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Ana M. Varela-Lago: This is an interview with Mrs. Dolores Garcia. Dolores, I would like to start by talking a little bit about your family. Could you tell me, where did your family come from?

Dolores L. Garcia: Well, my father came from Asturias, from a small hamlet called La Juncal near Pravia, and he was born in 1894, and he came to the States when—he must have been about twelve-and-a-half or thirteen years old. And he was one of the fortunate ones coming here because he had an older sister who lived here, was married and had children of her own, and he lived with them. And then, at an early age went to work in the cigar factory.

AVL: And how about your mother?

DG: My mother came from France, from Brittany, a small town called Saint Aignan, and that's near Pontivy.

AVL: You'll spell that for me later.

DG: And she went from—she had been working in Paris—she had—she was educated in a convent and then became a governess in Paris for a wealthy family for awhile, and then left there, and she had a brother in New York who sent for her and she moved to New York, and that's where she and my father met.

AVL: So, you father at some point left Tampa to go to New York?

DG: Um-hm.

AVL: Tell me about that.

DG: He left here, I don't even know the year, I know that he was not very young because he was older when they got married, and he moved, he went to Jacksonville and worked there for a while as a waiter, and then he went to New York and was working in Manhattan for, making cigars, and a company called the Morrow Brothers. And then he left that and went into, back into the restaurant business, and by then my mother had left working as a governess in New York because they wouldn't permit her to speak English, they wanted her to speak French exclusively to the two girls that she was governess for, and she very much wanted to learn English and adapt herself to the life here, so she went to work in the same restaurant where my father was working. She was working in the kitchen and my father was working in the, you know, in the restaurant proper. And she didn't speak a word of English at that time, luckily he spoke English and Spanish, and that's how they met.

AVL: Could you tell me their names?

DG: My mother's name was Anne Marie, her maiden name was Le Cocq, and my father was Silverio de la Llana.

AVL: Okay. So they got married in New York?

DG: They got married in New York. I was born in New York, and we never made a trip to Tampa until 1946, when we came here for a vacation, and by then my father had grown tired of the hectic life in New York and they decided to move down here. So they came down here in '48.

AVL: What did he do once here, did he keep working, or—?

DG: He kept working. He worked in Clearwater at a Spanish restaurant called the Belmonte and then he worked here from, well, when he retired, he was working at Spanish Park.

AVL: So he was always in the restaurant business.

DG: In the restaurant business—yes, after he left the cigar industry.

AVL: So did you like Tampa when you came here? How old were you at that time?

DG: No, I didn't like Tampa, I was fifteen.

AVL: Why not, tell me about that. Yeah, let's talk first about your growing up in New York and then we probably will understand why you didn't like Tampa.

DG: Well, I was used to all the advantages that New York had to offer: a very good

educational system, a lot of museums and zoos and botanical gardens and the theater, which I love, and so many things like that and I wanted to stay in New York! I could have stayed with my uncle but at that time they didn't, my parents didn't want me to stay and, you know, in those days, you didn't, you did what your parents asked you to do.

AVL: Were you an only child?

DG: Yes.

AVL: You didn't have siblings?

DG: No.

AVL: Okay, so tell me about your memories of your childhood in New York City.

DG: Well, I think I had a wonderful childhood. New York, you know, this was before World War II, it changed a lot after the World War.

AVL: Where did you live in New York?

DG: We lived both in Manhattan and in the Bronx, not too far from Bronx Park, and that's where we were living when we moved to Tampa. Prior to that we had lived in New York City near Central Park on 66th Street between 3rd and Lexington Avenue.

AVL: Was that a Hispanic community at all, or—?

DG: No, we have never really lived in a Hispanic community. And I had lots of fun with my friends. We just about grew up in Central Park and in the Museum of Natural History and the Metropolitan Museum of Art. We were there all the time and it was great, very, a lot, you know, they had a lot to offer. And then in the Bronx I went to James Morrow High School. It was considered a very good high school at that time, and I had been approved to attend Hunter College, but then when they decided to come down here I don't think they were very aware of, you know, that education here in Florida was very expensive, whereas in New York they had a very good system and you could attend, you know, city colleges. So then we came down here. I met Modesto the day after we arrived—

AVL: Oh, really? That's your husband, Modesto Garcia. Tell me about that.

DG: Well, a cousin of mine, Margaret, had married a good friend of Modesto's, Charles, Charlie Otero, and it was a blind date, and after that we started going around together and we got married a year later, so there went my education.

AVL: Did you have plans to go to school here in Florida when you left?

DG: Well, we had talked about it but, when we looked into it everything was so

expensive and, I started working and I never did go back to school.

AVL: So you got married then and lived in Tampa ever since.

DG: Lived in Tampa, and I was always very, very sad during the fall. I missed the change of seasons and I missed being in New York during Christmas with all the hustle and bustle, but now I think I would really miss it, miss Tampa if I left.

AVL: You never went back to live there, or—?

DG: We went. No, not to live, just visiting, just visiting, no, we never went back to live. I had suggested to Modesto, you know, going up there and trying it, but he was a Tampa boy and he didn't want to, he had been, he had lived in New York for six months with an aunt up there but he didn't want to stay there.

AVL: So, was there a conflict in the family, particularly coming from you, when you moved, I mean those first, you know, months of—?

DG: Well, my mother wasn't very happy here.

AVL: No?

DG: No, no.

AVL: Was your father happy?

DG: My father was happy here, he wanted to be with his family, and my mother didn't really. She had some cousins but she didn't really have as close a family in New York as he did in Tampa. But it was, you know, a tremendous change, it's a culture shock, just about. And during, we came here in '48, and at that time there just wasn't really much to do here in Tampa.

AVL: Did you come to live within the Latin community, I mean, West Tampa, Ybor City—?

DG: We lived, well, I guess, it was considered. Well, at first, no, we lived in Seminole Heights, but for awhile we lived near, on Florence near 9th close to an aunt of mine and my parents eventually rented a house there and then Modesto and I got married and then shortly after we moved in together on 31st Avenue near Nebraska which is not considered Ybor City. But we were very close to my father's family, extremely close, and—

AVL: Did you go to the clubs, functions and things like that?

DG: Oh, yes, we used to go to the, what they called the Tea Dances at the Centro Español and they always had picnics and functions like that, you know, at the Centro Asturiano,

that we attended and enjoyed. And once in a while, you know, something would come to the University of Tampa, there at the hall, and we would attend ballets or, you know, something like that. And then, of course, we would sometimes spend a few weeks at the beach.

AVL: That was something nice!

DG: Yes, everybody enjoyed that.

AVL: Okay, tell me a little bit about your memories of the Spanish Civil War. You were living in New York at that time?

DG: In New York City.

AVL: What do you remember of, you know, of what was going on there?

DG: Well, I remember. I don't remember that much. I do remember my father being very upset about the condition in Spain and very, extremely concerned about his family and he had received mail from them and they spoke of such deprivation and hardship and, you know, it affected the family to think that, you know, they were suffering like that, so, both he and my mother would gather whatever clothes they could find and they would buy new clothes and wash them so that they didn't appear to be new because it was, you weren't supposed to send new clothes. And I remember going on the subway for a long distance, I guess someplace in Manhattan, to send them to be delivered to Spain, wrapping them in, folding them in burlap sacks and being sent directly to the family in Spain. And whether they got all of them I don't know, I do know that they got some of them because they received letters saying that they had received the clothes and what a blessing, you know, it was.

AVL: Were you sending any other kind of material, money, or—?

DG: I think money was being sent but how it was sent, I don't know. But I know that they did send money because I remember seeing a letter from my grandfather thanking, you know, thanking them for the money. But I don't know how it was delivered.

AVL: Did they ever try to get out of Spain, I mean, or come here to be reunited with the family—?

DG: No, I don't think so, I don't think so. I don't know whether they would have even been permitted to leave Spain, because with the immigration quotas I don't know how that was. I imagine a lot of them would have left if they could but I don't really know much about that.

AVL: Was your father, on what side was he on in the war conflict?

DG: He was on the loyalist, on the side of the loyalists, the loyalists were—

AVL: People who supported the Republic?

DG: No! He was not the fascist, he was the opposite.

AVL: Okay, he wasn't supporting [Francisco] Franco, he was with the loyalists.

DG: Okay, I wasn't sure how I was saying which was which.

AVL: Why do you think that was so, why do you think your father was with the loyalists? How did he explain that?

DG: Well, he never really explained it to us, of course, perhaps the fact that my father, like many other, you know, young men or young teenage boys, came here because of the military conscription, and of course that was all part, you know, of the monarchy. I do know that he was always interested in reading about the monarchy and, you know, the history of Spain, but he heard about the atrocities that were committed against his own family—Although I understand when we were in Spain in 1979 that there was two factions there in the family where some were loyalists and the others were fascists, just one or two of them, I think, which is—it's hard in a family. Similar to the Civil War here in the United States, some brothers fighting against each other between the North and the South so, that would have been hard to understand but, that's really about all that I can think about—

AVL: Do you remember him talking about the war with your mother or other family members—?

DG: No, because he didn't have any family in New York, so it was mostly he and my mother, you know, working together, and my mother was just as concerned, you know, about getting them clothing and anything that they could send to them, but that's really all I can think of.

AVL: Did he belong to any clubs up there in New York?

DG: No, no.

AVL: He didn't socialize with any kind of Spanish speaking group?

DG: No, no.

AVL: How about the restaurant he was working, was it like a Spanish restaurant—?

DG: No, no, it was—you want to turn that off and maybe I'll tell you about it.

Pause in recording

AVL: Your mother was sending them some money, to your family at some point, in Spain?

DG: They were sending money and packages of clothing and shortly after—

AVL: For how long was this going on, I mean, was this after the war or during the war?

DG: During the war.

AVL: During the war, oh, during the war, uh-huh.

DG: This was during the Civil War and there was a place that they took it to that somehow made connection, whether they took the items out of the country and sent them, you know, from Latin America or Central America, I don't know how they were getting there, but that's, they were taken there, and shortly after that, an attorney, I remember his last name was Thompson, sent a letter to them stating that they were going to have to pay him, and I think it was quite a bit of money in those days, something like one hundred dollars or something like that, which was quite a bit, because they were aware of the fact that my parents were sending packages and money and they said this was to protect the family in Spain from, evidently from the government from being heavily taxed on import duties and things like that, so my mother was suspicious about it and she, the woman that she was employed by was a good friend of J. Edgar Hoover and she took the letter to her employer and showed it to her and her employer asked to keep the letter and she's going to show it to Mr. Hoover, and the answer back, from Mr. Hoover via the employer, was not to send the money, not to do anything, this was some type of scheme and evidently there were other schemes like this being perpetrated upon the families of, you know, the people in Spain, but they never did send the money and from, as far as they know, nothing ever happened. They never heard anymore about it. But as usual, there's always someone trying to take advantage of a situation.

AVL: Now, how about during, after the war did your family correspond with, I mean, your family in Spain, corresponded with—?

DG: They corresponded, and I think the family here in Tampa probably corresponded more, and my father was in touch with the family here and he got—

AVL: Did he ever go back to Spain?

DG: Not until 1979 on his eighty-fifth birthday, and—

AVL: Were they telling you through these letters or conversations how things were going over there?

DG: Yes, yes.

AVL: What are your memories of that?

DG: Well, my memories were of the families, especially those with small children, you know, they were malnourished, from day to day they didn't know what was going to happen to them, which was, you know, terrible stress on the parents, and I remember when we were in Spain, my cousin told my father, my father happened to ask her about a revolver that had belonged to his father, it was an antique, and she said, "Oh, we had to give that to the government," and my father was upset, he said, "But that was an antique," and she said, "It didn't make any difference," she said, "we were afraid not to give it to them," so that was a family memento that was, you know, lost. And, but yes, my father corresponded, you know, with the family more here I think, although he did write to Spain and did receive news. His sisters down here, I think, did more corresponding than he did.

AVL: Now, do you have a sense that your family in Asturias were singled out in any way because of their political ideas, or was that a general thing that happened to everybody?

DG: I don't know that they were singled out, I think it was just a general, I think it was just, everyone—

AVL: It was widespread, you think?

DG: I think so, yes, I think so. Yes, I think everyone, mostly everyone suffered.

AVL: And how about when your father went back to Spain, what kind of things did he say?

DG: Oh, it was—

AVL: It was, how many years after he had left?

DG: He was, well, he was 85 when we went back and he was about twelve-and-a-half or thirteen when he left, he had never been back in that interim. And—

AVL: Why did he want to go back in '79—?

DG: I insisted, I thought before I die, before my parents die we're going to Europe, we're going back to their, to see the family.

AVL: You wanted to go with them?

DG: Yes, yes.

AVL: He didn't want to go at first—?

DG: No, no, not at first, and they kept saying, "No, we're too old." I said, I said, "What difference does it make whether you die here or die there?"

AVL: Why did you want to go with them?

DG: I just, I just had this—something was calling me there. Yes, and then Modesto didn't want to go, and I said, "Fine." He said, "I don't have any family there," he had no idea how much family he had there, but he didn't think he did, and I said, "Well, Eine, if you don't want to go, I'm going, and I'm taking my parents," and he said, "Well, you can't do that by yourself." I said, "Well, I'm gonna die trying, but I'm going," so he said, all right, PR go. Once we got there you would have thought that it was his idea. When he started meeting all his cousins, they were coming from I don't know how many different towns, then he didn't want to leave. We were due to go to France and he didn't want to leave and we had a little discussion there. But it was wonderful, my father had three nieces and two nephews, brothers and sisters all from the same, one of his sisters. And they knew we were coming and they had *una torta* that was that big, it must have been twenty inches in diameter.

AVL: This was one *tortilla de patatas*, or—?

DG: No, no, *una torta*, the cake made of nuts, ground nuts, hazel nuts and they had 85 candles on that and he blew out every one of them, and it was funny because it's a three, well it's a two-story house in Spain, we call it a three-story here because they don't consider the bottom floor as a floor. And they were all upstairs watching and they saw us getting out of the car and they said they kept waiting to see my father when my father was already out, but my father was very straight and strong, they had no idea that was their uncle, they were expecting to see a little stooped man get out, and it was such a wonderful experience, it was so wonderful.

He was so happy, they were so happy, and he told them so many stories about his childhood and their mother's childhood there, but I guess a lot of time parents don't tell their children, you know, these stories, well, he told them and they were so excited, they just couldn't believe it, there were places where they wanted to know where the old school house was because it had since been torn down, so he went with one of his nieces, by car, to show her where the school house had existed and different things like that, and he told them so many stories that they had never heard and they were so, so appreciative. And one of my cousins told me, he said, "I know this has been a financial, you know, hardship, but—" he says, "you just don't know what this, we never expected to meet him and he was the last of, you know, of the family." So, they were so excited, it was, it was really a wonderful experience.

AVL: What did he tell you about Spain, though, I mean, did he kind of comment on the country or—?

DG: Well, he was so impressed—

AVL: What did he say?

DG: Well, because here he kept hearing people who had been there and they said, "*¡Ay! Una miseria, una miseria!*" what a misery!, what a misery!, and he thought, My goodness, you know, I don't see any misery here, people seem to be doing well; in fact he was impressed with the medical, you know, with the National Medical System that they have there versus, you know, here, and he felt, you know, they might not have as much but he thought they seemed to be happier, more content than people here, more secure and, you know, he was very impressed.

AVL: What did the family do in Asturias, were they working on the farm?

DG: They're dairy farmers, both my family and Modesto's family are, were, they're since retired, they were dairy farmers and some of their children were not. Now my grandfather had been the postmaster for the area and that was done out of the house. And then his son-in-law was the dairy farmer and his, you know, one of his daughters lived there with them. And, they seemed to be very, very comfortable, they had, the old homestead had been remodeled and, you know, was very comfortable, so we had a wonderful time and, just a wonderful time. We went back in 1985, Modesto and I, and we're going now in this year with our daughter and her husband and one of her daughters.

AVL: This is going to be the first time for them?

DG: Yes, yes, so—

AVL: Is it hard to keep the cultural heritage to your children—?

DG: No, they're very interested. In fact, I think my daughter is probably more interested than I was at her age. Yes, they're very, you know, very interested in knowing as much as we can possibly tell them about the families, you know, genealogy.

AVL: When did you become interested then?

DG: I think maybe when, when we came to Tampa I was more aware of the family, because before that, you know, there were pictures and, you know, letters, but then when you get together and you think, and then you know about the family in Spain and you think, Gee!, you know, that's quite a bit of family, and, it just kind of, you wanted to know more about it, and the more, and then my uncle Joaquin, Gloria's father, he told me so many things my father had never talked about and then that makes you, you know, curious as to—

AVL: Tell me some of those things that you remember.

DG: Well, he told me about recipes, you know, that his mother had made, and he told us about, see my mother had no idea that at one time my father's family had been very wealthy. My mother had absolutely no idea. And, he was telling stories about, they had a

butter factory, they owned a butter factory, several butter factories, and they shipped butter fat all over, they, my uncle at that time even had bills from the Philippines where they used to ship this in cans. We knew nothing about that and then when we were in Spain we went to the old butter factory to see the building which the family no longer owns, and—

AVL: So that was your grandparents' business—

DG: Right, my grandparents'.

AVL: —or it goes back further?

DG: No. Well, I don't know who started it, I don't know who started it. I know that my grandfather was a chemist and his brothers, they had all had good educations and I think probably the first generation of men, my father probably and my uncle because they came here, you know, although Joaquin was older than my father, he came later on, but by then the family fortune had been frittered away.

AVL: They both came to avoid military conscription?

DG: No, I don't think, see, Joaquin was, I can't remember, four or six years younger than my father so he was just a child when my father left, so I don't think there was much chance of him going into the service at that time. I think maybe that had changed, I'm not really sure, Jack might know, but I don't know. But yeah, Joaquin told us stories about, my grandfather used to hire men, passing through, you know, to work in the fields or whatever and there was a young Gypsy man who came and asked if he could do something for my grandfather to be paid and my grandfather told him, "Well," he said, "you know, you can work in the fields," and he [the Gypsy man] told him, he said, "I sing, I dance, I tell fortunes," he said, "but I don't work." So my grandfather told him, "Well, then there's nothing here for you to do." And stories like that, you know, that we found, you know, funny and strange, you know, that we had never heard anything like that before.

AVL: Was there pretty much a network of people from Asturias, I mean, apart from your immediate family, do you have a sense that people from Asturias kind of got together, from the same hamlets or the same villages, or—?

DG: Well, see since I didn't grow up in Tampa, I'm not familiar how that worked but I do know that after we came here, I think most of the gatherings were done at the Centro Asturiano. They used to play the *gaita* and *tamboril* and—

AVL: You hadn't heard that before, I guess?

DG: No. Well, I had heard. See my mother, being from Brittany, was a French Celt and they also play the bagpipe but it was a little different than the *gaita*, it looked different and I imagine it sounded, one as bad as the other, until you get used to it and appreciate

it. And they used to play that there at the Centro Asturiano, downstairs, they would have an American band upstairs, American music, and then they always had Spanish and Cuban music downstairs and that's when they would have, you know, the man playing the *gaita* and dancing to the old songs, the paso dobles, and—

AVL: Was that like a generational gap there, that the youngsters would go upstairs and the—

DG: Probably, probably the older folks were downstairs and, because they played more Cuban music downstairs. They had a group they called the Conjunto Alegre, and it was almost exclusively, you know, rumbas and, you know, Cuban dances, and upstairs it was, you know, the lindy and the jitterbugging and fox trots and stuff like that. Once in awhile they would also play paso dobles, but it was more American style music. But it was a lot of fun, we'd stay upstairs for awhile and then we'd go downstairs and see some, you know, like Modesto's father and some of his friends and after a while then we'd go back upstairs. It was a lot of fun, we enjoyed it. And then the picnics that they had, which to me was strange, I had always thought of a picnic as being outdoors and I understand that years ago they used to be outdoors at Ballast Point but then I don't know why they, I guess maybe with the weather it was hard to, you know, to have so many people at a picnic outside, so they started having them indoors.

AVL: At the Centro Asturiano itself?

DG: Um-hm, um-hm, yes, at the Centro Asturiano, yes.

AVL: How did your mother fit into this community, was it difficult for her?

DG: It was a little difficult for her. The good thing was that my mother understood almost everything in Spanish and could get along, she could make her wishes known and she worked in a factory in West Tampa, in a garment factory, that had a lot of Spanish and Cuban women working there and she knew. At first they didn't realize she spoke Spanish, and then they found out, but she got along very well with the family. We had known, we had been very close to one of my cousins who had come from Tampa when he was nineteen years old, and he had gone up to New York and my father got him a job at the Barbizon Hotel where he was working, in the coffee shop, and then he married a girl from here and they stayed in New York for quite awhile and they were very close to both my father and my mother and my mother thought of them almost like a son and a daughter-in-law. So, of course, when we came down here she was already close to them, so that was, and they used to visit, you know, back and forth quite a bit. But, yes, she was kind of a stranger, you know, and the fact that she had such a heavy French accent, yes, very strong accent.

AVL: But she came to the country very young.

DG: She was in her twenties, she wasn't that young, and I think that that accent was so ingrained. She didn't think she had one but everybody else did.

AVL: So, she learned to speak both English and Spanish?

DG: Um-hm.

AVL: And your father, did he speak any French at all?

DG: He understood a little bit, but, no, he never spoke it.

AVL: How about you, did you grow up speaking French?

DG: My mother spoke French to me as a baby and then I was being cared for by a Spanish woman while she was working, when I was very young, but I never really spoke them fluently, then I took them in junior high and high school and I did well, but, of course, if you don't practice it, and we didn't, we always spoke English at home. I think the fact that I was exposed to both languages at an early age I had a very good accent on both of them and I never could convince my foreign language teachers that I didn't speak the language at home. They said, "Well, with your accent you should speak better than you do." I said, "Well, I'm not fluent. I speak English at home," and they couldn't believe that until I told them, I said, "Well, you know, my father's from Spain and my mother's from France and we speak English at home," and then they were, you know—

AVL: I didn't ask you before, how was your trip to Brittany the first time you went there?

DG: Wonderful! Yes. Now, we didn't go to Brittany when my mother was with us because she wasn't well, and we went to Paris and we saw some of her family there and we didn't make it to Brittany, but when we, when Modesto and I went in 1985, and I had a godfather there and two cousins, and, although the family no longer owns the home. My grandfather had been the, he was the baker that supplied all the little towns with bread and it was right there in the homestead, the bakery was in back of the home. And my mother had told me such explicit stories and descriptions that it was like *déjà vu* when I walked into that house. I felt like I had been there before, especially the kitchen. She had explained, you know, the big fireplace and the big pot, the cauldron there in the fireplace where everyday there was a pot of soup, you know, going on, and it was like. I felt I had been there! It was wonderful!

AVL: Why did they leave Brittany, first your uncle and then your mother, was there any particular reason, or—?

DG: There were a lot of French people that went to New York and were working both in restaurants. I had an uncle that had come from France after the Second World War. He was the one who brought my mother here from France originally and he was the chef-baker at the St. Regis Hotel in New York. Another one of her cousins was the chef, what they call the *saucier* in French cooking, there is one chef who, all he does is make the sauces and, they just sent word that there was, I guess, more money to be made in New York City than there was in their hometown. But a lot of French people would come here

and work and then go back to France and stay. But, I guess, my mother being married to my father they weren't going to go back to France. But a lot of her family did, they—

AVL: Oh, I see. What would they do back in France, I mean, would they go to the same villages they came from, would they go to Paris with the money that they got?

DG: No, no, most of them I think—

AVL: Settle into a business, or—?

DG: Well, some of them were more or less retired and they had. I had, my godfather was, between working and playing the stock market he made a small fortune. So, when they went back to Paris, not to Paris but to Brittany, they settled there in a place called *de Bretagne*, and they didn't have to work. And my uncle ended up marrying, remarrying because his first wife had died in France, and he married a French Canadian woman and they moved to Canada, to Montreal, so. But I have cousins there who have worked here in the United States and then went back and stayed there.

AVL: That's interesting.

DG: Um-hm.

AVL: Was there, when you were growing up in New York, was there like a French community there, did you have a sense that, you know, people would go to some kind of social club or do things together—?

DG: There was a French group but my mother didn't belong to it, because my mother was not one who danced, she had never learned to dance, she was educated in a convent and was not permitted to dance. But, some of her family, they used to have parties aboard the *Ile de France*. The French ships when they landed, they would have parties, and French people would always go and attend the parties there aboard ship, and there were a large French population that knew each other and would get together, you know, in their private homes and have parties there and sing the old songs, you know, and tell stories and, you know, catch up on the news about the families. And, my father fit in there very well, I mean he got along, you know, with all of them and they all loved him very much, but, as far as going to the parties on the French ships my parents never did, but a lot of them did. That was an outlet for them.

AVL: You mentioned now that your mother was educated in a convent and (the light went on). Tell me a little bit about your family's relationship to the Catholic Church. I heard that, you know, there was some conflicts between the Catholic Church and the immigrants, and also related to the war in Spain, you know, there was some kind of problem. How was the—?

DG: Well, I know my father was, my father believed in God but I don't think he really believed in traditional religion. I think he spoke to God in his own way, you know, and

though he prayed, but he was not religious. Now his sisters and his nieces are religious, or were, my aunt has died, you know, has died, but they attended church on a regular basis, but, turn that off a minute I want to tell you something.

Pause in recording

AVL: Dolores, you're showing me here a photograph you have, it was taken in Asturias, and we believe it was probably 1911 or 1912—

DG: Nineteen twelve, I would imagine.

AVL: And that would be on the farm where your father was originally born? And you were telling me that probably a traveling photographer—

DG: From what I understand, a photographer would travel through the different towns, whether they had advance, I imagine maybe they had advance notice or maybe they would just come on Sunday, I don't know. And there's my uncle Joaquin de la Llana, who I imagine must have been about 10 or 12 years old at the time, and my grandfather Juan Antonio de la Llana y Llana, and my grandmother, Maria de los Dolores.

AVL: What was her maiden name, do you know?

DG: Rodriguez.

AVL: And this is Benigno. Was he the oldest?

DG: No, no.

AVL: No. Okay.

DG: This is my uncle Benigno, who was blind from birth and who was sent to a conservatory in Madrid for the *mudos y ciegos*.

AVL: *Sordornudos*.

DG: People who were blind and mute and—

AVL: Deaf and blind. So, he became a musician?

DG: He played thirteen instruments professionally, but the violin was his, the one that he had mastered.

AVL: And he stayed in the *aldea*, in the hamlet, he lived there throughout his life, or did he go—?

DG: You know, I really don't know. I know that he had been in Madrid, and I know that

he gave music lessons but I don't know, you know, much about him. He died. I think he was pretty young when he died. And then these two are my aunts.

AVL: What are their names?

DG: This one was Olympia but I don't know her married name, and this one was a spinster, this one was Honorina. There had been twelve children in my father's family but two had, I think were stillborn, and quite a few of them had died. And my father was the last survivor of the family.

AVL: How did you get to, you know, obtain this photograph?

DG: This one has been in the family and this is a copy. Gloria and Judy made copies for the family.

AVL: It's a wonderful photograph.

DG: Yes, we enjoy this. And my grandmother, although she had been educated also in a convent, but she was a beautiful seamstress and I'm sure that she had, you know, she made all these clothes, the women's clothes.

AVL: Very nice. So, you were telling me that your father wasn't particularly religious.

DG: He was a firm believer in God. He, you know, and he couldn't understand that people couldn't believe in evolution, he thought it was part of God's plan, not for us to, you know, to question it. He felt that if you didn't believe in evolution you didn't believe in God—But yes, he was very religious in his own way. I thought of him as a wonderful Christian because he would help anyone. He didn't care what they looked like, if someone was in trouble, you know, he would always stop and render service, or if he thought that they needed some money he'd—which used to upset my mother but he would reach, put his hand in his pocket and give them a few dollars, you know. But as far as attending church, no, he didn't, he was not religious.

AVL: And your mother was religious, I mean—

DG: No.

AVL: No?

DG: My mother, having been raised in a convent, said she'd had so much religion that she had enough for the rest of her life. She, from what she told me, they would go to bed saying vespers. They would get up in the morning and the nun would start with prayers and, although I'm sure her parents paid quite a bit to send her to that convent, they had to clean the dormitories. They didn't use shoes in there, they would wrap their feet with wool rags and they would have to polish the parquet floors and every meal was preceded with a prayer and ended with a prayer, and they had one hour a day that was supposedly

their free time and they would go for a walk with a nun and prayers would be said out loud.

Side A ends; side B begins

DG: My grandmother had been raised in a convent. She was orphaned at a fairly early age and she was raised in the convent and she wanted my mother to become a nun. Well, my mother didn't have any inclination to be a nun and my mother had a very, very strict upbringing. And my grandmother was a nurse, evidently she had learned this at the convent and she would accompany the family doctor on rounds and when people were sick, and in those day payment, there wasn't always money to pay them, both she and the doctor and they would, you know, bring home a dozen eggs or a chicken, or that's how payment was made for their services.

And my grandfather was the, you know, the baker, he owned the bakery and young boys used to be apprenticed to him. They would go there and learn, you know, learn the bakery trade. And my mother was one of five children, the other four were boys, two younger and two older. And one of them died of typhoid fever in France. He was away at Catholic school also, and when typhoid fever hit. Now, my mother, my grandmother had ministered to people in the town with typhoid and she never had gotten sick, but when they sent my uncle back to the house to be cared for by my grandmother they both died of typhoid fever.

So, my mother was just, I think, about thirteen or fourteen when that happened. And then she had one brother who became a pharmacist and lived in Leisure, France, and then one of the brothers had come here and he was the one who ran the bakery when my grandfather went to war during the First World War. My uncle at that time was about thirteen years old and he ran the bakery all alone, and he was the one who went to New York and became the chef-baker at the St. Regis Hotel. And one of her brothers died here, I don't know what type of business he was in but he died here of, I'm not sure, I think it was some sort of an influenza. And, but my mother had a very, very strict upbringing, very Catholic upbringing, and she never went to church except for some wedding or baptism or something like that. Now she sent me to church but she wouldn't go, she said, no, she had enough church, enough religious instruction. It was, I think, overkilled.

AVL: Did you go to a religious school, or—?

DG: No, no, I went to public school and then I attended, you know, catechism classes, but, so, consequently I'm, you know, I'm not very religious either. Now, my daughter is, but Modesto and I are just casual church goers. We go once in a while but not on a regular basis.

AVL: What was the thing, maybe your mother told you this, that she found more shocking when she came to the United States, coming from such a strict upbringing in France? It must have been quite an experience for a young lady—

DG: Well, you know, she had lived in Paris for several years as a governess, so she had seen, you know, she came from this beautiful city and she always talked about Paris. I mean, she was just, not that, you know, she was working for the family, she was just a working, you know, working girl, but they would take her and some of the other people that worked for them, you know, and take them places and show them off Paris and she just loved it. I don't think she was particularly, felt anything strongly against, the fact that she didn't speak English, I think she was, you know, she felt hampered, that's why she quit a very good job, she was very well paid when she was working as a governess, but the fact that they didn't permit her to speak English, she said, "Well, you know, that's fine for the young ladies but for me," she said, "I've got to learn to speak English." So she took a menial job working in a restaurant kitchen in Schraft's, New York and that's where she met my father.

So, of course, she didn't resent the fact that she had worked there in the kitchen, and after that she became housekeeper for a very prominent family where she just ran the house for them and took care of everything. And in the summertime we would go to Connecticut, to Hartford, Connecticut where they had a big summer home and we'd be there about two months and she'd take care of the whole place while we were there and then come back to the city, and she enjoyed that work. Some people don't, you know, don't care to do that type of work, but it never bothered her, she thought it had a lot of advantages.

AVL: Was she very strict with you? When I think of governess I always think of a very strict person, so I assume with her own child she must have been strict.

DG: She was very strict. My father was very strict. My father came also from a very strict upbringing and they were both very strict.

AVL: What kind of things did they do that you think—?

DG: Well, I mean, I didn't have the freedom that other, you know, some of my friends had, I had to, they had to know every place that I went and who I was with and they had to, you know, see everyone who came to, if I was going out on a date later on, as a teenager, they had to come to the door and had to meet them and had to tell them what time we were gonna be home and then being an only child, you know, I was the focus of their attention, they saw every little thing that I did, and, you know, they were very, very critical!

AVL: What did they think of your getting married so young and—?

DG: Well, I think that they would have preferred that I would have waited but no, they, you know, they were agreeable. The funny thing is that after my father didn't go to church he wanted me to get married in church. He didn't want me to have a civil service ceremony. He wanted me to get married in church so we got married at OLPH [Our Lady of Perpetual Help]. I would have probably gotten married in another church but Modesto wanted, you know, to get married in the Catholic Church, so we did. We

went to, we attended classes there, you know, prior to getting married. You want some more coffee?

Pause in recording

AVL: [beginning of the sentence was not recorded] educating your children, for instance—

DG: Well, they went to public school and—

AVL: How many children do you have?

DG: Turn it off (whispered). [recording stops]

AVL: So, this is another picture you're showing me, and where is this?

DG: This is on 11th Avenue and 9th Street in front. That was my aunt Amadora Menendez's house.

AVL: Is she the one?

DG: No, these are her children, three of her children. Jose, known as Tito, and his sister Lolita, Dolores, Lolita and Josefina. This is the one that you'll meet Saturday, and they built this and they used to sell Cokes in the summer.

AVL: Right in the backyard? This is the home and they just built.

DG: This is the bungalow, I think, the house was over on this side, and then there was a store. That might be the store. There was a bungalow in the back, she owned a grocery store on the corner, they had quite a big piece of property.

AVL: How did she come to Tampa then?

DG: Well, she was already married when she and her husband came.

AVL: Why did they choose Tampa?

DG: You know, I have no idea, but when you meet her daughter she might have some more information.

AVL: So they had a grocery store that was kind of their business?

DG: Well, it was her business, she ran the grocery store and he worked, he was a, I think he was an *escogedor* in the factory. I'm not sure. But she'll be able to tell you.

AVL: In the cigar industry, he worked.

DG: He worked in the cigar factory.

AVL: So they were both from Asturias and they came already married?

G: Yes, yes, um-hm, they were already married when they came here.

AVL: So what time, what year do you think this picture was taken, would you say, could that be the thirties?

DG: I'm sure it's the thirties, but—

AVL: It doesn't say.

DG: It doesn't say. In fact, this is a reproduction, it was a small picture, and I don't know how, my son got a hold of it, anyhow, he had it copied and enlarged. He loved it. He thought it was such a good picture!

AVL: Who took it, do you know, was it a professional photographer, or was—?

DG: I don't think so. It was a snapshot, somebody in the family took it.

AVL: Yes, it's very nice. So do you have a nice collection of old photographs of the family?

DG: I have a few. I don't have, you know, a whole lot, and I have one that is from the, my father is in a group from the Sección de Recreo from the Centro Asturiano and there's a lot of people there in the picture. Of course, I can identify him, I don't know, you know, anybody else in there. But, yes, I have—

AVL: You could bring them to our meetings, maybe, you know—

DG: If I find them, you know. That's my problem. I put so many things away when my father died, you know, packed stuff. I still have stuff in the shed that, stuff from my mother and, you know, things you hate to part with and yet you really don't have room to keep all that. But, yeah, I'm going to look and see if I find those photographs because I think—

AVL: Dolores, to conclude this interview, is there anything else you would like to add to what we have been talking about, some other information that you think should be included in this interview about, you know, your life or Ybor City or the war or some other memories?

DG: No, off hand, Ana, I can't think of anything that I can add. The fact that, you know, I didn't grow up here. Most of the things that I've heard I either know from experience from 1948 on or things that I've, you know, stories that I've heard my family and friends,

you know, talk about, but, no, I really. But if I think of something I'll definitely let you know.

AVL: Okay. So this concludes the interview with Mrs. Dolores Garcia, and I like to thank you very much Dolores for accepting to participate in this project.

DG: I've enjoyed it very much.

AVL: It has been a pleasure talking with you today.

DG: Thank you.

End of interview