:09] So he was working on, before they had refrigerated cars.

Ramona Arranda Genamaras [00:53:12] Yeah, definitely. And he used to run the controls of the temperatures on the cars. There was a certain panel that they had to work with that he was in charge of that. And that was his last. That was his last job.

Audrey Maier [00:53:30] So he worked many jobs during his career at the railroad.

Ramona Arranda Genamaras [00:53:35] Uh, the three different railroads, uh, the Oro Grande, the Santa Fe San Bernardino, you know, and the Colton one. Mhm. Southern Pacific. Mhm. So. And uh uh uh, we were very uhm how do I say this. Uh, uh, we would agree with, uh, whatever was brought up to us. Don't do this, or you're supposed to do this or whatever. And, uh, we didn't fight it, you know, like being rebellious. No, we didn't rebel. So it, uh, it's it's very interesting.

Audrey Maier [00:54:21] I'd like to hear more about your memories at school. And also, it seems like, you know, you were very often picked to do some of these presentations. I want to hear some about some of those as well

Ramona Arranda Genamaras [00:54:32] There was a gentleman, uh, in, uh, Highgrove. Then my father got associated with the used to water with garden, uh, chilies and, uh, watermelon and stuff like that. And then he would, since he was working right by the packing house, he went, he would get all the, the oranges that had one little spot. They were rejected. And, uh, he would he had a little truck that he converted into a little a little cabin. And he used to, uh, get all the oranges and we would go sort them out, and they

were all good, except that they had one little spot they couldn't test. And, uh, so my father would, would either sell them or, uh, sell the oranges or barter and buy whatever the other people. Because, see, most of the time people were growing in their own gardens or chickens or whatever. Uh, they have that. Maybe even goats. Mhm. And they learned how to, uh, strip them from their skin, uh, and, uh, cook them. My father used to like to buy the hazel now the goats and, and and they'd cook. They, they would buy them from them from Martinez Bakery. You remember the Martinez Bakery? right on seventh Street. Because most of those things were lined up all along seventh Street, where the church is. So. Yeah. Uh, yes. And then, uh, let's see. Oh, one other thing that's very vivid in my mind is that, uh. This, Miss Williams. She was my homeroom teacher at the time because they started with homeroom instead of just one room. Uh, that you had to attend. Uh, we had a home, uh, home room, and then they would send us to a different department. Music or English or history or whatever. And, uh. And this time, it was getting close to Christmas time. Uh. Christmas time. Uh. To me, it's just the most beautiful time of the year. Uh. I was in and Miss Williams. She's the one that had me do that. Uh, yeah. You better watch out. Okay. When I was only. I was in her class. I was ten years old at the time. So when we were transferred, uh, we were transferred in the eighth grade. My my group transferred in the eighth grade to the school, to Wilson school. I was a first graduating class of Wilson School. Mhm. And, uh. And that's when we had homeroom. Homeroom at the time, I had a cooking class. And sewing class and, you name it. And then, uh, that, uh, season was going on and, uh, I was even put in the committee to help the kids go over the bridge, make sure that they didn't have to cross the street to, uh, there was a committee, and I was told them to take ten minutes of my class to not only not only me, I was about. Uh, six of us that had to escort the kids over the bridge. So, anyway, uh. That time, like I said, it was getting to be Christmas season. And, uh, I was in with, uh, Ms. Williams, uh, class at the time. And come the message. The principal wants to see you, exactly what did I do now? what am I going to? What am I going to tell him that I'm not guilty? Anyway, is that so? I was really shocked. And, uh, they called me into a room where the, uh, teachers would meet, uh, the host, uh, the circle of, uh, teachers was there waiting for me. I walked in there and I said, I wonder what I did. I was shaking, and, uh, when, uh, Mr. Eisner, uh, got in there. No, it wasn't Mr. Eisner by then it was, uh, Mr. Gray, I think Mr. Gray, uh, called me in and says, uh, uh, we're calling you in because we want to offer you an opportunity to be Mary, the mother of Christ in the Christmas play. There was a shock, but I was shaking inside. Can you imagine being told, uh, something like that? And, uh, sure enough, they had that, uh, that we had new stage and everything. So, uh, they set it up, and then they had the glee club that came in with, uh, with a Christmas songs and watched it with, uh, with a little candle. And, uh, it was so beautiful because I could see everything, all the movements and everything. There was a young lady that was, um, uh, related to, uh, Boccanegra, the store that was on fifth Street, and, uh, I, her name was, uh, Gloria Reith, and there were an English speaking name, and, uh, she was a very, very fluent English person. She narrated the thing, went through the whole history of the birth of Christ and how they had to go on the donkeys and all this, and, uh, so and it was just fantastic. But that was my big experience in doing that. And, uh, and, uh, the there that the when, when I saw the teacher there I must have done something really bad. Everybody was there. And, uh, that's when it's been my happiest times. In Christmas time, it was just fabulous. And I could see everybody marching along with, uh, a little candle. And, uh, they had little paper clips, and they looked so pretty. I belong to the Glee club, too. So, uh, but I was chosen to be Mary, it was wonderful.

Audrey Maier [01:02:04] That is wonderful.

Ramona Arranda Genamaras [01:02:06] Yeah.

Audrey Maier [01:02:06] That was when you were at, you had moved to Wilson.

Ramona Arranda Genamaras [01:02:09] Well, we were transferred to Wilson. We went one year to Roosevelt School because they hadn't built the Wilson School.

Audrey Maier [01:02:20] So was Wilson School, kindergarten to eighth grade?

Ramona Arranda Genamaras [01:02:24] Um, let me see, yes.

Audrey Maier [01:02:26] Because you went straight then to high school after Wilson right?

Ramona Arranda Genamaras [01:02:29] Yeah. One year. The first year was, um, our eighth grade. Um.

Audrey Maier [01:02:35] And before that, Garfield only went to sixth grade.

Ramona Arranda Genamaras [01:02:38] To sixth grade.

Audrey Maier [01:02:38] So what would you do after sixth grade?

Ramona Arranda Genamaras [01:02:40] We went to seventh grade, and and, uh, Roosevelt School. That's where we were all transferred. All the seventh graders. Mhm.

Audrey Maier [01:02:50] That's interesting. It seems like you had a really lovely memories of your time there.

Ramona Arranda Genamaras [01:02:56] I had uh, I think I was the one that, uh, really was a favorite.

Audrey Maier [01:03:03] Did you enjoy school and learning?

Ramona Arranda Genamaras [01:03:04] Oh yes. Uh, yes I have. My mother used to leave us older kids home. So sometimes because they had to do whatever they had to do to, uh, go shopping or something, and they'd leave us with, uh, us older girls and, and, uh, when they had to leave me there to watch the gang and then, uh, I said, no, I, I got to go to school. I've just got to go. And, uh, sometimes, I could talk myself out, do this thing in school instead of staying to watch the kids. Sometimes they would, uh, my mother would call in a lady to come and babysit us, babysit again because they were all younger than me.

Audrey Maier [01:03:53] What about school did you love so much?

Ramona Arranda Genamaras [01:03:57] Um. Because there was always something to do. Always. I was always very active in, in school, uh, programs and stuff like that. Uh, around, uh, Halloween while I was still. No. I had already graduated from from Wilson School. And oh yeah, I had my two of my girls and, uh, that they I used to be associated with a PTA, so, uh, that one time, I was a member of the PTA, so I said, I want to do something for the school. It didn't have curtains. I talked to them. I went and talked to the principal and I said, I want to do this is what I want to do. I want to have, uh, a carnival. With the kids that are dressed up in in their Halloween costumes and give them a prize, and give them a competition, and they all loved it. My mother made, I think, uh, I think she

made buñuelos to sell to get money. And then part of that money was going to buy, um, candies and something else. And apple for the whole school and whole school was about 100 people. And, and, uh, I even bought the walnuts that we put in the little bag. It was a little bag that we gave to each one. And, uh, uh, my mother, uh, talked her into, uh, making us buñuelos and selling them, and, uh, and that was the first carnival. I was the first one to start the carnivals.

Audrey Maier [01:06:04] That was your idea?

Ramona Arranda Genamaras [01:06:04] Really. that was my idea. Mhm. And uh, my kids, I dressed them up to two years and they won first prize. One time they were uh uh devils. The Devils one time they were angels and another time they were um. Dice with a box. And they would win the prizes. Yeah, I wasn't the. uh the judge They've picked out a group of people to judge them. But I'm the one that started the carnivals.

Audrey Maier [01:06:41] That's amazing. And you were involved in the PTA? Had the PTA already been around when you joined?

Ramona Arranda Genamaras [01:06:47] Oh, yes. yeah. And and and Will and, uh, Garfield School, uh, they had a PTA. Mhm. But then it became a little stronger when, when we went to Wilson.

Audrey Maier [01:07:01] What sort of things would you do besides starting the whole carnival? Uh, as a as a member of the PTA.

Ramona Arranda Genamaras [01:07:09] Uh. Let's see. Well, I wasn't, uh uh uh uh uh uh, family, uh, family of, uh, Floris mother. And her name was Lourdes. Uh, the mother was the president of the PTA. So we lived across the street from each other. Yeah. So everything, uh, I didn't get involved in that at all. Uh, all they wanted to do was, uh, have people attend the meetings. And, uh, my mother always had, uh, a baby a new baby, so. So we would, uh, encourage her to go, and we would go with her and help her. And it was in the afternoon. Yeah. Not at night. Uh, no. In the, uh, while the classes were going, it was just after after the classes. And then, uh, of course, it was pretty active at the time. It was a pretty good sized school. Mhm.

Audrey Maier [01:08:10] Well, it seemed then there were a lot of moms out and I'm assuming it's mostly moms and.

Audrey Maier [01:08:14] Yes.

[01:08:15] since it's in the afternoon and most dads are probably working.

Ramona Arranda Genamaras [01:08:18] Or uh, Yeah, that's true.

Audrey Maier [01:08:19] But It seemed like they were really interested in their children's education. Was that definitely something you felt?

Ramona Arranda Genamaras [01:08:25] Yes, definitely. Most the most are the people that, uh, uh, were, uh, involved with, uh, PTA. Uh, uh, most of them had jobs, and they made a little time to go to the meetings. Even some of the fathers to see what was going on. Yeah. So that's why I say that was the happiest part of my growing up. Yeah. And then when I. When I was in high school, uh, they, they had me practice, uh, Spanish dance with

castanets. I did it. And it was, uh, it was, uh. Oh, I see what was the occasion at the school? And, uh, they had music and they had, uh, different things that were being presented. But I want to I wanted to remember what, what the occasion was. And they had it at the gym. So they had all the students there. The high school. Yeah, that was very, very interesting. I even. I even have dreams about it. They still ask. And then I started to remember the different, uh, groups that were associated with it. Then there was we were all a good mixture with the white kids.

Audrey Maier [01:10:02] In high school.

Ramona Arranda Genamaras [01:10:04] Mhm. Yeah. We didn't have all this. Uh. Um. Uh, friction between the races. We we had, um, going to high school, one Japanese family and one Negro family. That was all. In a school that had, what, over a thousand kids? In in the. We knew each other from the from the different classes that we were. Yeah. Even, uh, one boy, uh, this was gonna, uh. Interesting. Uh, one boy got interested in me, and he was a white boy. He says, uh, can I see you? Uh, after school and this and that trying to make a date is, uh. And. No, I'm sorry, I don't. I have a very strict father, and he doesn't. He doesn't allow that. No. No. Dating. Of course, this was in the early part of my 4 years of, uh, high school. And I don't even remember what his name was. He was very nice. Very, uh. Very educational. Boy, glasses and all. Yeah. So, anyway. Yeah, that's part of my my stories.

Audrey Maier [01:11:48] Uh, you had mentioned that you had, uh, spoken for the dieciseis de septiembre, uh, events.

Ramona Arranda Genamaras [01:11:56] Yes.

Audrey Maier [01:11:57] I wanted to hear a little bit more. You mentioned that you had. But do what you remember. Even from the celebrations, I believe. My grandpa, great great Grandpa Saldivar, was one of the organizers.

Ramona Arranda Genamaras [01:12:10] Right.

Audrey Maier [01:12:11] Yeah.

[01:12:11] So he had to have known me

Audrey Maier [01:12:12] Yes, I think so. Probably

Ramona Arranda Genamaras [01:12:14] Yeah. Because, uh, they would organize. And then there was the Sosa family that, uh. Some of the members are still living. And, uh. Uh, yeah, they they had me they had me learn, uh, uh, dedication, a dedication to the flag or to the, uh, to the country or where we came from. Mhm. Yeah. My sister. My sister that got left in the van. She also got in on that too. And then I also was a dancer. And a singer, of course. Uh, the Padilla's used to teach us. Uh, uh, do the program. Do the programing. And, uh, uh, Mr. Delgadillo was a piano player.

Audrey Maier [01:13:15] And so would you have performances? Where would they be?

Ramona Arranda Genamaras [01:13:19] Um, the one that I remember, uh, at the park right now. Where the where the, um. A sombrero, right behind the sombrero there was a park. And, uh, uh, it had swings and it had, uh, uh, tetherball and something else that I don't know what else. And, uh, they build a stage for us, and then they would have bring

in, uh, mariachis and, and, uh, they would have street dancing. Yeah, all of that. Um. Up until. Let's see. Up until my , my first daughter. That, uh. My first daughter was, um, a teenager. Mhm. Yeah. Because, uh, she wanted to stay. Uh, for, for some reason I was, uh, either catching a cold or something and I had to come home and let me stay. Let me stay and, uh, um, then we would go with my husband or I would. Well, my husband at the time, my first, their their dad would go back to where their, we were holding they were holding a festivities and pick them up. And, uh, my, my daughter, she was a little spitfire. So she got in a fight with, uh, with another, uh, another girl. I don't know whether they were fighting over the boys or what, but they brought her over all beat up and everything. I said, well, what can I do? So I started just washing her up and really taking care of her bruises and scratches and stuff. But, uh, she didn't let. She's, uh. She was always a little. A little kid, younger, uh, in body because she was born at 4 pounds. So she never outgrew that 4 pounds. Uh, and it was. It has been quite a life for me.

Audrey Maier [01:15:51] When you were in high school, were you ever, um, encouraged to, you know, go to college or have a career, as, you know, a young woman?

Ramona Arranda Genamaras [01:16:04] Uh, let me see. Uh, I just mentioned this the other day, to my to my brother. I said, did you know that the one time just before I, uh, just, before I graduated, I wanted to be a WAC. I wanted to go into the Army and, uh. And I said, oh. Then he said, uh. I said, my dad got real upset at me. Yeah, that's what I started telling him. My dad got real upset at me because I wanted to be a WAC and, uh, I was already going steady with my my first husband. And, uh, what did he have to say? He hit the ceiling. [unclear] Oh, a Pancho Villas. Uh. Uh, women. Because they all traveled together by, uh, and Mexico... Villages. So that was the end of that. And, uh, I said its either that or I get married, and I did. I got married in 1943. Yeah. So the WAC thing went over.

Audrey Maier [01:17:35] Were you ever pressured to get married or leave school before graduating, or were you encouraged to graduate?

Ramona Arranda Genamaras [01:17:42] No, I said, definitely, I'm going to graduate, if nothing else, because we couldn't afford, uh, college, although it was just around the corner. We couldn't afford it. So, uh, and my father never encouraged it because he didn't have a steady job, so. And how could he? You know, it costs money to transportation. Taking the bus. Uh, the bus or the, uh, at the time, it was a trolley and used to go down downtown to San Bernardino and, on Colton, right in front of our house was the trolley train. Yeah. So, anyway, he said no, uh, if. And then I was always encouraged, uh, I sew I, uh, I was, uh, you what you would call a seamstress, but, uh, I, uh, I was always encouraged to, uh, do things with my hands with, uh, the, uh, uh, crafts that I knew. And I used to make my kids, my daughters, their outfits, uh, their dresses to go to school, and, uh, I made, like I say, I made the costumes for Halloween. They won the three prizes. Yeah, but I was always busy doing something.

Audrey Maier [01:19:19] It sounds like it. Oh, we haven't even talked about baseball. So you mentioned you got involved when you were 15 playing baseball.

Ramona Arranda Genamaras [01:19:26] In the 40s? Yeah.

Audrey Maier [01:19:28] Id love to hear about how you even grew your love for baseball and all about what it was like to play.

Ramona Arranda Genamaras [01:19:36] Mhm.Yeah. And there's my plaque right there, in the middle.

Audrey Maier [01:19:41] There it is. Colton Mercury senioritas softball team.

Ramona Arranda Genamaras [01:19:45] Mhvm. That's them. That was us. Yeah. And uh at the time um uh there was uh uh. A program, the NYA from the government. When they first started Norton. When they first started Norton, they needed seamstresses. I applied, I got my I got a job that summer. They would train you how to run the, the, the and the special machines. For buttonholes or, uh. Uh, seams for, uh, uh, whatever. They need it. And, uh, I worked that summer. Through the NYA there was a government sponsored.

Audrey Maier [01:20:37] And were you making the clothing or managing?

Ramona Arranda Genamaras [01:20:41] No, I was making I was, I was issued, uh, um, a machine, a special machine, a heavy duty machine with a, you know, the there were there was, um, blue denim and blue denim was heavy, and you had to have a heavy machine, not just a common house. House machine. You cant. They won't take them, the fabric because sometimes they had to double it all the way down and double stitch. So. And then, uh, after I was, uh, after my, my son was born because I have four girls in one boy. Uh, I got hired in at, uh, Motavey, uh, uh, garment factory there on, uh, by the depot San Bernardino. And, uh, I worked there for 15 years.

Audrey Maier [01:21:44] What did you do there?

Ramona Arranda Genamaras [01:21:46] I was a blind stitch operator, uh, for hems, I did the hems on, uh, anything that need hemming, we would do it. I would do it. There was four of us that did that. There was a buttonhole maker, and there was, um, inspectors, uh, trimmers. Uh, let's see, what else did they. Well, mostly that was the basics. And, uh, uh, one of my sisters in law. Uh, got me the job. She said they are going to be hiring. You want to go? Go try. I got the job right away.

Audrey Maier [01:22:23] Well, it seemed like you had a lot of sewing experience. Did you even, you know, help new people on the job?

Ramona Arranda Genamaras [01:22:28] Oh, yes. Uh, at school, uh, there was, uh, there was a play going to be on, and they needed some costumes, so they had me. They asked me to go and teach the school kids how to even thread the machine, because if you don't know how to thread a machine you it takes you nowhere. Yes. Uh. And, uh. Um and see. And the the lady that's their sitting with me. Uh, her sister, uh, was, uh, what was her name? This this was Carmen. The other sister was Gloria, a younger sister. And, uh, they were told to to, uh, and learn from me how to thread the machine, how to do the different stitches and everything to make the uniforms. The costumes for the play. Yeah. And then also I took on, uh, a wedding, a wedding. Uh, um. Uh uh uh, that was, uh, my age. There was a family by the name of ma, Matuse, uh, the girl was with the bride, and she came up to me and said, I hear that you do sewing? I said yeah, I do sewing for my kids and whatever. And, uh, that will do to my my wedding dress. I just want a simple, simple, very simple wedding dress. Said sure, I'll do it. I outfitted her with her wedding dress, and he with the, uh, bridegroom with, uh, uh, a friend of mine at school. In the same grade. They were all same grade. It was fantastic and I was just thinking about that the other day. Mhm.

Audrey Maier [01:24:47] Did you learn, how did you learn to sew and sew so well.

Ramona Arranda Genamaras [01:24:51] My mother started when you know when, when she made those dresses that I told you when we went to the do the Redondo Beach, Redondo Beach. Um, since I didn't, I didn't expect you to know anything, but my mother used to, um, teach me how to cut, uh, the the format and the dresses and the. And then I made my eighth grade graduation dress. Yeah, I made it for me. For myself.

Audrey Maier [01:25:28] What did it look like?

Ramona Arranda Genamaras [01:25:30] It, uh, I had a little sweetheart, uh, neckline and then some little puff sleeves and, uh, a formfitting top, uh, top here, and then, uh, um, circular skirt.

Audrey Maier [01:25:49] It's gorgeous.

Ramona Arranda Genamaras [01:25:51] And it was made out of, uh, uh, a little red, red dot voile. And you know that that's that that's real lightweight. And then it had little, little spots on it. Yeah. So all of that I had I got all of that done. Yeah. I had a lot a lot of uh, things that I did.

Audrey Maier [01:26:16] Oh, I did. When the two places that you worked first the military. And then the other garment place, San Bernardino. Were they integrated where you were working with older women too?

Ramona Arranda Genamaras [01:26:28] Oh, yeah. Uh, the, uh, the manager or that or the instructor or the one in charge? He was a white, uh, man. Yeah, he was a little shorty, pudgy little guy, but he was a he was a the manager. And we did pretty good. Uh, there. Oh, besides that, I, um, my my husband, um, uh, when we were married, uh, after he came from the service, he got himself a, uh, a loan, uh, GI loan. And from there, we bought the first house that was already built. But my my, uh, property was all vacant in the back of the house. They were just building new houses, and, uh, I, uh. We had a, uh, disagreement. I think, uh, he couldn't handle what I was doing. I was too much for him. And, uh. Uh, he started drinking, and that did him. He passed away in 74. And, uh, so, uh, in between there and, uh, the time that I, uh, that was in the 80s because I had taken off to Northern California to this to this, uh, cousin that hired that told my father about it. I went over there to where they were living and got me a place to stay. I worked the fields. I was out there sorting tomatoes. And for all three seasons, 3 or 4 seasons. And so I made my living while I was up there because I had already applied for a divorce, cause I said, you're not gonna drag me down, with you. You won't quit drinking. I'm leaving. I did, just packed myself up with whatever, my sewing machine especially, and, uh, a second refrigerator that we had and thats about it.

Audrey Maier [01:29:09] By that time. Were your kids older?

Ramona Arranda Genamaras [01:29:12] Yes, I had already had my. My my boy was, uh, ten years old when he. When I took him with me. While we were up there in Northern California, we met. We met a family that took us under, uh, under their wing for a little bit while we got established. And, um, mother in law, I think, had a rental unit. That she rented to us. And, uh. Uh, he, um, since I had all four girls and they were always picking on him. And, uh, he was a boy, he couldn't defend himself. So they always used to call him a mama's boy. So I said, well, you're not a mama's boy over here. You're you're just one of the workers. He learned how to, uh. Uh, to do the newspaper in Merced. And, uh, he

learned he came out of that cell that he was put in by my, my daughters because they were all older and they were always picking on him and I had to defend him. So, yeah. Go ahead, mama's boy. Uh, yeah, I been through that, and, uh, he then he came out of his shell. He he went and approached the, the people he was throwing the paper for. He bought himself a bicycle with a little money. I taught him how to budget, taught him how to save money, how to invest. And now he's working for the casino.

Audrey Maier [01:31:07] Uh, when you mentioned too that your mother was very good at saving money as well it seems like-

Ramona Arranda Genamaras [01:31:12] Mhm.

Audrey Maier [01:31:13] -Something that she passed on to you and then you passed on to your son.

Ramona Arranda Genamaras [01:31:16] Mhm. Yeah. But uh I got the opportunity to do that because if, we stayed where we were, we, we wouldn't have had anything. And then I built in that empty lot that I bought because it was empty behind the first house that we bought. The first house was on the front the uh by the street. And so even. I think it was even, uh, Mark, that was that was remarkable. And you built through, uh, two homes. Just with my knowledge that I had. Oh, and I also helped my mother buy the home they were living in.

Audrey Maier [01:32:02] Wow. And so you bought one home with the GI Bill. Where? Where was that home?

Ramona Arranda Genamaras [01:32:08] On H Street in Colton.

Audrey Maier [01:32:10] Oh, okay. And then there was a the lot that you bought. Mhm.

Ramona Arranda Genamaras [01:32:13] It was with uh the property.

Audrey Maier [01:32:15] Wow.

[01:32:17] And I had uh, um, uh, three bedroom house in the back. Set it in the back and in the side. I had enough property. I built another house and then I built another little house. Rental.

Audrey Maier [01:32:32] And so you would rent that out to families.

Ramona Arranda Genamaras [01:32:34] Mhm. And then I rented the front house because I moved into the bigger house with my kids at the time before I left. Uh, Colt- uh, before I left Colton. Mhm. By then I had already applied for uh, for divorce.

Audrey Maier [01:32:50] But that must have been a good way to save some money.

Ramona Arranda Genamaras [01:32:54] Oh, yeah. And then I was also working at, uh, uh, at the, uh, garment industry. Mhm. And I left my job, went up there. So I, I've been around.

Audrey Maier [01:33:10] When you went up to Northern California, did you sell the houses in Colton or you kept them going?

Ramona Arranda Genamaras [01:33:15] I kept them going because, uh, my husband was still living there with, uh, with my other two girls. The other two girls that had already made their mistake by hooking up with whoever. And it went bad for them. They suffered. They suffered, but I can't do a thing about it, it's your life. I can't go and fight those, that man that they were, you got attached to. Because they, they didn't get married. They were just living together. They had families. They said, I can't do a thing about it. But wherever I was able to help them, I would help them. And then a couple of times they, they would come over and they'd come over all beaten up and stuff, it it was terrible. So, if they want to know anything, what, what it feels like. And if I see anything like that, said, no good.

Audrey Maier [01:34:26] And you went through a lot yourself.

Ramona Arranda Genamaras [01:34:29] Oh, yeah.

Audrey Maier [01:34:30] With your first husband. But I think it speaks a lot to your strength about how you were able to, move on when some people, you know, some people aren't able to.

Ramona Arranda Genamaras [01:34:38] No, because, um, they they stick to their, how should I say this, say this, to the negative instead of saying, I gotta change my life, I gotta work for myself, do this for myself, or do this for my the kids that are still with me because usually, usually, um, uh, we wind up with more than we can chew, and then you can adjust. So, that's the only thing. And like, I, uh, people asked me, uh, how did, how did you, how did you get to this age? 'Cause I'll be 99. And, uh, I said moderation. Everything in moderation. Don't try to do something you cannot afford or that you can't handle. Just tear it down to something that you can, go forward. So, that's the, that's uh, my model. And now some of the kids are, are coming back. And I remember what you told me about moderation. And they say, sure enough, it works. And my own kids went through a lot of hell, but then that's what they chose. They never did get married. Uh, never had a wedding for the four girls. So. And I can't run their lives. They were adults by then. Mhm. So that's, that's been my story of my life.

Audrey Maier [01:36:31] When you moved back, after being in Northern California and you had your divorce.

Ramona Arranda Genamaras [01:36:37] Mhm.

Audrey Maier [01:36:38] What what did you do then. Where did you, go?

Ramona Arranda Genamaras [01:36:41] I.

Audrey Maier [01:36:41] And what did you do?

Ramona Arranda Genamaras [01:36:42] I bought me a little, uh a little trailer. Because I had, I had saved some money and I bought me a little trailer and that's where I lived. And uh, uh, I went to school to, to, um, beauty school for, uh, uh, for a series a month. Uh, I was doing pedicures, manicure. But I didn't like the manicures, uh, myself, because I'm not for, for nails. But then I used to do them, for my family. I used to do their pedicures, so I know what that's all about. And then I, by then I was drawing Social Security. Uh, I was already, uh, past 65. And and, uh, when I came back, I happened to get a, uh, an apartment with, uh, with, uh. A low, a low, uh, rent. Because I was low, low income,

through the government. So. The Lord has helped me a lot. Yes. He has done wonders. So now I got to pay back. I'm hoping. I'm hoping that, uh. When, on my uh 99th birthday. 90, 99. Um, that I will have a party and, uh, no gifts. I want just, everybody that attends, give me \$1. And that's for a donation for these kids that are born with a facial defect. That way we will collect money to send to them. Any money that comes in will go there. I'm paying for the, the whole thing. It cost me, this last time, I had a party and about 200 people showed up.

Audrey Maier [01:39:07] Wow.

Ramona Arranda Genamaras [01:39:08] So, um, I'm working on it now.

Audrey Maier [01:39:11] Well yeah, with that many people total.

Audrey Maier [01:39:13] That big of a party to organize.

Ramona Arranda Genamaras [01:39:15] Oh, yeah. Well, we, uh, I'm using the same method that I used for last party, which is a lot of help already. So I'm going to have a group session, to lay my plan out and see what they think. Uh, if there's, uh, uh, any other way. I said I'm putting in the first \$50 to go to the that, uh, the doctors that are on the on the ships. This is a, uh, a medical ship. And the doctors I think, give their time too. And those operations they say they can do them in 45 minutes and they come out the kids there with a cleft lip and stuff and things that are wrong with them, whatever they figure out. And that's my plan.

Audrey Maier [01:40:11] That's so lovely.

Ramona Arranda Genamaras [01:40:12] Mhm. So I said, uh, I don't need gifts. I have too many things I got to get rid of. And when, when I'm gone, everything is going to, be done away with and that's it. But I'm hoping that the Lord will leave me to do that. That good deed. Mhm. So that's where, that's where I'm at right now.

Audrey Maier [01:40:42] No. That's perfect. Do you mind if we go a little back in time? I had some questions.

Ramona Arranda Genamaras [01:40:46] No, that's all right.

Audrey Maier [01:40:47] About, uh, where your children went to school. Did they only go to Wilson and then, uh, Colton High School?

Ramona Arranda Genamaras [01:40:58] Uh, no. Um. Uh most of my family, because they lived in South Colton, went to Wilson. Uh, my brothers and sisters. But, uh, the and the, uh, the other kids, my kids, they went to Lincoln because we lived in the Lincoln area of, uh, Colton on 'H' Street. Do you remember, or, if you were ever visiting in that area, remember that Steel man that used to be in, on top of a building? Uh, no? There was a steel company. Somebody stole the steel man. Just like they stole that, cow that was.

Audrey Maier [01:41:46] On top of the, yeah, the market. Yeah. Uh huh.

Ramona Arranda Genamaras [01:41:50] Yeah, they stole that one.

Audrey Maier [01:41:53] So, wait, so you bought, your property was on, in North Colton. Did you have, was there any resistance to you buying?

Ramona Arranda Genamaras [01:42:01] No.

Audrey Maier [01:42:02] Oh wow, that's surprising.

Ramona Arranda Genamaras [01:42:04] By then, uh, since they, the, uh, since the, um, soldiers were coming back, they were giving and ah, giving a lot of opportunities. If you was a veteran. And what's so interesting is, see all that? Those pictures, they're all my family. Um, they're related to me by marriage. On my own. My own, uh. Yeah. My own brothers and sisters, and brothers mostly because they were all boys, that are in the picture and they all came back unscathed. All of them. This brother that takes care of me. Uh. He just recently, he got out of the service. So now when, when I leave this place, he's going to have to leave, too. And, uh. Uh, I think this this the reunion that will be to go to my son, and everything will be sold, and divided among my immediate family, which is my four daughters and my, and my, my son. We're working on it now. Going through that, all of these little lessons have to be. Yeah. We don't want any problems. We don't want any bad feelings, because some, some families, my own, in my own, uh, family tree, uh, aren't talking to them, themselves, aren't talking to them because, of some little thing that went wrong. I'm not speaking to that person. I'm not speaking to that person, or they're not speaking to me. And that puts a damper on everything. But we'll see. And, uh, as fast as, uh, we're leaving this wonderful world, it's, uh, we never know. We never know when the day will come. So I gotta get, uh, everything lined up. Uh, I am donating my body to science.

Audrey Maier [01:44:24] Wow.

Ramona Arranda Genamaras [01:44:24] Mhm. It's all paid for. All I have, uh, all I have to do is put my, and my uh, request. Uh, I have to go fill it out because I had it already, but the lady that was going to take care of me, my sister in law, uh, she has her own problem. She has her own husband that is taken care of. So we have to go and change the person that will be taking care of me. That's the one that just called me. He, he takes care of, and he's going to do that for me. He's done all the paperwork. He's kinda, kind of, um, financial person. Anything I need to know, he'll start calling. That's how he got, well I got a hold of Mark, I, we gave him, with we are. We went through them because they have a computer. I don't, I don't do computers, at all. Even little things like that I, I don't want anything to do with 'em. My brother, my brother that is living here. The one that, sets, uh, the TVs, if, uh, if he's not around, I don't listen to anything! Anyway, yes. It's been a wonderful life for me.

Audrey Maier [01:45:45] It's so, sure has, and, I'm realizing that we're almost been talking for two hours, so I had more questions, but I think I'll come back another time.

Ramona Arranda Genamaras [01:45:55] Okay.

Audrey Maier [01:45:55] Does that sound good?

Ramona Arranda Genamaras [01:45:57] Yeah, when you think of a question write it down.

Audrey Maier [01:45:59] Yeah, I will. I already have some in my head. So, I'll come back after I listen to this too. I'll see all the things that we missed talking about.

Ramona Arranda Genamaras [01:46:06] Yeah.

Audrey Maier [01:46:07] Because I'm sure there's a lot.

Ramona Arranda Genamaras [01:46:08] Boss, that he used to, take the men to the field, to pick the oranges. He was an orange picker, and he had a truck and he corralled the workers, take them to the, to the orchard.

Audrey Maier [01:46:26] Oh so he was a foreman.

Ramona Arranda Genamaras [01:46:27] Mhm. Well he was actually. Yeah. Yeah. Foreman. Yeah. He, he got the contracts for that. Yeah. And he, he worked all in uh, in the, here in the, um, in this area, up to, um, I think up to. Uh, Rialto. And then all the way down to, to here to uh. Anyway. Down here or there.