

Oral History Collection

Brianna Sosa

Interviewer: Karen Goss

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Place of Interview: Denton, Texas

Karen Goss: Hello, this is Karen Goss. I am with Brianna Sosa and we're going to be conducting a brief interview for the Milpa project for the Oral History program at the University of North Texas. We are in Denton, Texas, and it is Monday, April 29th, 2024. Welcome, Brianna. Thank you for agreeing to do this interview! If you don't mind, if you could just tell me a little bit about yourself and your connection to food. In particular, if there's any family recipes or anything like that that you've been collecting or anything special that comes to mind when you think about food and your family and that kind of thing, that would be great.

Brianna Sosa: Yeah. So, I've been in Denton for about 6 years now, roughly. And before that, I was in South Texas for my entire life. I was there quite a long time. And I grew up around the Hispanic culture and surrounded by it in every sense of the word, the language, the food, everything. So, my relationship with food I think is tied with family and it's extremely linked; it's a part of the culture. And, it has a lot to do with, I think, what is available in that region. But a lot of recipes that I've been trying to learn, remember

and talk to my grandparents and mom about -- some examples are Menudo, Fideo, Calabaza con pollo, mole. Yeah, that's just a couple of the examples.

Goss: That's awesome. I don't know really anything about any of those, so the more you want to tell me, the better! We'll get into that a little bit further as we get further into our little chat. Are there specific recipes amongst those that you have memories of either your mom making or your grandma making or, as a collective, like your whole family making that kind of a thing?

Sosa: Yes. So, with menudo, that's like an overnight endeavor. So they start the evening before, and they're boiling -- I don't know exactly which parts of the animal that they're boiling, but I know that it has to be going all night and they have to wake up and set alarms to get up and mix all this stuff.

Goss: Oh wow.

Sosa: And I remember my mom telling me to go do it at like, 11, so she could sleep longer. And then she'd be up early in the morning, at like 5:00AM, and starting it because it's more of, like a breakfast thing. So then, like, it's ready by, like, 8:00AM

to eat. And she normally makes a lot. So, we have a lot leftover, and the whole family comes and eats some of it. So, that's one memory. And then with the entire family, I used to make them tamales with my grandma and she would kind of lead that. She can't really do it anymore because she's a lot older now, but --

Goss: Oh wow.

Sosa: Back when me and my sister were younger, we would help her grind the meat in like a manual meat grinder.

Yeah.

Goss: Is it one that she had had for a long time and like had maybe gotten from her grandmother and it was just passed down from family member to family member? Or is it like a wedding present that she got? Or do you know where it came from?

Sosa: I think my mom probably made her upgrade at some point. Because she's just very stubborn, like. We had to force her to upgrade to a manual like Spice Grinder because she would want to do it. In the molcajete! Oh my God! And yeah, we're like, no, this is easier. Look, you just push the button. There's no manual labor, yeah. She's very -- about that manual

labor when it comes to food, especially because for her, I think that's how she shows that she loves you and appreciates you.

Goss: Absolutely.

Sosa: But yeah, so specifically with tamales, we'll be up and helping her grind the meat, cook it, and then put the masa in the little wrap thingies -- know what they're called, but, I guess the husks, the little shell that you peel off beforehand. And then we fill them with like giant spoons and you just fill it and then put the meat, and then roll.

Goss: That's so cool. Did that also feed the entire family then? Would that be like another event where everybody would come over and eat all of grandma's food?

Sosa: Yes! Foods involved the whole family -- is going to be there -- all of our family, and it's amazing.

Goss: So, from having those experiences in the kitchen, did that lead you and your sister to want to cook also? Or are you just kind of, more, "we'll make it when we have time to make it, but there's all these other choices that we have?" Like, what's your

connection personally to cooking and that kind of thing?

Sosa: I think as I got older, I started to realize that not everybody had this experience. And I kind of realized, oh, these foods are special to me. And my culture. So as time went on, I wanted to start collecting these recipes and I wanted to be like, well, not everybody has a grandma and a mom who knows how to do all these things and cook for 20 people at a time. Like, that's insane. But yeah, that definitely, I think it helped to get a better understanding of who they are and how why they cook the amount that they do and, yeah, all of.

Goss: That's amazing. And so, the things that you do cook now, are there specific ingredients that are different that you find here versus what you were able to find when you were still in South Texas and a little bit closer to the Mexican border? For example, are there specialty shops that you go to? Where are you able to find things at the more Americanized grocery stores and that kind of thing, or how does that work?

Sosa: Yeah. So, I will say things that we would use for these commonplace meals that would feed a large number of people. I think the resources were easier to find back where I'm from, whereas in Denton, there you've got to find specific places and they might have it. But a good example is me and my cousin and my sister made Fideo the other night and we couldn't find the vermicelli noodles and we had to go with normal pasta to go ahead and make it. So that's a good example of that.

Goss: Nice. Can you give a broader description of what Fideo is? I'm not familiar with that, and I know that's one of your favorites, so I want to have you share a little bit like what it actually is, when you would eat it, that kind of thing.

Sosa: Yeah. So that's a good -- it's really a soup, if I had to classify it as something. But you're supposed to roast the noodles, and then make the meat, and then put them together. And then boil the water with the tomatoes. You can also cook the onions with the meat if you wanted to, but I think it's better boiled. Some people, I think all people do it differently -- yeah, each family teaches it

differently probably too -- but then you put everything all together, and then it's like a nice, pleasant soup that is very flavorful and good!

Goss: Is it something that you make enough of that you can save it and have it for a later meal? Or is it something that you would intentionally make enough to serve the people that you're inviting over to eat? And it's a one-and-done kind of thing? Is that another example of something that would be made to feed a lot of people, or is that something you can make in a smaller batch?

Sosa: I think, when I was younger, I always ate it with a lot of people. And now I kind of feel like we've had to dial it back because our entire family didn't move up here with us to go to college. So, dial it back a little bit.

Goss: That makes sense.

Sosa: But yeah, I think back when I lived down there, it was for sure for more people.

Goss: When you guys were making it this most recent time, were you able to do it based on the recipe that you had gotten from your mom? Or were you still,

like, needing to call your mom or FaceTime your mom during the actual cooking to make sure that you were doing things the right way?

Sosa: [laughs] Yes, we did have to FaceTime our mom in order to make sure we're doing everything correctly, because she was -- she's the expert on it.

Goss: That's great. Is she like -- what has her reaction been to you and your sister reviving this excitement of having recipes that you grew up with? Is she pleased that you're wanting to carry that forward and kind of save that legacy, or is it something that she had even thought of before that she wanted you guys to do or no?

Sosa: Yeah, I don't think she put a lot of thought into it. Especially when she was growing up, they were doing these meals in order to survive and make ends meet, and it was very stressful when she was growing up. But for us it was more like, we like this and it's a part of our culture. We want to reengage with that because we can't, up here. It feels like sometimes, because we're not around our family all the time like we used to be -- but I feel like she likes it. She likes that we're asking her

questions, and obviously she's really good at making these foods at this point, so I think she likes us doing it.

Goss: Is she able to share all of the recipes herself, or is she also having to like, call your grandma and ask her specific things about "like when I tell my girls what I want them to do for this recipe," or does she have enough knowledge from all the times that she's made it herself that she's just passing it on?

Sosa: I think at this point she knows all of it. She was the youngest -- nope, sorry, not the youngest, the oldest of four, so she was feeding them constantly. So she learned as she was doing that, so I think she knows pretty ingrained at this point.

Goss: That's amazing! So did your mom also grow up in South Texas? Was this area where her family was pretty much all the time, or were they moving back and forth? What kind of things was your mom doing as she was growing up?

Sosa: Growing up, yeah, she grew up in the same exact area that I did, obviously different time, but. Yeah, occasionally they would go up to Ohio to do migrant

work -- I think they went every summer. Or, yeah, something like that. It was like a seasonal thing that they would go up and do.

Goss: With the whole family?

Sosa: Oh, yes. Everybody that's old enough, everybody would be working.

Goss: Wow. Do you know at like what age did your mom and her siblings, what age were they kind of expected or allowed to do work alongside their parents at that point?

Sosa: I think it was as soon as they could, or were able to pick things. Yeah.

Goss: Was there specific crop that they were moving to Ohio to pick, or were there different seasonal things that they did?

Sosa: I think it was -- I know that for sure they mentioned tomatoes and onions. And I think that's partially also why my grandpa knows how to grow these things on his own now, and he has a little garden in his backyard that he tends to. He's always tended to it ever since I was, oh, very young. Ever since I was young -- and me and my sister used to always

go mess up his crops -- not intentionally, but yeah. [laughs]

Goss: That's great. So do you think that because they did, grow and pick or, were part of that whole process with tomatoes and onions in particular, that your grandpa is still growing them because those are ingredients that they always want to be fresh when they're cooking? Has that translated to your generation, when you guys are cooking? Are you always reaching first for fresh, or are you reaching for whichever is most available, whether it be fresh or canned?

Sosa: We always try to do fresh. I think probably because of him. He'd always have his tomatoes that he just picked. He'd have them like, out. And he also -- something he would make like every weekend or so was chilito. And it's essentially just like a spicy sauce type of thing to put on your eggs in the morning type of thing. And normally our grandma would be making, like chorizo, or egg or something along those lines sometimes nopales -- those are pretty good! And he would -- it was entirely on him to do the chilito though, because he did it

right -- yeah -- and he would show me how, he would show me and my sister like, oh, here are the Serrano Peppers --

Goss: Wow.

Sosa: And he's like, should we do one or two? And we would always be like, do 2 Grandpa, it tastes better! Yeah. And then it's like, oh, it's spicy -- maybe we should have gone with one. [laughs]

Goss: That's awesome! So was he an actual participant with other things in the kitchen? Because sometimes the roles are very gender defined, especially in the kitchen -- so were the tomatoes and all of that like his one thing that he did, or was he invited into, I guess, allowed into the kitchen for other things too?

Sosa: I think because of the era that my grandmother came from, no, he was -- that was pretty much his only thing. At least that we saw.

Goss: That makes a lot of sense.

Sosa: Yeah.

Goss: Based on that time frame.

Sosa: Yeah, she was very much like the kitchen is my domain.

Goss: Yes, her domain, "this is mine, I'm doing this." So, yeah, okay, that makes a lot of sense -- so is it mostly the recipes from their generation that were passed on to your mom, that you and your sister are most interested in preserving now? Or are there things that you think your mom started to cook separate from what she learned from her parents, that you're also wanting to carry forward?

Sosa: I think there's things that my mom cooks less often and more often based off of her preferences. UM. Yeah, I think. Like a good example is she doesn't cook fideo all the time because it's a little more unhealthy, or she'll cook less, and boil more often, because it is healthier. And that's kind of like the way she'll break it up in between what she decides to cook.

Goss: Interesting. Do you guys have a plan yet for what you want your collection of recipes to look like? Do you envision just a collection on like recipe Note cards? Do you want to actually put together some kind of a family cookbook where you're collecting not just from your mom and your grandma, but maybe

also from your aunts and some of your extended relatives? Or is that something that you want to do? A digital archive of recipes so that it can be kept forever and ever for future generations? Or has your thinking process in your collection of the recipes even gone that far?

Sosa: The plan right now, I haven't really talked to my cousin and my sister about it just yet, but so far, we're the only ones who really have shown interest out of the grandchildren -- but at least the thought right now is to commit it to memory by doing, because that's how they learned absolutely. So. That's kind of. The thought process right now.

Goss: Do you think at some point there will be a written record of some sort just so that the oral tradition doesn't just get lost somewhere along the way if there's not somebody else that picks up your same interest and wants to carry it forward?

Sosa: If one of us has a child that has zero interest in learning that, then yes, I would say yes.

Goss: In your conversations that you've had over the years, like with your mom, especially about the time that she did, like, leave her home in South Texas and

go to Ohio, did she have any specific things that she shared with you about like what their time was like there, or how different their day-to-day life was? Working on a farm like that versus just normal everyday life when they were back home?

Sosa: I know she wasn't a fan of it. I know because she told me a couple times that they would have to go to the restroom in an outhouse and stuff like that. And it was like hard labor. And I remember I was wearing converse one time and my grandpa was like ohh, Chucks, and I was like, yeah? And he was like, I used to wear those when I would have to go pick the vegetables in the fields and I was like, oh, I did not know that.

Goss: Oh wow, that's interesting. Were there other families in the same region where your family came from that also went and did migrant work, or was your mom and her family singled out for that, like were they having similar experiences to other kids that she went to school with and that kind of thing? Or was she maybe partially like mad about it because she was the only one that had to leave home for the

summer to go do this kind of work? Has she talked about that at all?

Sosa: I'm not sure. I do think that it had to have been other families because she mentioned like other people other than her being there that are also Hispanic that I know she mentioned from the area. But, I don't know that she, like, resented it. At least now she shows no resentment. But that could have been different when she, yeah -- younger, 12. Yeah, for sure. But I know from when she talks about that time she was very stressed-well, raising her other siblings, her three other siblings.

Goss: Yeah. Did she kind of have to take on more of the mother role when her parents were doing all the farm labor type things? And is that kind of what made her more responsible for the cooking, do you think?

Sosa: Yes. Absolutely think that. Yeah, I think that she -- she was very -- she had to be responsible at a very young age for her and her three siblings. And making sure that they went to school and did what they were supposed to do, make sure they ate everything that their mom was supposed to be doing, but their mom was busy working -- if that makes

sense -- and there's not a lot of jobs you can get with third grade education, at least, well, paying ones -- and then her dad had up to a 9th grade education also. So they were both trying to make ends meet -- just trying to do enough work, whatever that ended up looking like to make sure the family was fed.

Goss: Did they talk at all about, like, what their meals looked like from one place to the other? I would imagine if they had to work in the fields for long hours every day, there were different time constraints on what they could and couldn't make that kind of a thing. Were there other things that they might have had memories that they shared? They're probably not as specific as that, but are there things that you remember from conversations with them about what eating looked like in the two different places?

Sosa: They didn't really mention anything like that, but from what I know about them, my assumption is they utilized beans a lot. And my grandma knew how to make tortillas from scratch, so she'd probably set

up some sort of situation for them to be eating them.

Goss: Are they corn tortilla eaters, or are they flour tortilla eaters? Or will they eat both depending on what's available?

Sosa: I think depending on what's available. They weren't especially picky back then. I don't think they had the means to be picky about what they were going to eat. It was going to be what's more convenient for the time.

Goss: When your grandmother made the tortillas, what was that process like? Did she do that when you witnessed it? Like, were you able to, like, observe a whole tortilla making process? Can you talk about that?

Sosa: Yes, I did help her. I did help her a little bit when I was a lot younger and she was actually able to do it. Every New Year's, she would make buñuelos from scratch, so she'd do the whole tortillas and she would like, do the whole, pressing them down, flatten them, and then she'd fry them in a pan on both sides and me and my sister always laugh at this, but when she's making like regular tortillas

like on the stove, she just grabs them with her hand.

Goss: Oh my goodness, just from the practice of having done it so many times. She's not afraid of the heat anymore. Wow.

Sosa: Yeah. Like she -- [Gestures grabbing tortilla in pan] And my mom can do it too. Yeah. I'm like, we always joke with them. We're like, is that what happens when you become a Hispanic mom, like, you just lose feeling in your fingertips and you could just grab it? But yeah. We would help her. I remember when we were younger and they didn't like us being around like the super hot stuff we would like, put the sugar in the cinnamon on the bundles and stuff like that.

Goss: Wow, you're making me hungry, but I'm really enjoying this conversation! So what other things do you want to talk about in regards to things that you've talked about, you know, with your mom or with your grandma? Surrounding the idea of food and recipes and family and all of those things?

Sosa: Yeah, we've tried to tell them that we do want to keep some sort of record of it all. They're like --

they're these hard, chill Hispanic women. They're like we'll get in the kitchen and do it. That's the type of people they are, so, yeah. So I always try to follow that advice to a certain degree, but I know that, especially working full time -- it's kind of hard to find time for that, but we do occasionally.

Goss: You've named a couple of your favorite dishes. Are there more?

Sosa: Yeah, there's more -- I know my grandma used to make, specifically, she used to make this gravy out of nopales and we used to help her like go to the backyard with box cutters and we take the spines off the paddles. Wow, yeah.

Goss: Oh.

Sosa: That hurt sometimes. But she's kind of like I'm out here, I'm 60 years old, you're going to be out here too, and you're gonna be doing this!

Goss: Did your grandparents grow up in Texas, or did your grandparents grow up in Mexico and then come to Texas? Because they probably have different

memories of food also from their childhoods from wherever they grew up.

Sosa: I think they were both already here. Umm. I think their parents came over though.

Goss: Okay.

Sosa: Uh. I know for sure on my dad's side, my grandpa -- We went and visited him the other day. And he was talking about how the water that's near the border is not clear anymore, and he was saying like he was saying it in Spanish and I don't understand Spanish -- it's something I'm working on but -- our dad translated it for us and he was like, he's talking about like the water was clear back then, and it's not anymore.

Goss: Interesting.

Sosa: It kind of makes me sad, but --

Goss: Definitely!

Sosa: Yeah, he's 94. Yeah.

Goss: Wow, yeah.

Sosa: As many years as -- you've been around for a minute!

Goss: Save those memories! When you talk to your grandma and your mom about food, what does your grandma talk about? Like recipes and things like that being passed on from her mom or from her grandma? Is it something that -- are there things that started with your grandma, or are these things that she brought forward into her young married life because she had learned it growing up also?

Sosa: I think so. I think she had a very traumatic childhood, so she doesn't like to talk about it. But, from what I understand, yes. I know she did have to -- she's the oldest of 12, so --

Goss: So she probably played a similar role that your mom did growing up and raising her siblings and that kind of thing as well?

Sosa: Extremely similar, yes. Yeah. So. Yeah, it's my understanding that she carried on that as well and raised her other siblings in a similar way to my mom.

Goss: Are the majority of the women in your family, from both your grandma's generation and your mom's generation -- kind of, did they kind of follow the same gender roles? I guess you could say as far as

the kitchen being their domain versus the men in the family? Or have some of them, especially as times have changed and they've been, you know, in different parts of Texas and things like that, are they kind of shifting into more, "Yes, I grew up doing all of the things, but now I can share more?" Like where are they with that?

Sosa: Well, I can tell you where my mom is with that, for sure. So my mom got divorced from my dad, I think back in 2016. So with her first marriage, she was very much carrying that sentiment of the kitchen is my domain. This is mine. I do all the things here, yada yada. And when she got divorced and remarried -- with my stepdad, her now husband, she is very much of the idea that this is their shared space. They cook together apart, and they very much share that role and they yeah, and even across all what would be considered "normal" women gender roles as far as cleaning and cooking and everything they do all of that together and apart.

Goss: Knowing that, like if your grandma comes to visit your mom, what is your grandma's reaction to your mom sharing that now as opposed to how it was when she

grew up and how she raised her daughter, your mom? Is she happy to see that change? Or does she kind of roll her eyes at your mom and be like you should be doing this? Or like, is there -- is that even a thing?

Sosa: I'm not sure that she knows. Since we live so far away now, I don't think she knows.

Goss: Okay. Do you think she would be okay with it or do you think she would --?

Sosa: I doubt she would be okay with it.

Goss: And that's probably just a cultural thing, right? Where it's just the role that they grew up in. So this is their comfort kind of a place?

Sosa: She's only not doing it, my grandmother, she's only not doing it now because she physically cannot. Yeah.

Goss: Because you can't -- makes a lot of sense, yeah.

Sosa: Yep. Yes.

Goss: So what other things do you remember about being in the kitchen when you were younger?

Sosa: It was a lot of observing.

Goss: Did your grandma and your mom want you to help? Did they want you to learn those kind of traditions? Like, were you and Brittany open to that, or were you just there to observe and "call me when it's ready?"

Sosa: Yes. We. Definitely more of a second one. [laughs] When we were younger, we did not really care because we thought at the time everybody eats like this. Everybody eats these things. We weren't -- especially growing up down there, everybody's Hispanic, everybody's like -- you can't turn a corner and see somebody who's not just like you. You go to school, all the kids are Hispanic. There might be one or two kids that are not, and that's like -- they're the ones that are in the minority in a sense, okay? So we're very much of the idea that everybody eats these foods. And then as we grew up, we were like --

Goss: Maybe they don't.

Sosa: That is not the case. Yeah, that's very much not the case.

Goss: Okay. Did you realize that more before you left the South Texas area or more when you guys got here to

Denton in the North Texas area and you're like -- this community is a little bit different? Obviously not every single person at UNT is Hispanic, but we're definitely serving more Hispanic students, and there's more in the community. So was it something that you were starting to realize before you moved here or really was it an eye opener when you got here? And you're like "Oh!"

Sosa: Yeah, I knew, I definitely knew that. Not every place was like the place I grew up. But, seeing it was a whole different thing. Yeah. I just feel like, and especially like University of North Texas, we're a very diverse school. Yeah, for sure. I realized there's a lot of different ways of life out here.

Goss: Yeah. So it's impressive, and fascinating, to me and I feel very honored that you're sharing with me that you know, these are things that you grew up with that you do want to preserve and keep. Can you talk a little bit more about like when you realized "Hey, maybe it would be a good idea to get some of these recipes from Mom and grandma."

Sosa: I think especially after my grandma started having some health concerns and you, as you grow up, you kind

of realize, okay, my grandma, my mom, these people aren't going to be here forever. And that's kind of when -- I was around like 16 years old and I was like, okay, these things aren't going to stay this way for as long as me and my sister and whoever else is alive, we need to start curating this and saving it.

Goss: That's amazing. And I know you mentioned at least one of your cousins is kind of interested in doing some of this too -- are the other grandchildren also interested in learning the recipes? Or do some of them already know the recipes? Like what are the other people in your family's household cooking habits that you know of? What do they look like? And is it different between folks that have, like moved up north like you guys have? That sounds weird because you're still in the same state, but you know what I'm saying, are people that are still, you know, a little bit closer to the Texas, Mexico border -- do their families cook and commune around food and that kind of thing? Is it similar or different?

Sosa: I think, because of the way that they are, that's saying something without saying a lot [laughs]. I do not think that they carry that same sentiment because I think they weren't -- well, first off their dad is the one that is part of our family so and he didn't really carry that forward like.

Goss: Right. That would have been the women's domain, not his domain. So he was more concerned with.

Sosa: Exactly. I think that might have.

Goss: Making money, that kind of thing, rather than carrying on a tortilla recipe. Yeah, okay.

Sosa: Been part of. It -- yes. Exactly. Yeah. So I think that's kind of why, more than anything. But I know at least one of our cousins used to have some sort of desire to cook the meals that we grew up with. But she has -- she still lives in down there in South Texas, but she's not, really engaging with the culture at all, pretty much.

Goss: Very interesting. So as you guys start making more things and doing more recipes, do you think that you'll be able to find the ingredients that you want so that they taste like home. Like what's your

experience with some of the? I think you referred to them in another conversation that we had as the "meat markets?" Is that kind of a thing or is it something that you've noticed becoming more mainstream and like our more traditional Americanized grocery stores like Kroger and whatever else we have in town, like Winco? Are you able to find things there, or are you needing to go to more specialized places to find some of the things that you want so that when you do take the time to make these recipes, that they'll actually taste like you remember them tasting?

Sosa: Yeah, I think, I think it's more convenient to go to these specialized places because they're going to, you know, they're going to have what you need. But I think this most previous time we made fideo we got everything from Walmart, so it's not like we weren't able to, but it's just more convenient to go to these tapatios and La Michoacanas -- these places that we know is going to have what we need.

Goss: And you had made a reference to something that you and your sister call some of these places. Can you talk about that?

Sosa: Yeah. We like to call them little portals to South Texas back where we're from, because it's literally like walking into a corner store in there. Back where we're from and it they sell all the Mexican candies that we like to eat and everything like that so -

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Goss: I think that's amazing and fascinating! Thinking about like your experiences in South Texas with food growing up versus your experiences here in North Texas with food and resources that are available, things that are on menus and restaurants that you go to that kind of a thing, do you have any kind of just like, in general, feel for what food in North Texas over the next several years, as our population continues to grow more towards a Hispanic majority, what that might look like and what kind of resources our population, as it changes, might want or demand? I know you're not specifically part of the food industry, but since you know you're learning to cook more things and interested in how to source all this stuff like, do you have any thoughts on that in general?

Sosa: I mean, I do think since there would be more Hispanic individuals in the area that there would be more of a want for those outsourced materials that we use to cook our most common dishes. I'd imagine that they'd be more commonly found in, like Walmart and these, like more Kroger like these more common places -- I guess supermarkets in the area. That would be my assumption.

Goss: But I think the accessibility of the smaller markets like you were talking about -- I think that's so unique and special that it would be sad to see those either go away or become smaller if things became more mainstreamed, because I think even just even just your comments about how to how it makes you feel like you've, you know, gone into a portal back to South Texas -- like -- really strong connection to that kind of a place.

Sosa: I think they'd find a way to stick around.

Goss: Are there certain restaurants in town that you have found that make some of the dishes that make you feel like you're still eating food from South Texas growing up, or have things become so Tex Mex, Americanized, and, bland, I guess, you can find

them anywhere on some of the menus? Do you seek out places that remind you of home?

Sosa: UM. I enjoy the Tex Mex stuff. I don't have anything against it. It's pretty good most of the time. But I do find it difficult when I'm a little homesick or. However, if I'm not willing to like flat out make something. There have been a couple of dishes that have come close to like, I think probably my favorite food are taquitos from back home. Sometimes my family will make those ourselves, or we'll go get some from. wherever place. Um. And I have yet to find a place that makes them exactly like they do back home, and I am still on the hunt for that. I've found a couple of places that are like decently adjacent -- Like I think it's over here on Highway 380 today. Those are pretty good.

Goss: Good to know.

Sosa: I like the spicy sauce, the red one. That was pretty good.

Goss: Would your grandpa approve of the amount of spice that they put in? Are they using the appropriate amount of peppers? [laughs]

Sosa: I think so. I think so. It's pretty spooky. [laughs]

Goss: So now you said that your grandma doesn't travel here much, but do other members of your family from South Texas come and visit you guys and like, have you had any conversations? Or, not necessarily a formal conversation, but just casual comments about like whether things here taste better, or if I miss, you know, whatever we had at home or do you guys know how to make whatever that grandma made? That kind of thing?

Sosa: Yeah, we always, they always talk about how it's so different over here, so different over there. And they're always like, oh, there's all kinds of diversity here. And it's like crazy, like they're having micro doses of what? The culture. I don't want to say culture shock, but to an extent it is, but- like, "ohh everybody here doesn't at least minutely understand Spanish?" Yeah, it's very much a lot of, "Oh, I miss having this convenience store that we have over there. That's not here." It's a lot of that.

Goss: Okay, that makes sense. And then when you guys go visit in South Texas, are there specific foods that you

crave like I know you want more of your grandma's cooking, but are there other places in your hometown that you're like, "I have to go get Taquitos from a certain place," if it's not the ones that grandma made, is there something or are there special places that that taste is the thing that you have to have?

Sosa: Absolutely. A good example is breakfast food. So like here. It's very like "eggs, bacon, pancakes," type of thing. And then over there. I'm not eating that for breakfast over there. I'm eating like full tacos. Like giant ones from like flour tortilla type -- yeah, like huge with sauce heat on them, a whole lot. And then if I'm not eating that I'm eating menudo. I always eat menudo while I'm down there because they don't make menudo up here the way they do down there.

Goss: Fascinating. So if there was ever, in your realm of the world, a way to create either like your own home kitchen where you had all of the ingredients that you needed and all of the things -- would it be something that you would want to carry on those same traditions where you're inviting large groups

of people, whether they all be related by family ties or just friend ties so that you could still have those big gatherings like you had when you were growing up? Or is there enough in the North Texas area that you found that you can still go to like XYZ restaurant down the street and find those similar tastes at least partially and that kind of community? Or is the fact that it's like your home kitchen the thing that makes it special? Does that question even make sense?

Sosa: Personally I. Don't like cooking for a lot of people because that's labor. My mom used to do it so often when we were younger and we would have to participate in the clean up and the prep for everything. So I definitely do not miss that. And I wasn't even doing the hard part, so I'm not a big fan of cooking for a lot of people and I think. I'm good with cooking for me and my sister. My cousin. That's enough for me.

Goss: So still a labor of love, just a smaller portion going in there -- that makes a lot of sense.

Sosa: Yes, that's work!

Goss: All right. Well, I absolutely appreciate the time that you've taken to talk to me about your experiences with food, your experiences with recipes that have been passed on through your family, your thoughts on what food in our area looks like versus food in South Texas looks like. Is there anything else that you want to add or any tidbits that you want to throw in before we? Close this conversation.

Sosa: No, I think we covered everything.

Goss: Okay. Well, thank you very much. And if there is anything else that you want to add, just let me know and I can add it as an addendum to our transcript. Thank you!

Sosa: Thank you!

[End of interview]