MT 6: Research Project

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Period 5

Introduction

100 years ago America was seen as the country of new opportunities and better lifestyle. Thanks to the stories told by travelers and by the people who chose to start a new life in America, many people considered to immigrate to the Unites States, due to its great variety of new opportunities. Each family had a different experience when they started their journey to the United States. Many came alone, and others brought their families with them, in the hope of starting a new, better life here in America. Since so many people were migrating to America, jobs became more demanding and living areas became harder to find in cities. Many people came to America with nothing more than just themselves, they had given up everything they had back home, to make sure that their ancestors did not have to suffer as much as they did. If it wasn’t for our ancestors, who took the challenge of a new start in a completely new country they knew very little about, and if they would have not been brave to suffer the consequences this journey could have brought them, we would probably not be here today. We have them to thank for taking a risk, and sacrificing their lives to give us nothing more than the best they could’ve.

Mom’s Ancestry

My mom’s family tree goes back to Zacarias Ponce. His grandpa, whose name I was not able to acquire was the first to come to the Americas from a town in Spain. Zacarias Ponce lived in Mexico. I do not know what year Zacarias was born but I do know that his dad fought in the Mexican Independence War (1810-1821). He was Married to Juana Cedano, and I know very little of her as well. Zacarias was a farmer, and he came to the United States for new opportunities in the new country.

Zacarias’ son, Emiliano Ponce Cedano, my great-great grandpa, was born in 1888, in the city of Atengo, Jalisco, a small town in the central region of Mexico’s state, Jalisco. Emiliano Ponce was married to Felicitas Duran, and they together had 9 children of their own. He lived his life in Mexico. Emiliano Ponce was mainly a musician. He served as the military band director for the Mexican National Army from the years of 1919-1922. In 1922, he got baptized; he devoted himself to Christianity and began composing hymns for the church. He is known very well by the Seventh Day Adventists for his arrangement of “Mas Alla Del Sol” or as said in English “Far Beyond the Sun.” He later became a pastor, and worked in the Seventh - day Adventist church in Mexico.

Emiliano Ponce’s daughter, Maria de Jesus Amparo Ponce, born on September 29, 1917, in Mexico City, Mexico, was my great grandma. She got married to Teofilo Melchor Covarrubias Oliver, my great grandpa. Maria de Jesus Amparo Ponce was a homemaker; she stayed home and took care of their 8 kids.

My great grandpa was born in January 6, 1915 in Mexico City, Mexico. Teofilo Melchor was an accountant for a publishing press, in Mexico City. Melchor was the first to come to the United States in 1954, with his wife and oldest daughter Yolanda, who was 15 years old at the time. He came to the United States searching for a better way to support his large family; his wages in Mexico were not enough. So he came to the United States in hope of affording a better lifestyle for his family. He left his other 7 children in Monterrey, Nuevo Leon with their grandparents, while they came to the United States to start settling down. They would bring their kids from Mexico, one by one until they had enough money to do so.

They first arrived at Corpus Christi, Texas, with a relative that also had a big family. It was hard living there because it was so many people in a small house. It was around 15 people living there. Finally they found a job there in Corpus Christi, selling vacuum cleaners. Amparo would stay home and sew for money. They stayed there in Corpus Christi for one year. After that year living in Corpus Christi, they moved to Chicago. It seemed like it was easier to find a job there. They rented an apartment, with the Flores family of five. They did this to help each other with the rent and utilities. There in Chicago, Melchor worked in a factory where he was required to throw carbon in a furnace. He would do that every day, he’d come home tired and exhausted. As a result of this job, he got a hernia; he was not able to work there anymore. So he ended up working in a factory where they built casino slot machines. On the other hand, Amparo, his wife, worked in a factory making fire arms. That type of job was available for women at that time. In 1959, the state of Illinois banned the production of casino slot machines. Melchor was told that he could either move to Las Vegas, Nevada or to the state of Maryland to continue to work in the same company. That same year, the rest of his family migrated to the United States. In 1960, Melchor, Amparo and their eight children moved to Maryland. While Melchor worked building casino slot machines, Amparo took advantage of a free course in a community center, who taught them how to do slip covers and upholstery. Thanks to that they were able to start their upholstery and slip cover company, named MACOMEX DECORATORS. That is how they ended up supporting their kids, so that they could have enough money to provide their kids with and education and career. Her kids ended up being very successful, most of them with good careers such as doctors, dentists, business owners, administrators, and nurses. Maria de Jesus Ampario Ponce died in the summer of 1987 at the age of 69, due to a cancer that she fought for two years. Melchor lived for a much longer time, he remarried three time and all his wives died before him. He died in March 2010 at the age of 95, in a peaceful sleep.

Amparo Yolanda Covarrubias Ponce, my grandmother, was born on January 5, 1940, in Mexico City. She was the first child of Amparo and Melchor Covarrubias. She grew up being a very responsible girl, because she had to take care of her siblings at a very small age. When she was just six years old, she would stay home alone taking care of her two siblings, while her parents went out into the city to work. Although she was very busy at home helping her parents, she had the chance to go to school and finish elementary. By that time they moved to Monterrey, Nuevo Leon, when she was about 13 years old. Her parents decided to start a new life by moving to the United States. At the age of 15, her parents and she started their journey to a relative house in Corpus Christi. Finding a job was not that difficult at that time, even at such small age. All you had to do was look for any advertisements in the newspaper, and contact the company or person. Yolanda worked by taking care of four kids, she would clean the house, and cook for them when they came back from school each day. Yolanda went back to Mexico to help take care of her siblings, until everything was ready for them to come to the Unites States. In 1956, Yolanda and her siblings went to live with her parents in Chicago. She worked at the Boily Needle Company, which included making sewing kits for companies. She also worked at a Motorola Television Factory, welding cables for the TV’s that were being manufactured there. She later worked at Walgreens, and then at the First National Bank as an accountant at the age of 18. She did all of these during the day to help her parents, and at night she would go to school to finish her high school education. She would go to school from 6 in the afternoon till 10 in the night. There were many kids from different backgrounds, doing the same thing she was doing. In 1960 she moved with her family to Maryland where she did a semester in college and dropped out to work at an insurance company IBM Operator. The company closed therein Maryland and they sent her and her sister to Dallas, Texas to train new workers at the recently built facility, for seven weeks. In the Labor Day weekend, she went back to Montemorelos, Nuevo Leon to visit her grandfather that had an accident. Her sister went back to Maryland and Yolanda decided to stay in Montemorelos University to start her career, as a registered nurse. During those years she met Isaias Tineo Valenzuela, my grandfather. They got married October 31st, 1965. They had 5 kids together. Isaias Tineo Valenzuela died in 2012, from 4th degree cancer.

Mirta Yanira Tineo Covarrubias was the middle daughter of Yolanda Covarrubias and Isaias Tineo, and she also is my mother. She was born in Navojoa, Sonora, a northern state in Mexico. She lived her teen years in a boarding school where her dad was the principal there. She came to the United States as a resident alien, with her parents and her 4 siblings, when she was three years old for two years. They lived with their grandparents, Amparo and Melchor Covarrubias at Tacoma Park, Maryland. Her parents wanted to be able to provide them with a better type of living, filled with more opportunities. She attended Silgo Elementary School for her kindergarten year. The family went back to Mexico because my grandpa had to take care of his parents, since he was the only child. She finished her elementary, high school and university education in mexico. Mirta went to Montemorelos University, the same university where her parents had met. She went there to study Musical education, and she graduated in 1993. During her university years she met my dad, Jose Antonio Robles who was studying there at Montemorelos University as well. They dated for 2 years and then got married on December 12, 1993, in the city where they had met, Montemorelos, Nuevo Leon, Mexico. After the wedding they moved to Lindsay, California, where my dad had been living for several years. They had two children, Antonio Robles, and Amy Robles. Mirta was a stay home mom and a homemaker, until 2013 when she began working as a music teacher in a private school in the outskirts of Exeter, California. To this day Mirta and Jose are living happily together, in Lindsay, California.

Dad’s Ancestry

On my dad’s side of the family, the farthest that I was able to research was to Alberto Robles Garcia, who was born in 1904, I do not know where exactly he was born. I do know that he lived somewhere in Jalisco, Mexico, and he was a farmer. Alberto Robles Garcia had many wives and kids from different women. He was an alcoholic and the only thing he cared for was money which would allow him to buy more alcohol for him to drink. He did not provide his kids with basically anything, they were considered poor while he would go out to the bars and waste his money on alcohol. One of his kids Antonio Robles de Leon; my grandfather, was born in November 4th, 1928. He had an important role in the family since he was the oldest boy in a family of five kids and a mom. He was like the dad, he worked to help his mom and to make sure that his siblings had what it took to stay alive. They lived in small town called La Pareja, Jalisco. When Antonio Robles was 14 years old, he migrated illegally to the United States. Antonio’s cousin and Antonio came to the United States to work. Antonio’s main reason for migration was to get money so that he could help his mom and siblings who were still in Mexico, living in poverty. He hoped to one day to get them out of poverty. He came to Somerton, California with his cousin. Then both of them began working by washing plates for the field workers’ food, in Indio, California. He worked for 8-10 hours a day for about 30 cents an hour. He stayed there working in that industry for 5 more years and then he went back to Mexico to his family. All the money that he got by working he sent his mom by mail, so that she would pay expenses, buy food, and clothes for his siblings. In February 19, 1951 he got married to Maria Hilaria Curiel. They lived in El Arenal, Jalisco for many years. During that time, they had 9 kids but 2 sadly passed away. Throughout Antonio’s life he came once in a while to the United States to work as a field worker. The family would come for the summer with their kids, to work in the fields. In 1959 he became a resident alien and his kids as well got the residence. When he was already in his 50’s the whole family moved to Lindsay, California with one of Antonio’s relatives, who was also a field worker. They had decided to begin a new life in the new country, in hope of more opportunities. He lived in Lindsay, California until he died in 2010.

Jose Antonio Robles, my dad, was born on July 12, 1965, in El Arenal, Jalisco. He migrated to the United States in 1972 when he was 7 years old. He grew up spending his summers in United States, working in the fields and then going back to Mexico to get his education. He finished his high school here in the Lindsay High School. He graduated with the Class of 1984, and he was the valedictorian. He was the one to say the speech in Spanish on the day of graduation. When he graduated he went to Montemorelos University to study theology. There he met Mirta Tineo, my mother. They married on December 12. 1993. They came back to Lindsay, California to live here. They had 2 children together. For about 22 years he worked as a bee keeper in Cary’s Honey Farm in Lindsay, California. Jose would work while Mirta stayed home to take care of the kids, and to provide them with their needs. To this day he still lives in Lindsay, California with his family.

Today, not much has changed for immigrants; they still have struggles when deciding to come to the Unites States. Things have changed because now there is welfare, and rescue centers that are especially made for the poor and for the people who are going through addictions. Before, in some aspects, it was easier because rules to come over here were not as hard. People could cross the border easily and they didn’t really have to have citizenship. It is still a bit the same because they still don’t have full advantage on everything. There are still things that illegal immigrants cannot do, such as getting credit cards, licenses, buying a car, etc.

Works Cited

Interview with “Gloria Gonzales”

Interview with “Jose A. Robles”

Interview with “Mirta Robles”

Interview with “Yolanda Tineo”