

1Part II: Transcript of Berta Williams Oral History

**Berta Williams Interviewed by Charlotte Cushman September 4, 2009**

Transcription – Part II

CHARLOTTE: So, tell us about the cage that Washington sent.

BERTA: It was a steel cage and it had bars on the window and they had a place that she could lift up just so high so they could stick in their - you know, their letters and stuff that they want to mail out. And the packages, the mail man used to come inside the house and into the cage to you know deliver the packages.

CHARLOTTE: Where did the mailman come from?

BERTA: Benson.

CHARLOTTE: What do you remember about him?

BERTA: Oh she had several and they were very nice. They would come from Benson. They would stop at Pomerene first, then Cascabel, and then Redington was their last stop.

CHARLOTTE: And how did they travel?

BERTA: By car.

CHARLOTTE: Was it a special kind of post office vehicle or was it their own car?

BERTA: No, it was their own car.

CHARLOTTE: Did they come every day?

BERTA: They came three times – Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. Three times a week.

CHARLOTTE: And they would take the outgoing mail as well as bring the incoming mail?

BERTA: Yes, right.

CHARLOTTE: Did you meet the postmaster at Cascabel and the other towns also?

BERTA: Yes, the one in Cascabel. Mr. Nevitt. Tom Nevitt was the postmaster there.

CHARLOTTE: And did your mother have business with the other post offices at all?

BERTA: Sometimes, not very often. But sometimes she would.

CHARLOTTE: You mention Mr. Roberts was the post master before your mother. Who took your mother's place when she was no longer able to work?

BERTA: It went back to Mr. Smallhouse.

CHARLOTTE: Mr. Smallhouse. Tell us about Mr. Smallhouse.

BERTA: Oh he was a rancher. He was the, he married Mr. Bayless' niece. So when Mr. Bayless died, he gave everything to his niece and Mr. Smallhouse. So he was the owner. You know, they were the owners. And they were very nice people, very nice. They had two sons – Charles and John. And I used to babysit sometimes with Chuck.

CHARLOTTE: So you were older than those kids.

BERTA: Yes. A little older.

CHARLOTTE: Well I know we've got some photos to look at. Do you want to show us your pictures?

BERTA: Yes.

CHARLOTTE: Let's see what we've got here.

BERTA – This is the school at Redington. The kids.

CHARLOTTE – So tell us -Do you remember –do you want to put your glasses on – maybe you can tell us if you remember the names of any of the children in the picture.

BERTA: This one here is my brother, Ben.

CHARLOTTE: That's Ben. All the way on the right.

BERTA: Yes, and that's Mr. Michelson the school teacher.

CHARLOTTE: He's standing in back.

BERTA: Right. And the...I don't know who these kids are really.

CHARLOTTE: Which one are you?

BERTA: No, I'm not there.

CHARLOTTE: You're not there.

BERTA: I had graduated. This is at the new building.

CHARLOTTE: What year do you think that was?

BERTA: It must have been...I just really don't.

CHARLOTTE: Do you know what year you finished going to school? (4:19)

BERTA: Gosh, no. (She laughs.)

CHARLOTTE: That's ok.

BERTA: With years I'm not too... I have a hard time.

CHARLOTTE: Well, thank you. That's a beautiful picture.

BERTA: And there's one of the mail carrier. Mother snapped a picture because he was asleep.

CHARLOTTE: Is this...

BERTA: I think his name was Mr. Jones.

CHARLOTTE: Mr. Jones. Is this one of the ones who come from Benson.

BERTA: Yes. That's his car.

CHARLOTTE: OK. I bet he would be sleeping because that would be a long drive up from Benson.

BERTA: Yes. And this is the Carlink Ranch. This is the bunk house.

CHARLOTTE: So all the way on the right is the bunk house? Who slept in the bunk house? (4:59)

BERTA: The workers.

CHARLOTTE: And did they go home somewhere else or was this the only place that they lived?

BERTA: No, sometimes they would go home about...for the weekend but through the week you know they stayed in the bunk house.

CHARLOTTE: Ok. Do you know how the name Carlink, where that came from?

BERTA: No, I don't.

CHARLOTTE: And is that ranch still there? The Carlink Ranch? It is still there? On the Redington Road? Or where is it exactly?

BERTA: Well, it's um, well, yes, you could. It's going over the mountains and you cross the San Pedro River and it's... That's where it starts. Right across from the San Pedro. (5:43) Yes, Mr...um....The Smallhouse's daughter-in-law and her husband run it now.

CHARLOTTE: Oh. OK. Have you been back to visit?

BERTA: No. We called. We called and you have to make an appointment now. 'Cause I wanted, as I told my granddaughter, not Stephanie, the other one, I said, before I die I want to go back there and see if the house is still there and this and that and visit the old Ronquillo homestead. So she called, her name is Stephanie, Stephanie Smallhouse. She called Stephanie and Stephanie said sure. She said, sure we'd love to talk to her about... They want to know about the people that were there years ago.

CHARLOTTE: Yes.

BERTA: And it seems like I'm the only one left that knows about it. And so Trixie says I'm going to make an appointment. Then she got pregnant and well, she's 35 years old. She wasn't having too good a time so we decided to wait. She has the baby now and I'm a great grandmother again. 7:03

CHARLOTTE: Oh.

BERTA: So. But I want to go before, you know, I die.

CHARLOTTE: Yeah. And is the Ronquillo homestead still there? And what about the house where you were a little girl? Is that the same house where the post office was?

BERTA: No. It's on the Ronquillo homestead, but it's further from the main house.

CHARLOTTE: And is that still standing? The one that was the post office?

BERTA: I really don't know.

CHARLOTTE: Yeah. 'Cause if you haven't been back.

\*BERTA: Yes, it might be. That's why I want to go you know. 7:42

CHARLOTTE: Wonderful. So this looks like a lot of cows. This is...

BERTA: So this is at Carlink.

CHARLOTTE: This is at Carlink?

BERTA: Yes.

CHARLOTTE: During what?

BERTA: Round-up

CHARLOTTE: During the round up. So they were getting branded?

BERTA: Yes.

CHARLOTTE: Oh boy.

BERTA: You've seen Mr. Bayless. This is Mr. Smallhouse.

CHARLOTTE: Oh Mr. Smallhouse. He heads the 56<sup>th</sup> Rodeo Parade in 1981. It says the rancher is parade marshal.

BERTA: Yeah, and this is one of the school teachers, Mrs. Heilert. (8:20)

CHARLOTTE: Mrs. Heilert.

BERTA: That was before Mama's time.

CHARLOTTE: So who had this teacher? This was before your mother was there?

BERTA: Yes.

CHARLOTTE: But she was just one of the people who lived in Redington?

BERTA: Yes. And she would come pick up her mail.

CHARLOTTE: Aaahhh. Where do you suppose...and so she traveled by horse?

BERTA: Yeah, she'd want to go riding so she'd ride and pick up her mail and keep on going.

CHARLOTTE: Where do you suppose she came from?

BERTA: I really don't know. I don't.

CHARLOTTE: A lot of the school teachers came from somewhere else I think.

BERTA: Yes.

CHARLOTTE: They didn't grow up in Redington.

BERTA: No.

CHARLOTTE: I'm also curious about the horse because you mentioned that your father had a car. Was that unusual that your family had a car? (9:01)

BERTA: Besides the people at the Smallhouse's, we were the only other ones that had a car.

CHARLOTTE: Did people want to go places with you? Did they ask your father to drive them?

BERTA: Oh yes. Oh yes.

CHARLOTTE: Kind of like a taxi service.

BERTA: (laughing) Yes

CHARLOTTE: Or an ambulance or anything.

BERTA: But we glad to do it, you know. That is one thing about people that live out like that. They are always glad to do favors.

CHARLOTTE: They help each other.

BERTA: That's right.

CHARLOTTE: They've got to help each other. What else do we have? What's this one? (9:34)

BERTA: Oh that was our teacher Miss Bourne. My first teacher. But this isn't taken at Redington. This is when she was teaching at Baboquivari. 9:46

CHARLOTTE: Now she's the one that wrote the book, right?

BERTA: Yeah.

CHARLOTTE: And did you know her?

BERTA: Oh yes.

CHARLOTTE: But she wasn't your teacher?

BERTA: Yes, she was. My first teacher.

CHARLOTTE: Oh she was your teacher? Oh, OK. And do you remember who else was in the photograph?

BERTA: No, these are from a school in Baboquivari.

CHARLOTTE: Oh, ok. But she's the one wearing the hat.

BERTA: Yes.

CHARLOTTE: OK

BERTA: She had a little ranch out towards Oracle.

CHARLOTTE: I wonder if that's still there.

BERTA: I have no idea.

CHARLOTTE: And what else do you have?

BERTA: You've seen Mr. Bayless. I have Mr. Bayless.

CHARLOTTE: This is a newspaper article about Mr. Bayless when he died in 1938. "Charles H. Bayless – Pioneer Cattleman and Banker is Dead". Do you remember when he died?

BERTA: No I don't. But I remember I was very sad.

CHARLOTTE: No more candy from that drawer, hunh?

BERTA: No.

(CHARLOTTE and BERTA both laugh.)

CHARLOTTE: And do you have a card there also?

BERTA: This is one of mama's old fashioned cards.

CHARLOTTE: This is the matinee girl. Mrs. C. Bennett. Do you know who Mrs. C. Bennett is?

BERTA: Yes, she was...she was...I don't remember. I think she worked in the post office when the Roberts had it.

CHARLOTTE: Hmm. And this is addressed to your mother. It looks like it's written in 1911.

BERTA: Oh.

CHARLOTTE: Do you have anything else there? Maybe we can look at these photographs and you can tell us a little bit about these. Who is in this picture? (11:36)

BERTA: Oh, this is the house at the Diamond R. And this is my....

CHARLOTTE: Do you want your glasses?

BERTA: Oh these are ... This lady is from California and she came to visit this lady. And their names Canez. And these are the Canez children. (12:00) Now I don't remember her name.

CHARLOTTE: Is that your mother in the middle?

BERTA: No. No.

CHARLOTTE: So your mother's not in that picture?

BERTA: No.

CHARLOTTE: So this is the Diamond R where you lived?

BERTA: Yes.

CHARLOTTE: And who's...someone is looking out the door.

BERTA: Oh my brother Frank, the youngest one. (BERTA is laughing.)

CHARLOTTE: The youngest one. He is wondering about who these people are.

CHARLOTTE: Now outside there is some kind of little cot. Is that where you would sit, or even sleep outside?

BERTA: Yes. The boys did sleep out there sometimes.

CHARLOTTE: There must have been a nice breeze. That's right?

BERTA: Yes, there was. It was so nice.

CHARLOTTE: What about this one? (12:39)

BERTA: There's the place. And there's a sign - Post Office. And there's a cage. It used to be over here where my bedroom was.

CHARLOTTE: On the right hand side was where your bedroom was?

BERTA: Yes.

CHARLOTTE: And that's where the cage was?

BERTA: No, the cage was moved to the North side.

CHARLOTTE: Oh ok. Who put the cage in?

BERTA: Some people that came to the...I think they came when they delivered the cage.

CHARLOTTE: They worked for the Post Office.

BERTA: Uh huh. See the road would go right here. That's where those people were. The man was waiting to...while the other men went to....

CHARLOTTE: In front of the house there?

BERTA: Yes. And here is the front door where my brother ran to see what was locked where he could look out.

CHARLOTTE: And did you have another door in the house?

BERTA: Yes, there was one beyond the window there.

CHARLOTTE: On the right hand side?

BERTA: Yes. And one behind there, where the kitchen was.

CHARLOTTE: On the left hand side. And how close was this to the San Pedro River?

BERTA: Very close. Like from here to Grant Road I think.

CHARLOTTE: Ok. So about maybe a ¼ of a mile or so. Like maybe a 5 minute walk? Something like that?

BERTA: Yes.

CHARLOTTE: Could you hear river sometimes?

BERTA: Yes.

CHARLOTTE: Was there always water in that part of it?

BERTA: At that time, yes. But now it's bone dry.

CHARLOTTE: Right, but in those days do you remember...?

BERTA: Yes. Water being in it.

CHARLOTTE: Did you get water from there?

BERTA: No. We had a well.

CHARLOTTE: And did you swim there at all?

BERTA: Yes, we used to go play in the water.

CHARLOTTE: Oh nice. Tell us about this picture. (14:14)

BERTA: Oh that's the school house – old adobe – before they added on to it. They added on this space.

CHARLOTTE: On the right hand side ...

BERTA: Yes

CHARLOTTE: They added on the adobe.

BERTA: We used to all ride horses.

CHARLOTTE: So all the children rode horses to school?

BERTA: Not all of them. There's some that lived real close. And um... but we were miles from the school so we had to ride horse back.

CHARLOTTE: Did you have your own horse?

BERTA: Um Hm. Then we'd meet at the Ronquillo place and walk up the hill to school.

CHARLOTTE: So you didn't bring your horse to the school house. This is just for the photograph that the horses were there. Do you remember why you were all in front there?

BERTA: The teacher just wanted us to.

CHARLOTTE: Just for the photograph?

BERTA: For the photograph.

CHARLOTTE: Do you remember any of the other people's names in the picture?

BERTA: There the Montanos. There was Lucy and her sister. (15:22) I don't remember the sister's name. Then there was the Veldez. It was Reynaldo, Carlota, Clara, Tilly, (?) Eulalia—she was named after Eulalia Bourne. David Manuel. And there was the Bingham. It was Gareth, Ardell, Donna, Velva. And there was a girl named Nelda Swint. And there was two kids that came to school from a ranch that wasn't close to Redington. It was the Beyota.(?) (16:10) Their names were Clifford...the first one was Clifford and what was her name? Can't remember the girl's name, but they were also there.

CHARLOTTE: Your teacher had her hands full I think.

BERTA: Yes, and of course us. The four of us.

CHARLOTTE: Yes, you were a big part of the school.

BERTA: The younger two, Chuck and John Smallhouse. Too went to school.

CHARLOTTE: Did you speak English at home or Spanish?

BERTA: No, my dad wouldn't let us.

CHARLOTTE: Wouldn't let you speak English?

BERTA: No, Spanish.

CHARLOTTE: Oh, so you always spoke English.

BERTA: Yep. One time he caught my lil' brother and I trying to speak Spanish. We didn't hear him coming up, you know, behind us and uh he spanked us and told us he didn't want to hear us speaking Spanish anymore. So he took us in the house and gave us a lecture and told us why – 'cause we'd have trouble in school and he was right.

CHARLOTTE: Did he speak Spanish?

BERTA: He wasn't a Mexican.

CHARLOTTE: And what about your mother? Did she speak Spanish to you?

BERTA: No. But she spoke Spanish with her brothers, er would come and visit and she'd speak Spanish.

CHARLOTTE: What about in school? Did you speak Spanish with the other children when you were in school?

BERTA: No.

CHARLOTTE: So it wasn't allowed?

BERTA: No.

CHARLOTTE: I wonder if the teacher spoke Spanish?

BERTA: No.

CHARLOTTE: No.

BERTA: No, we didn't have any speaking Spanish teachers.

CHARLOTTE: How did you like it when the teachers came to town? (18:04) When you got a new teacher?

BERTA: Well, it was hard to get used to them. And then I had... We had a teacher and her name was Mrs. Trimbull (?) and she was very strict with us, especially me. I was so naughty. I was always getting into trouble.

(CHARLOTTE laughs.)

BERTA: She'd make me put my hands down like this on the desk. She'd get... We had those wooden rulers and then she'd get it and hit my knuckles. And boy that smarts you know. It stings so –ooohh.

CHARLOTTE: What did you get in trouble for? You told us about the outhouse. Were there other times you remember?

BERTA: Oh yes. One time...(BERTA laughs)... We had the two teachers and they both for some reason – one of them usually stayed with us – but this time they both went home for lunch. ‘Cause they used to live on the Carlink property. And they went home for lunch and we stayed there and I was bored. So I told kids, “Let’s go into the, not the old part, but the newer part, and have a paper fight.”

(CHARLOTTE laughs)

BERTA: We’d wad up paper and throw it at one another.

CHARLOTTE: And you’d be the one to suggest it?

BERTA: Yeah. Of course. And we had paper all over the place. And then we heard Mrs. Brown, the other teacher, not the man teacher, but Mrs. Brown coming. And I didn’t know what to do, so I went and hid under Mr. Michelson’s desk. I was quiet and school started. And the kids said, they asked where I was, they wouldn’t tell. They said “We don’t know.” So then everything went along. We’re having, school started and I was missing. And then Mr. Michelson, of all things, was a big man, out stretched his feet, you know, like they do. And he looked under the desk.

CHARLOTTE: Oh no!

(BERTA laughs.)

CHARLOTTE: So he didn’t even know you were missing?

BERTA: No. Because I belonged in the other room.

CHARLOTTE: And what happened to you then?

BERTA: Well, he was nice. He didn’t say anything. But Mrs. Brown, the teacher, of course she went and told my mother. (20:21) I got punished.

(CHARLOTTE laughs.)

BERTA: I was always getting punished. The only time...Oh and another incident that I got real punished for was ...My dad would go on the round up, and after the round up he would come to town. And he’d always have big barrels of gas, ‘cause you know there was no gas stations.

CHARLOTTE: Yes.

BERTA: So there was three barrels he’d always take and have filled with gas. And uh I thought, he was on the round up, and I thought to myself, Oh my poor dad, when he comes home, he’ll be tired. I think I’ll help him out. So, I used to see him siphon – get the little thin hose and siphon. Put it down in the barrel and then get a bucket and fill the bucket up. And then from the bucket he’d siphon into his gas tank. So I went, and I couldn’t open the barrel

– the stopper – the barrel - whatever you call it. So I thought, maybe I'd get water I could put in there. So I went and got a bucket of water.

CHARLOTTE: Oh no!

BERTA: And I siphoned water into the gas tank. So when he came home –

CHARLOTTE: Did you know that was a problem? Were you doing it as a joke? Or you did it as a mistake?

BERTA: Yeah. I didn't know. I thought water would work.

CHARLOTTE: Ohhhh.

BERTA: So, when he came it was time to go to town, he went to start the car and it would sputter.

CHARLOTTE: Oh no!

BERTA: He went and looked and found out there was water in the carburetor. So then he was really fuming.

CHARLOTTE: Did they know it was your fault then? That you were the one who did it?

BERTA: Right away.

(CHARLOTTE laughs.)

BERTA: And so yes. Then poor dad, he had to take the tank off the truck and clean it out.

CHARLOTTE: Yeah, because he'd have to do all the car maintenance himself. There wasn't a repair shop down the road.

BERTA: No. I couldn't go anywhere for I don't know how long. The kids would come knock on the door. "Can Berta come out and play?" "No, she's being punished." Boy, my older brother was so happy that I was getting punished.

(Both BERTA and CHARLOTTE laugh.)

CHARLOTTE: It's always fun when somebody else is getting in trouble – not you.

BERTA: The only time I didn't get punished was when we moved to the Diamond R. My dad...because Mr. Morano (?) that lived off at Redington, he was a very good farmer. So my dad thought I'll think I'll ask if he wants to come and farm and share, you know, you take half and I take half. My mother thought it was a good idea. So he went and talked to Mr. Morano. And he told him, yes, he'd be delighted, but he was a very superstitious man. That he didn't want my mother or us kids in the garden. (23:39) So, my dad says no problem. So

he came and he farmed. And he grew such big luscious watermelons and stuff. One day, my dad was still home, these people came to buy stuff. So and my dad just gave them. He wouldn't take money for them. Two great big watermelons. So they decided to sit under this tree and eat the watermelon. They'd crack it open and they'd break pieces off and eat it. So then my brother Frank saw that and he started crying, after they left. The people left, he started crying he wanted watermelon. And of course I thought, and I thought, I told my Ben, I said Ben go see where mother is. See if she's busy. And I said, but don't say anything to her, just see. And so he went and my mother said "What do you want?" He didn't know what to say. "Nothing," he said. And he went back out and he said "She's in the kitchen. I think she's canning." Oh I thought – good. So I went, and I went in the back door to my mother and dad's room and I got my dad's shoes and I went back and I was putting them on. And the kids said "What are you doing?" And said..."Dad's going to get mad. Why are you putting he shoes on?" And I said "Never mind." So I went out, put his shoes on and went out in the garden and cut the watermelon and brought it back.

(CHARLOTTE laughs.)

BERTA: Then I went and put Dad's shoes back. I cleaned them off as good as I could 'cause you know sometimes the garden is muddy. Cleaned them off and put the shoes back. And then we went back and we had watermelon. Then mother called us for lunch. So we went and we went in and Mother said "What is that on you?" – to the boys – "What is that on your shirts?" And they wouldn't say anything. And she said, "I asked you. What is that on your shirt?" And she says, "It looks like watermelon." And so we had to tell her. At first she was "Oh, my God!" she said. "What is your dad going to say? What is...Mr. Morano is going to be so mad! You know he doesn't want me or you kids in his garden!" And then, pretty soon, she just starts laughing and laughing and laughing.

(CHARLOTTE laughs.)

BERTA: And then she quit laughing and said "We have to tell your dad. What's he going to do? You know you all three are in trouble." So we were worried then. The three of us were very worried. And then when supper time came, we're having supper, and then my mother told my dad. "The kids have something to tell you." And boy, my heart sank. And then I didn't say anything. Then Frank said, "Dad, we had watermelon." Dad said, "What?" "We had watermelon." Then he looked at me and he says, "Yes?" And I didn't say anything. Then, Frank spoke up again. He said, "Yes, I was crying because I wanted watermelon. I saw these people eating watermelon and I wanted watermelon. And Sis (he used to call me Sis), and Sis felt sorry for me so she went." "Oh my God!" he said. "Mr. Morano is probably going to leave." He'll be so mad. And Frank said, "No he won't!" And my dad said, "How do you know?" "Because I know," he said. "You know what Sis did? She went and put your shoes on and went out in the watermelon patch and got a watermelon." And my dad said...for a while was stunned. And then he started laughing and laughing and laughing. And he said "That serves the old superstitious old goat right!"

(CHARLOTTE and BERTA both laugh.)

BERTA: So I didn't get spanked. That's the only time!

CHARLOTTE: But you were always the one doing the tricks. It wasn't your brothers. It was you.

BERTA: Yes, but that time Frank, yeah, Frank, spoke up for me.

CHARLOTTE: Oh good.

BERTA: He told my dad that I felt sorry because he was crying and crying.

CHARLOTTE: But because you had your father's shoes on, no one would see your foot prints in the garden.

BERTA: No.

CHARLOTTE: You were clever to figure that out.

BERTA: I hope...what can I say...I always...I don't know. (28:45) My mother used to say that I was the one that gave her the most problems. We were, you know, kids.

CHARLOTTE: So you didn't do what you were asked to do?

BERTA: No, I was always getting in mischief.

(CHARLOTTE laughs.)

CHARLOTTE: But I know you helped with chores also. Did you ever do the dishes?

BERTA: Oh yes. Yes. Yes, I did. And I used to hate doing them. And one time I told my mom, "Mom, why do I have to do dishes?" I said, "I'm getting tired of it." I was worried because I couldn't go outside and be up in the tree. I was like a monkey, always in that tree. And she said, "Well," she said. "Make a game out of it," she said. "Pretend like the plates are boats sailing on the water." 'Cause we used to fill the tub, she had a plastic pan she used to fill up with water, with soapy water. "And that the knives and forks are the crew people." I don't remember what the saucers and cups were. "Make a game of it and do it with a smile." I said, "OK." So I did.

And uh one day I was up in the tree. It was early morning and I was up in the tree. And my brother Ben was down on the ground. He couldn't talk. He didn't start talking 'till he was close to 5 years old. And uh, and he was, Mother thought he was a mute. And he's down there playing with his little cars and cans. I was talking to him. I was up in the tree and he wouldn't answer. And I said, "Ben, answer me!" Wouldn't answer. And again, "Ben! Answer me!" and nothing. So on the third, "Ben, answer me!" he didn't answer me so I got down out of the tree and I went and I slapped him. As I was slapping him, my mother was coming out with a pan with dish towels to hang up – 'cause we used to have a line outside where she'd hang up clothes. And she saw it, so she got one of those towels and she hit me. And I said, "But, Mother, why did you hit me?" "Well, you slapped your brother." "Yes, but I did it with a smile."

(CHARLOTTE and BERTA both laugh.)

BERTA: But that didn't help. She already swatted me.

CHARLOTTE: You had good logic though. You were just telling her what she taught you, right?

BERTA: I'm telling you, I was terrible.

(CHARLOTTE laughs.)

(31:35)

CHARLOTTE: Tell us what's in this picture.

BERTA: That is at the Carlink ranch. This is where we had the water, the tank with water. And right in here is where my mother had a little garden.

CHARLOTTE: How did the water get into the tank?

BERTA: From the windmill. We had a windmill. A well and a windmill.

CHARLOTTE: But the windmill is not in the picture.

BERTA: No.

CHARLOTTE: It's not nearby?

BERTA: It's way over here.

CHARLOTTE: Off to the left. And what's the building that's sticking out then on the left hand side.

BERTA: That's part of the house.

CHARLOTTE: That's the edge of the house. OK.

CHARLOTTE: Who's in this picture? (32:15)

BERTA: That's my mom and my little brother, Frank.

CHARLOTTE: That's Frank? The little baby?

BERTA: And this is me, and this is Ben.

CHARLOTTE: So Ben is all the way on the left, the shorter one on the left.

BERTA: Mmhmm.

CHARLOTTE: And then behind him is...?

BERTA: Is Fidel.

CHARLOTTE: Fidel.

BERTA: The oldest brother. The oldest.

CHARLOTTE: And whose car is that?

BERTA: That's my dad's car.

CHARLOTTE: That's the black one?

BERTA: No, that's the Ford I think, with the rumble seat. It had a rumble seat. That was before he got the Dodge Sedan.

CHARLOTTE: You all looked dressed up. Do you remember where you were going?

BERTA: We had just baptized my brother. We were coming from there and my, her niece snapped a picture.

CHARLOTTE: Were you at church to baptize the baby?

BERTA: Yes. Un hunh.

CHARLOTTE: Where was the church?

BERTA: Oracle. Went to Oracle, where her brother and sister-in-law lived.

CHARLOTTE: Which church was it?

BERTA: I really don't remember the name of it.

CHARLOTTE: Is it Catholic?

BERTA: Catholic church.

CHARLOTTE: Is that St. Helen's?

BERTA: Probably. At Oracle.

CHARLOTTE: And what building is that?

BERTA: That's Oracle. Where my, her brother lived.

CHARLOTTE: So that's your uncle. Your uncle's house in Oracle.

BERTA: Yeah. He worked for Elizabeth Lambert Wood – the author. She’s the one that donated the YMCA to her ranch.

CHARLOTTE: Ohhh. That’s still there. That camp is still there.

BERTA: Uh hunh.

CHARLOTTE: How about this picture with the Carlink Ranch banner? (33:53)

BERTA: Yeah. That’s where we were in the parade. And that’s my brother.

CHARLOTTE: On the left. Which brother is that?

BERTA: The oldest.

CHARLOTTE: Fidel?

BERTA: Fidel. And that’s me, and that’s my cousin, Reynaldo Valdez. And that’s...

CHARLOTTE: So Reynaldo is the third one?

BERTA: Yes. And those are his brothers. Um, what was his name? David, Conrad and what’s the other one? I can’t remember the other name.

CHARLOTTE: They were all your cousins? The Valdez family?

BERTA: Yeah. And then there were others that were not cousins. The Montano family.

CHARLOTTE: And this looks like a special day. You’re all dressed up.

BERTA: It is Armistice. We marched in a parade.

CHARLOTTE: That was Armistice Day?

BERTA: In Tucson. Yeah, they brought us to Tucson to march in the parade for I forget how many years. I think three years.

CHARLOTTE: What do you remember about the Armistice?

BERTA: I remember that we would get up real early, come to town. And in town we would go to a house. I don’t know who owned it, this house. It was somebody that my folks knew. I can’t remember their names. And we would dress like cowboys, you know, with the bandanas and the jeans and the shirts and march in the parade. And there were other people, you know, in the parade, too. Other schools.

CHARLOTTE: So that’s why you had your banner.

BERTA: Um hum.

CHARLOTTE: And you were the youngest one it looked like.

BERTA: Yes.

CHARLOTTE: And the only girl.

BERTA: Yes. Look at the bow legs. (BERTA laughs.)

CHARLOTTE: Yes, but cute. You are the cutest one!

(BERTA laughs.)

CHARLOTTE: Tell us about this picture.

BERTA: This is my mother and dad in front of the post office. There's the sign.

CHARLOTTE: Is that the cage then?

BERTA: Yes. That's the cage.

CHARLOTTE: They were a very nice looking couple.

BERTA: Thank you.

CHARLOTTE: And the house was made of adobe?

BERTA: Yeah. It was plastered.

CHARLOTTE: Do you remember who built it?

BERTA: No I don't.

CHARLOTTE: And what were the steps made of? (36:04)

BERTA: Out of cement.

CHARLOTTE: Those were cement.

BERTA: Yes.

CHARLOTTE: Tell us about this picture.

BERTA: Oh that's Mr. Bayless and that's his sister-in-law. That's his brother Stewart Bayless.

CHARLOTTE: So Mr. Bayless is the one on the right.

BERTA: Yes.

CHARLOTTE: And his sister-in-law is next.

BERTA: And this is his wife – This is his brother Stewart's wife.

CHARLOTTE: So the brother Stewart is all the way on the left.

BERTA: Yes, and this is their daughter, Margaret. The one that he left the ranch to when he died.

CHARLOTTE: And this is in Tucson?

BERTA: Yes.

CHARLOTTE: What about this picture? It says something about "Recuerdo a Maria Torres." (36:59)

BERTA: Oh that's my mother.

CHARLOTTE: And it's a picture of your mother, but you don't know who it's for?

BERTA: No.

CHARLOTTE: Who Maria Torres is.

BERTA: No.

CHARLOTTE: Do you remember if this was maybe before you were born?

BERTA: Oh yes.

CHARLOTTE: So you don't know anything about where she was going or what she was doing?

BERTA: No.

CHARLOTTE: What about this picture? (37:25)

BERTA: Oh that's the girl there that she hired at one time that she had to let go because she got...I don't know what my brother did, because he didn't talk when he was that little. He didn't talk. So I don't know, he must have kicked her or I don't know what happened. And she scratched him in the face and right here on the chest. So she had to let her go. But she was with Mama for a long time, to feed us, you know. And sometimes when Mother would be behind on the laundry, she would help out with the laundry.

CHARLOTTE: So she was from Redington?

BERTA: Yes.

CHARLOTTE: Another ranch? She's the one all the way on the right hand side.

BERTA: Uh hunh. And that's me, that's Ben. That's Mama. That's a school teacher. Mrs...what was her name...can't remember her name. And that's Donna Bingham.

CHARLOTTE: The little girl is Donna Bingham.

BERTA: Donna Bingham.

CHARLOTTE: She looks about your age. Did you go to school together?

BERTA: Umm hmm.

BERTA: Miss Hart!

CHARLOTTE: Miss Hart. She's the teacher in that photograph.

(38:45) CHARLOTTE: And what about this card? The birthday card? It says Mrs. John Rhodes on it.

BERTA: Oh! This was my dad's mother, mailed this to mama before not ever knowing that mama was going to be her daughter-in-law.

CHARLOTTE: Oh, this was before they were married?

BERTA: Yes, un hunh.

CHARLOTTE: So this was August 30, 1915. She already liked her even though they weren't related.

BERTA: Oh yes! (BERTA laughs.)

CHARLOTTE: What about this card? (39:16) From the National League of District Postmasters.

BERTA: Oh. I don't know.

CHARLOTTE: She just had that?

BERTA: She just had that.

CHARLOTTE: And here's another card from the Arizona State Association of Postmasters.

BERTA: Oh that's another card I guess they would send her. They would send her cards.

CHARLOTTE: The official cards.

BERTA: And then she had one from during the Lindbergh kidnapping. From Phoenix, a detective agency, Hooper and Holmes. They contacted her and they deputized her. And she had to... 'cause they thought he would try to escape. They had her set down all the serial numbers of the money that would come in.

CHARLOTTE: That's a big job.

BERTA: Yeah. I think my nephew, Miguel's boy, took the card, she had a card, that I had for a long time. And even when she left the post office, we moved to Tucson. We're living on Arcadia. Gosh, I was already 23 I think, when I had my first boyfriend. And she was still in contact with the agency. So, she just didn't like him for some reason. So she wrote to Hooper and Holmes and had them investigate him.

(BERTA and CHARLOTTE laugh.)

CHARLOTTE: What happened then?

BERTA: She made me... She didn't like what she... She didn't show me the letter, but she didn't like what she read, so she had me get rid of him.

CHARLOTTE: You didn't get away with much I think, from the sound of it.

BERTA: No, not with her. Not with her. Like she said, I was a problem to her.

CHARLOTTE: Is there anything else that you wanted to tell us about?

BERTA: Well, I just wanted to say that I'm very proud, I am very proud of my mother. She was a humble person. She would help anyone that needed help, even the hobos that would come down the river. In fact, she would feed them. Well, she would have my brother who was afraid of nothing, my oldest brother Fidel, take their food out to them. And uh, she would help just anyone that needed help. And um, I admire her because she her own way, even then, of disciplining us. After we got to be teenagers, she wouldn't, well, even before we were teenagers, she would have this system. Every Saturday, she would say we were going to have a roundtable discussion where you can tell me your grievances. So we had a big round table, that's why she called it a roundtable, and it had, in the middle, it had legs like an animal's legs, which I was afraid of when I was little. And we'd sit around the table. My dad would skedaddle. He didn't want no part of it. He'd leave everything to my mom. So she'd get a paper and pencil and write down our names and then Fidel would say "Berta didn't want to help me do this or that, and blah, blah, blah, blah." So, and then, me. My name, Berta. "Fidel hit me." Or whatever. And then Ben. "Berta stuck her tongue out at me." Or whatever. And Frank. "Berta..." Because he wanted me to... I used to make up stories. And he'd say, "Berta didn't want to tell me a story." And stuff like that, you know. There was other stuff, and then she would deal with us. "Well, Fidel, you can not go this weekend to play with your friends." "Berta, you have to do the ironing first." Scrubbing or whatever. "Ben, you have to rake the yard." "Frank, you have to feed the animals." And, "No one is going anywhere this weekend."

CHARLOTTE: Well, so she was very organized. Even with writing things down and very precise it sounds like.

BERTA: Very.

CHARLOTTE: And there's always a consequence of whatever happened. Would you love to see those papers now and all those things that happened every week?

BERTA: Yes.

CHARLOTTE: But your father didn't want to stay and see what he had done that week.

BERTA: No. He took off. Dad left everything to her. He knew she was capable of handling it.

CHARLOTTE: Yes, she sounds very capable. Not much she couldn't handle it sounds like.

BERTA: No. She was something else. (44:50)

(Someone says: I'm afraid the tape is just about to run out again. Maybe you need to have one more thing or anything else you want to say in closing?)

BERTA: I just want to say she was a remarkable woman. And what makes me ashamed of myself, is how she struggled, I mean struggled, for an education and here I had it and I didn't make any use of it, what I had. I don't know.

CHARLOTTE: Well, I can see why you were proud of her. She does sound like an amazing woman, just an amazing woman. Well, we're so grateful to you for sharing her story with us, and sharing all these photographs, and cards, and stories and articles, and all of it. So thank you so much.

BERTA: Thank you. Now I feel good that at least she's been, you know, recognized. That's what I often worry. I used to think...In fact I talked to my nephew about it. Fidel's oldest boy, Danny. I talked to him about it. I said you know, if there is a, what do you call it, for postmasters...

CHARLOTTE: Like an award or something?

BERTA: I think my mother should deserve one.

CHARLOTTE: It certainly sounds like it. Well, thank you so much.

BERTA: You're very welcome. Thank you, because without you, I wouldn't even have this privilege that I have to speak about my mother.

CHARLOTTE: And you have her desk also. (46:40) Right here.

BERTA: Yes.

CHARLOTTE: Stephanie sent me some photographs of it. Did she sit at that desk?

BERTA: Yes, that flap used to come down. But it broke. You know, so many years and moving and everything. And it's just kind of coming apart.

CHARLOTTE: It's beautiful though.

BERTA: See the pigeon holes are in the side there.

CHARLOTTE: What would she keep in the pigeon holes?

BERTA: Letters. She had labels on them. They came off. Like the names of the people. I wrote them down.

CHARLOTTE: Oh – from the different families.

End of tape 1, side 2.