

The Latinos Project Oral Histories
The Historical Society of Pennsylvania
with the Balch Institute for Ethnic Studies

Ricardina "Rica" Iwanyshyn
Interview Date: April 5, 2003
Rica's residence in Bensalem, PA

Interviewer: Joseph Gonzales, Project Ethnographer

Interviewer
... With Rica –

Iwanyshyn
Iwanyshyn.

Interviewer
Iwanyshyn. The date is April 5, 2003, and the time is 12:00, and this is Tape 1, Side A.

Okay, so I'm going to begin just with the basic questions. What is, this is redundant now, but your name and your age?

Iwanyshyn
I am Rica Iwanyshyn, that's my name, and I was born in 1947.

Interviewer
Okay. What month?

Iwanyshyn
May.

Interviewer
May.

Iwanyshyn
13th.

Interviewer
Oh, okay. That's my, my baby brother's birthday, May 13th.

Iwanyshyn
Okay, we are Taurus.

Interviewer

Uh-huh, Taurus, and he was born on a Friday – Friday the 13th, yeah. So, supposedly a bad, bad omen. How many people are in your immediate family?

Iwanyshyn

Well, I have my husband and my children and my mother I consider also to be part of –

Interviewer

Okay, and what are their names?

Iwanyshyn

Steven. Well, Steven is my husband. Wendy's my oldest daughter, and Steven, Stevie is my youngest son.

Interviewer

Okay. And your mother?

Iwanyshyn

Adela.

Interviewer

Adela, okay. And, let's see, how would you describe your work or, or, or what you do?

Iwanyshyn

My work work, well what I make my living?

Interviewer

Well, how you make your living, uh-huh.

Iwanyshyn

Well, I'm the, I work for the University of Pennsylvania. I am the business administrator. Actually, I think it's a very interesting way that I have come to be part of the center because as I was growing up and raising my children, I, I have to get a job. At that time, I wanted to be, to be available for my, I mean, we needed the money, but at the same time, I needed to be with my children, and I needed a job that it can be like flexible and I don't feel I have to be committed to, I have to be there, when the children were sick or out of school or, or just an event, school event, I wanted to be there at all times. So I

decided to go as a temp for an, for an agency because I did not want to commit. I'm a very committed person when I take something, I really, I give it all, to that, whatever I'm doing, I'm very committed, and I didn't want to feel that, and it's not fair for the employer as well, because people has to be committed. They are not, but they should be. So I start as a temp, and then I came to work for Temple University as a matter of fact. It was, my center was, at that time, actually it was a sort of clinic, and, and I was temp, temping for the director of that center. It was big and it wasn't my center yet. And what happened is that the director retire, and they, they nominated a ____, they brought from Canada. It was supposed to be very good for the center and all that, and he got a better job. He stayed like six months, and he resigned. So the center really needed a person there in their _____, a very, very special person, and there was not such a person. So the center sort of got divided into three parts. At the same time, it came the decision, even though we were, we belong at Temple, we were, we were located at MCP – I don't know if you are familiar with.

Interviewer

No.

Iwanyshyn

MCP is, it used to be the women's hospital, I think, women's medical hospital, that was, and that is still, is on Henry Avenue. And it's, it's really a nice hospital. Now it's with Hahneman. Oh, it's a history with that hospital as well. So at that time, they sort of like asked, asked to, we have to leave or be part of MCP, or move with Temple, where Temple is located. So my boss, who was also growing and developing at that time, decided why not I make my center and stay with MCP? So the, all the three people moved with Temple, and we stayed with MCP, and I think that was about around 1986,

yeah. But before that, I was working for this big clinic, and all these things were changing, and this person from Canada hired me as a temp because I was very specialized in people who were tough, it seems, and I was able to cope with them, so he requested me. And then when he left, and, and I was just temporarily here, he asked me for, to be permanent, but, and like I said, my children were important, to be with them was very important, and just a little money will help me, but I needed to be with my children, so, and then when he left, I came to work for this woman who's my current boss as a temp still. I didn't want a part-time job. Or, I mean, it was a full-time job. I didn't want any permanent job, so, in the meantime, she's a very tough woman. Very, very tough woman. And she, she couldn't keep anybody, so I was leaving, like it would be my last day, and then she will call me on Monday, I had to come back, and then, and she will ask me, "Why don't you stay as a permanent?" And I say, "No I can't because every day don't, I will feel that I have to commit to you. I cannot take a day off. And you are the person who likes the person who lives there, and I can't give you that, and I can't." So finally, she was so persistent and I said, "Well, I have, this is what I need, and I have to be able to just leave. When my children are sick, I leave. When my children have an event or a trip in school, I leave. And I don't want to hear any, you know, this is our agreement, and there are those conditions. Otherwise, I can't work for you." And she accepted, and, oh, it was part-time. I also just wanted like half a day. And she accepted because it was hard to get anybody for her. She, people would stay one day, two days, a week, and they would quit. It was just, and it's not just the work, the work is a lot, it's really a tough job because she is very energetic and, and she gets involved in a lot of things, and so we have a lot of work, but that's not the bad part. The bad part is that also

you have to cope with her personality, and she's very demanding. And so the combination of being involved in so many things, and you have to keep up with all the things, with deadlines and their needs and, it's, and then having to cope with the personality, that's where it, the job is very, very unique. It's not too much the work itself. So we did that, we, and I said, "I will try, and if it doesn't work with me, and then I will leave." And she was good to me. She was very good to me, like I said, I used to take off when the children needed me, but when they were like at home, she would say, "Oh, bring them here." So I would, I brought my children to work, which I didn't, they didn't mind because it was a, a change. It was a big deal for them. So it was I will either bring them or if they were sick, of course not, or go to the trip and whenever she gave me a hard time, I would say, "That was our agreement," and she, she really gave me the flexibility of do, doing that. And I'm very, I'm a person very energetic, so I like a job when you like have to be on the go all the time, and not too many jobs are like that. I've been working for a long time, and this job was you have to move. I mean constantly, and you have to be involved in several projects, and you were like a, they call me an octopus sometimes because you have to be here and there and everywhere, and, and there is problems, and you have to solve the problems that they come, and you have to do your projects as well. And the days go by very fast, and when you do that it's, I really think it's good to be very, very busy, because if you are not busy, then it's boring. Life is boring.

Interviewer

Let me ask you this. Have you always gone in, I notice that your schedule now, you, three days a week, you go in extra early. Have you, have you done that for this job? Has that always been –

Iwanyshyn

Oh, no, no. Well, you know, when you have children, you have, I had to make sure the children, the children were on the bus, and then I had to come home before the children were, be here. Yeah.

Interviewer

Before they got home from school, okay.

Iwanyshyn

And my mother was here, too, but I think they really needed me, and also, they were involved in a lot of activities. My mother helped me tremendously with the house or with dinner. Dinner was ready most of the time, and that was, I mean, without my mother, I wouldn't have, we probably wouldn't have any good food. But she will not drive the children, she will not, and they were like in sports and everything, they were taking piano lessons and many other activities, so we would pretty, even with the school, I was very, very involved, yeah. I used to, as a matter of fact, my vacations, I used to spread it out, my days of vacation, to be sometimes, like, every, every two weeks, I will go to school the whole day just to help out, and that was my vacation, part of my vacation, instead of having like a, a week or two weeks, I would do that. So it was, I didn't, she was good. So it wasn't like too much of the kind of I was attracted to the job. It was more like we were connected somehow, and once I became part of that center, she also was growing with the center, and I feel that we built the center together, my boss, a couple other doctors and myself, we used to discuss, "Shall we do this? Shall we do that?" It was, I was part of all the decisions and future plans because we were only four people, and she developed tremendously. I mean, we have a center of 32 persons right now, and we have grants that are like somewhere from a quarter of a million dollars to a half a million dollars a year.

Interviewer

That's significant.

Iwanyshyn

I mean, we grew an army. We were like a little \$100,000 a year grant center, that's it.

We were like four people. So we become like a family, and, and I become part of that, like it's not, it's not going to be easy for me to just leave my job because it's, it's much more. I really, really belong there. I, I put my roots, I'm putting my roots there. And, and I really feel proud of myself in the respect that I'm also a person who likes to do community service. I like to be involved with people. I like to help people. I like all that, so I said what better job than to do it with this job because we do help people. And, as a matter of fact, I, we have people who don't, doesn't have income. We try to give it, give them a break, and I get very involved. As a matter of fact, just last week, there was a woman from Colombia who, who understood like in English very well, the, the other way around, but she couldn't express herself well in English, so I, they asked me if I was willing, and things like that, I just go and I say, "Sure," you know? That's why we are here, to help out people. And I sat at the interview. She was in Colombia, we did it by conference call, and I think, you know, those, you help people, and sometimes they call me, Spanish-speaking people, and I try to look for a place of where I can send them. So, I mean –

Interviewer

To refer them to –

Iwanyshyn

Yeah. And even English-speaking people, I always, like, if they have a problem, I have to work with them, especially financially, if they have a problem, I have to find a way,

and that's not my job, really. This is because I'm, I'm the kind of person, I like to feel that I'm making a difference to some people, yeah.

Interviewer

So, so what is the name of the center? I don't know if we got the name.

Iwanyshyn

CTSA. It's Center for the Treatment and Study of Anxiety.

Interviewer

And you job title? Your official job title, because I know you do more than just –

Iwanyshyn

And, and that's so true. Business Administrator is my title, and I'm supposed to take all the, about the finances of the center, but I feel that, like I was telling one of the business administrators, because they don't understand. My job is unique, and I'm not saying because I feel special. Anybody who, who works in my, in my center, they can feel that it's not like a very typical center because we have to be able to do many things, and we have to be able to do things at the same time, you know what I mean? So it's not that I'm making, a lot of people say, "Oh, we all are busy." No. With my boss, it's like you could be like in a serious project, and she wanted you to get up and open the door for her, you know what I mean? Like, which it may sound ridiculous, I mean, you want to be there, and you, and, if she's happy, we all are happy. Let me put it this way. And sometimes, of course, people get annoyed with that, and you tell her that you're working on a project, but still, the interruption is there, and you have to be able to cope with those things, so it is, it is different in many, it's more hectic, more busy, more, and she is also, I think, probably won't put this, but I feel that she's a workaholic, even though she doesn't admit that she is. She lives, she dreams, she, that, that's her life, okay? And sometimes I don't mind her. This is not our life. We also have –

Interviewer

Right. This is our job, but –

Iwanyshyn

I mean, this is good for me, and I'll do anything for my center out of my way, if I have to stay late and all that, but I also have another life that, and I like to keep it.

Interviewer

Right. To balance.

Iwanyshyn

So, the balance, exactly. So I think I, I, it was sort of like destiny that put us together and then I start enjoying and I start seeing the important, what we make, the difference we make to society because we do make a, a dramatic difference with all our studies. She does studies for rape and crime victims, so we are helping, we are studying those cases, making people get better and function with their life, and I'm part of that. So I am –

Interviewer

That's the post-traumatic research?

Iwanyshyn

Yeah.

Interviewer

Okay.

Iwanyshyn

We specialize in, in all anxieties, but it's obsessive-compulsive disorder and, actually, I, I would think that my boss was considered the founder of treatment for obsessive-compulsive. We were at one time the only clinic in the whole country that we did, and we have patients from all over the place, all over the world, we have from Viet Nam, from England. Right now, we have from Germany, so we had a very, we have reached out, and my boss is international now. So I like to, to feel that I was part of some, of this growth. I mean, it wasn't, I don't feel it wasn't anything financially beneficially to any

of us because we're still making low, probably, you know, income, but it's just that we have made our richness in different, in a different way It's like we have made a difference in people's life. And I still would like to be part of that until, I guess until I'm ready to move to something new, but I have been offered, as a, as a matter of fact, after we were part of MCP, I think we, that, no it started, I think, in '83. I can give you the exact date. My son was about two or, so about '83. But we became MCP at '86, and, and we were doing fantastic. The hospital was one of the top ones in the City of Philadelphia for women especially, and that's what we were concentrating a lot, and what happened, I don't know if you read in the newspaper, it became a sort of corporation. They were starting to get a lot of hospitals together, which is still, we're doing fantastic, however the president took a lot of the money that each of them have taken, and it went bankruptcy So it became, from MCP, became Allegheny University, and now I think it's part of Drexel and Hahnemann. It still exists, the, MCP In the meantime, they took a lot of the money of our studies, of the, it was, they didn't take the grant because they couldn't, they would, they would have to jail for that, but it was all the monies, funds, and it was for our rainy days that we have, like when we didn't have enough money from grants, an they took that money They, they, it just disappeared, and then my boss had to make a decision very quickly because they, they, the future of the hospital was uncertain. We didn't know if it was going to be a hospital, and she got approached by several places – Temple, one, Hahnemann, Penn, and she negotiated, and she thought that it was the best for us to go with University of Pennsylvania. And I went with that in July, officially it was July 1, 1999, we became part of Penn. However, Penn was not ready for us. The building was not, the building was there, but the, the offices were not there, and it, it was

the worst year of my life. I almost quit that year. It was, I wasn't, see, this is a bigger title than I was. I was running the show there, but it was a small thing. The way that MCP processed everything, they will do it for us – everything, like payroll, buy anything. We just have to process like purchase order, check request, everything, and they will do, and send it, and they will do everything else.

Interviewer

To the business office.

Iwanyshyn

Yeah. Every, everything. So were like, we were running the show, but, and we had some control, but, and we had different departments to do things with obviously, from purchasing to, to the grants, we will build the grant, we will develop the grant, but they, it would be reviewed by a very tough committee and say, well this, you, you shouldn't have done that. So we didn't really control the whole thing. We developed, we, we initiated, we created, but we knew that we don't have to be so perfect because it was very different departments that had to review So my job was not as intense as it was, it is now

Interviewer

As it is now

Iwanyshyn

So when I, when we first started moving, I had to work in two places. I was the only one from my centers who has to learn all the systems from the new place, and on top of that, maintain my, my work with MCP So right away, and they, I had to make decisions like with the Xerox machine to the telephones to the wiring to the computer, and like –

Interviewer

While they were, when they were making the new office, you had to make all of those decisions.

Iwanyshyn

The new office, so I had to go at every, every, at least twice and three times a week to Penn, and then go to MCP. It was like very crowded, and I thought that was the worst of my life at that moment. I said, "Well, once that get, it over, we are okay" I have, she was very good, and she always sent me with one doctor, and, because I couldn't make all those decisions by myself. I didn't know nothing about electronics, about computers. I learned very quickly

Interviewer

You had to.

Iwanyshyn

I had to, of course. Really, I was pressed into, like, "Xerox machine. We have to pick up this Xerox machine. What do we need?" And we need this. A, a telephone, we have to need it, we need this, that, we have to really very quickly, but I was likely that I can take one of the faculty members for the _____, but I have to be _____ ---

Interviewer

Right.

Iwanyshyn

And my boss would go to make the negotiations and stuff like that. So July 1st comes, and no place to go for our, and they, MCP, is asking us to leave. What do we have to do? We had to negotiate for three weeks for, where at the, at that time, we didn't know, like, how long it will take because they always say, "Oh, that, it will be ready next week."

Interviewer

It'll be ready next week. It'll be ready next week.

Iwanyshyn

I was going every, every week. So finally, we move, I think it was like the third week of July, the daughter my daughter has to go to Peru. I was supposed, I scheduled for months to take this day off. Okay, of course now, that day we're moving, and I have to be first

making sure that everything is in the trucks and second going after all the names, make sure that they put everything –

Interviewer

The way it needs to be.

Iwanyshyn

And, and the doctor who is, he was number one in helping me arranging and when, and worked for many years with this man, that's the man who now is in the National Institute of Mental Health, Dr. Michael Kosak. He was my help, he, we worked together so good, and he would think into, if I get, forget one thing, he, he will cover that, whatever I forgot, and, and he announced then he's resigning, about not even a month before we move. It was totally –

Interviewer

So it was all on your shoulders.

Iwanyshyn

Devastating for me. I, I, I cried because I didn't, and then on top of, and he was my friend, and he still is my friend. But then my boss was somewhat resentful that he shouldn't have done that to us considering that she has asked him before we move whether or not it was a good decision, whether she had made a good decision.

Interviewer

Right, the timing was very bad.

Iwanyshyn

It was good for the center, he was trying to explain to her, but it wasn't, it's not good for him personally And he has a better offer She didn't understand that. It was a very hard, and then I have to, I couldn't say anything about him or her because I was sort of in the middle. He was pretty cool. He didn't, as a matter of fact, he helped me out, and he stayed with us that, those three weeks, trying to help out. He, he delayed his starting time

for, at the, Washington. So he was great to me, and I appreciate for that. My boss was so hurt about the whole, he was, he's her right hand for, for treatment on all the projects, so it, it was like, like we, we lost a part of the center. And then and I had to take responsibility of many things because my boss makes the big decisions, the negotiation, but really, everything else, it goes onto other people. So, therefore, it was from peace to, to –

Interviewer

Right. Every little decision. Every little component.

Iwanyshyn

Oh, God. And the, and the transition, so it was very hard. That day was the hardest day of my life because I had to rush, and I had to move in my van things that we think it was delicate, and it couldn't go in the trucks, and we rented a big truck just for our stuff. We put most of the things, most of the files, by a company, but things that we, she didn't want or we didn't feel that it has to be in the truck, we had to do it ourselves. So the doctors, all the doctors help and it, it was a fantastic help. They were in shorts, one drove the truck, the other load it. I had to put everything in my truck, my –

Interviewer

It was like a family moving.

Iwanyshyn

Exactly My daughter's bags were in there, and here, I went to drop her off and then come, go to Penn, and the, the things from the company, and the funny part is, nobody barely asked me, "Have you had," that was like I was going through menopause as well, and they said, "Have you had like those hot flashes and all that?" And I said, "To tell you the truth, I don't know, because I think it happened in July of 1999, but I was so busy in and out. It was very hot, and I was constantly hot and cold, cold in the air conditioning

office and hot outside, I probably went through those hot flashes during that period, but I don't know "

Interviewer

But you couldn't tell the difference. Right, right.

Iwanyshyn

And they were laughing and cracking up, everybody, because I really don't know It probably was at that period, I was doing that –

Interviewer

With all of the stress and the, all of that going on, who knows?

Iwanyshyn

Exactly Finally we settled, and that was the beginning of the worst period of my time. I didn't know how worse it would be because the company went, the, the hospital was MCP, and then Allegheny and then, now Hahnemann/Drexel, the grant itself, because they didn't have to move our grants, the grants had to be moved like that as well. So, it's already like December, and we don't have the grant. We don't have any money The university provided us a certain amount of money, but it was going down –

Interviewer

Right. Operating costs, right.

Iwanyshyn

Because they thought in two or three months, we can have our own money The first employees of the first MCP disappeared because there is no more MCP I could not contact, and we need papers, it was the worst, worst, worst year of my life, and my boss was not very patient, were like very demanding, "Why it's not, this is not done, and you have to do," and I am doing, but I am not moving. So I got to the point then, at that point, I said, "You know what? I don't need this job." And I will _____ with fears, I said, "I like this place. I like very much. But if you can find somebody," and I

say serious, "I'm not upset, I'm not mad, and I'm not going to be resentful. If you can find somebody better than me, by all means hire right now, and I will help out in the process. I can no longer do it because, see, I am doing everything I can possibly can."

And at the same time, every time, because she's very, very impatient, I was coming every morning, and I was dialling(?) these people, and I said, "You talk to these people." She wasn't getting anywhere, and she wasn't also understanding that I couldn't get anywhere.

Finally I said, "You have to hire somebody if you think somebody can do the job better than I because I don't think, I'm going to have a nervous breakdown." I was --- [END

OF TAPE 1, SIDE A] Okay, so it was, it was the hardest period of my time, I got myself sick, I went with, even though they say it can happen to anybody, but I really think it was my low resistance. I was in the emergency, appendicitis. I never get sick, and I was sick, and she was more, and my relationship with her has enormously improved. She's very cautious with me because I was, I think I was to the verge of like –

Interviewer

At that point.

Iwanyshyn

I couldn't do any more. And later on, like the grants were moved, and I think we, we become very wonderful. We're really progressing, we're growing more and more and really, really I like where we're going, how, how we ascend at this point.

Interviewer

Okay So where originally are you from?

Iwanyshyn

That's another story [laughs] I'm originally from, I was born in Lima, Peru. My family comes from Cuzco, my, the part of my mother's side. I was, I went back to Cuzco because my mother was very, very ill, and they felt that Lima was not good for her, and

my mother wanted to die in Peru, and we went back to Cuzco, and that's where I stayed my, my high school years, the best years of my life. And when people ask me, the first thing I think is, "I'm from Cuzco," but I'm not really I am from Lima. I was born in Lima, but I consider myself Cuzco.

Interviewer

Cuzco is home.

Iwanyshyn

Yeah, and it's a beautiful city

Interviewer

Okay When did you come to the United States?

Iwanyshyn

I came with a one-way ticket. I just got out from high school. I was 17 or 18, somewhere around there. Let me think. '66, September '66, because I graduated in '65, yeah. '66.

Interviewer

And what were your reasons for leaving home and coming here?

Iwanyshyn

To look for a better life. I have an aunt here who I, I, she helped me a great deal. She offered me, to bring me here. Of course, I had to work, and she will just help me, providing me the ticket, which I had to pay her with, once I got a job, but just the fact to provide me that. She said you can go to school and there is a better, better life financially here, better opportunities, so it was just my mother and me, and it was very sad for me to make that decision, and we thought, my mother and I, we thought that it was a, it was the best to change our life otherwise. There was nothing for me in Peru as far, we didn't have money, I couldn't go to college. There's no jobs, so there was nothing, really I had to move on. I had to make a change. And, at that point, I didn't know what, and then I come to my aunt, "If you want to come here, I can help you out. I can provide you with

the ticket. And when you come here, you know, we can work out the details, and I can help you out with, with a job." And I figure I don't have any other plans, I don't have money because we were, we didn't have money, so I said, we talked about it with my mother, and it was a very, very hard decision because it was just my mother and me, and to separate each other, it was very, very hard, so, so I left.

Interviewer

Well, what was, what was going on in Peru at the time that was, that was omitting the opportunities or, or was it economics or?

Iwanyshyn

Economics, I think, in Peru unfortunately it's a very, like a friend of mine just told me last week, it's such a rich country, but I think the government that manage, who manages the country, I don't just, I don't think just the president, it's the whole thing, that they don't do a good job because the country is rich –

Interviewer

Right, with resources.

Iwanyshyn

Its resources. We have everything – oil, fish, I mean it's, the location is so good, so we have three wonderful areas which is the coast with, with fishes and we, we did export "atun" --- and that's a fish, "bonito" actually --- exported, and the flour and –

Interviewer

Fertilizer.

Iwanyshyn

Fertilizer, yeah. So it was the coast, we have wonderful, all, all you can have from the sea, and then we have the mountains, which is a lot of great agriculture, and that's where I come from, Cuzco. You can plant just about anything, and in some places all year round because there's areas that it's always spring and summer – spring and fall, excuse

me – which is a beautiful, it's probably the best place in the world I think, at this point, I feel, not Cuzco itself because Cuzco can get cold. It's that, outside of Cuzco that agriculture, you can plant anything and you can grow anything, we have are rich in that. We have, you know, the llama, alpaca, vicuña --- those are our main animals, they come from there, and then we have the jungle, and you know what's in the jungle – all the many medication comes from the jungle – and it's hot, and we have a lot of food, so we have so much of natural, natural resources. And to be a poor country, it's just the people are not doing their job, and, and it's, I don't think I can, I, I hate to say that, but I don't think I, I can remember a good economy ever We always are struggling and we don't need to do so. So that's the reason. To look for a better world, for opportunities. This is the land of opportunity We all know We all come here for that reason, I think, so that's the reason I came, even though it was the hardest decision of my life at that point.

Interviewer

So did you come directly to Philadelphia?

Iwanyshyn

Yeah.

Interviewer

Okay

Iwanyshyn

My aunt helped me, and she, she, she picked me up from the airport, and she already had a job for me to start on Monday I think I came Saturday, I arrived either Saturday or Sunday, it was a weekend, because she also had work, and she wanted to do, be available for me when I come, and spend a day or so. But she had a friend, and she said, "Don't," I was a kid actually and being away from my family –

Interviewer

Right, a teenager

Iwanyshyn

And I never work in my life on the, over there. You know, you probably come from the same culture, we treat our as kids. So it was like the whole thing was very, very, very hard for me, and one lady, her friend said, "I'm on vacation, so why don't you let her stay a week with me, and I will explain to her, give her a little introduction of the country," because that's what it was, and she accepted. And, so, she called the lady, I was going to be baby-sit, watch some children, live there with them. Like a nanny, I guess, you can call. And so the lady, her name was Berta, and she, she took me that week, and her husband and her, she was on vacation, so we went a little around the city, she took me, she explained to me how the, it, it wasn't McDonald's, but it was a fast food place that she took me. I was amazed, like, the girls were in roller skates instead of being, I don't think you have that anymore here –

Interviewer

No, no, no. I've seen it though.

Iwanyshyn

And then they will come to your window and then they will bring you the food, and they, I was like, "Wow!" you know? "I'm in another world." And what amazed me, too, is that we went to New Jersey, I don't know why we went to New Jersey – to visit her friend, I think – and then as we were approaching the, the bridge, which one was that? I think it was the one that opens?

Interviewer

Oh, it's not the Betsy Ross.

Iwanyshyn

Could be the Tacony?

Interviewer

Maybe.

Iwanyshyn

Either the Tacony or Walt Whitman, yeah. I was totally amazed at this, oh my God, technology, at the advancement of this country, like it was fantastic, so every little thing was like “wow” for me. I was really very, very impressed with the country That was just for a week. [laughs] After that, when I started working and no one in my place knew Spanish, not one word of Spanish, and I took a couple of courses in English, but never to talk. Oh my God, I cried, and I was the most lonely, I was so lonely in, in those times that it was, I wanted to go home.

Interviewer

Really?

Iwanyshyn

And my, my, my view was save as much money as you can possibly can in one year or so, move back and open a business or something. That was my plans, yeah.

Interviewer

So you chose Philadelphia because your aunt was here, right?

Iwanyshyn

Because my aunt was here, and that was, and actually I went to New York, New Jersey, Washington, DC, and I liked those states. I think they're very interesting states, but I, I don't know, I started like putting my roots, I guess, here. Started having friends, my aunt was here, and like it's important to have family then. Even though a couple of my friends said, “Let's move to New York,” it just, I liked to visit New York, but just to visit, yeah. I, I will never live in New York.

Interviewer

Do you know, do you remember how long your aunt had been here at that time?

Iwanyshyn

Oh my God, that's a good question. She was a quite a while, and she had a rough, rough life. Nobody spoke Spanish in those times. There was not too many Latino, and she said

she was just, her day off would go to the park and cry It was, it was hard, and there was a lot of discrimination. They talk about discriminating blacks? We were, we are just as bad.

Interviewer

So did she come in the '50s do you think? Or even before then?

Iwanyshyn

I came in the '60s, so maybe even before. Even before, but you know what? I'll, she's in Peru now I'm going to call her. She was here for a long time, and because of her, many of my family came directly or indirectly She helped one, I helped two, that person helped two, we came, and for the same reasons, you know? For the better opportunities.

Interviewer

So your, your aunt was the first –

Iwanyshyn

The first one.

Interviewer

Root or point and then you found, you were the second.

Iwanyshyn

And then we all, yeah.

Interviewer

So you came by airplane when you first came to the United States?

Iwanyshyn

Oh yeah, yeah. I, I'm not sure if I was the second one, but I came with her So she, she helped, I guess, other relatives came as well on their own and, and stuff like that. She has helped others, too, but I was just with her. I'm the second generation, I guess. She was the first generation, I would consider, but I, I think I was the third one that she helped, yeah.

Interviewer

Okay So how many years does that mean you've been here in Philadelphia?

Iwanyshyn

1966, '70, '80, '90, oh my God. Thirty –

Interviewer

Thirty-seven maybe? Thirty-seven years?

Iwanyshyn

That's a lot. I never even, more than the years I was in Peru.

Interviewer

So now you are living, we call this Bensalem?

Iwanyshyn

Yeah.

Interviewer

Bensalem.

Iwanyshyn

I lived in Philadelphia almost until I moved here. Well, I lived, like, with families that, because I was a nanny, so I live with them. I didn't, especially at the beginning, I didn't live, live with my aunt. But my, my aunt and, and I brought my mother to this country as well for, to visit us because it was hard for us to go, and then that's when –

Interviewer

They were sisters?

Iwanyshyn

Yeah.

Interviewer

Okay, are, are sisters.

Iwanyshyn

Are sisters. And that's when I sort of, she sort of put pressure to me. Because, see, I was doing well living in those homes because you don't pay rent, you don't have to have an apartment and stuff like that, so I stayed with her. We got an apartment because my mother was coming to visit us, yeah. Only for a few months, I, I stayed with her. I stayed more with, with families.

Interviewer

With the families.

Iwanyshyn

Yeah, that I worked with. And I was going to school as well to learn --- at the beginning it was to learn English, and then I took courses at Temple, at the university, and then I applied for Pierce Junior College.

Interviewer

And you were paying for these yourself –

Iwanyshyn

I was paying as, I didn't even, because at that point, I really didn't even know if there was any financial aids or anything like that. Everything was so new to me. I wish I could know all that now I would take more, more of that benefit, more from that. I met my husband in, we got married in 1969, so we met in 19 --- a year before. When my mother came, we were already seeing each other, and, and then my mother was, um, they denied her extension of her visa, and we didn't know, because we thought, "Oh, we can get married, plan with time, and my mother will be here," and then when we go for an application, they denied it. Oh my God. So what we did, we wanted to extend for a whole year, and that didn't happen, so we extended I think for a few months, but we tried to get married in that, because I didn't even know if my mother could have come. We, we --- It was ---

Interviewer

Right. You'd have to send her back and then bring her back.

Iwanyshyn

Yeah. And it was like a lot of problems still with pol --- _____ came along, and different guerillas, I don't know if at that time the Sendero Luminoso [Shining Path] had started, but it was other, other groups, and the United States didn't

want too many people, and it was more strict, so I didn't know if my mother was going to ever even come, come back again. So we arranged the wedding for June 15, 1969, so we can, we can have her here, and she left right after, not too long after that, yeah. So I got married in 19 --- in June.

Interviewer

So let me, remember the last time we talked, what other areas in Philadelphia did you live in?

Iwanyshyn

Well, I originally, my aunt lived in, even though I didn't live with her, I sort of felt that that's, that was my place to, even though, so if, at the beginning was Olney. Actually, and then we lived in Logan area with my husband, the first apartment. We live in Mt. Airy, around Washington and Cheltenham, and then we live, again, we went back, we bought our first home in Olney, in Somerville, and then our second home, we lived and we bought it in the Northeast on Cheltenham Avenue, and then this is our third home which we moved, oh my God, when my son was seven, and he's 20, he was seven, he was born in '79, so about, '86 –

Interviewer

1986 was, yes, when he was seven. So '86, you moved out here to Bensalem.

Iwanyshyn

Yeah, around that time. He, he, he went from his, from his, first grade he started here. On his birthday, my husband's birthday, we moved.

Interviewer

Oh, you moved on that day? That's a lot of work on your birthday. Well, just, how would you describe a typical day for you in Philadelphia? A typical routine?

Iwanyshyn

A routine day, well, a working day is, now my life has changed a lot, of course. I'm more involved with, even though you think, like, all the children are already older and you don't need to do, oh, you still need to do everything. I get up early, I try to go to work the earliest I can possibly can, like I was telling you, Monday, Wednesday and Friday, I normally now go early for differing reasons, it's more, more peaceful at work. I am very active at work, I am in meetings and I get involved even with, with other groups. I try to, to learn more, and if there is workshops or, or seminars, I try to get involved as much, even though my, there is a constraint of time in my work. I think I'm more, I feel that I'm more than a business administrator. If anybody has a problem, they, they come to me. Like I was telling the other person, it's from, from anything in the bathroom to like a, a, big decisions, I'm pretty involved on almost everything that people get. It's funny, one lady was one day in my office, and one of the doctors asked me for something and she said, "Do you also have to take them whether he runs to the bathroom?" Because it was something very ridiculous, and I say, "Just about." If something breaks, they call me, okay? And among the things I have to do, and then I don't take lunch, and to possibly leave at 3:30 because, see, I don't take lunch, I just eat, I got used to it, I guess. There is times I'm, I will go out to lunch for a special occasion, but under regular, I don't, and I come home. I now visit my mother, she's in a rehab because, you know, she had, she fell, and so now I try to do, like, Tuesday and Thursday, I try to go to see her Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday and Sunday, and occasionally Fridays. Because Wednesday, I usually take a course of something to work or to a workshop or something, so it's hard, so I come home. We usually make dinner on the weekends, so it's something easy, like throwing something in the oven or heat something we already

cooked, and we eat together, we try to eat together, and my husband goes to sleep. I usually work on the computer for a, either something for my organization work, sometimes I have meetings with my organization, sometimes I go out, it's at least once a week something like that is part of my routine, or we go out for different, different things from work as well, or I meet people. Weekends, I, I try to be in touch with my family or with people from my organization, like, like tomorrow we're going to the exhibit, you know, and try to maintain in contact with my extended family As a matter of fact, yesterday, my cousin from New York called me and I'm like trying to pre-do for today, try to clean, and, and then he, we, we spent about a couple hours chatting because we haven't talked for a long time, so I call my, my family from New York. We have family in Washington. I have family in Philadelphia, and we keep pretty much in touch. So I try to break, like, a week different people. This way, we don't, I have a large family I can't talk to everybody, so –

Interviewer

Right. You have to kind of do a cycle.

Iwanyshyn

Exactly Exactly And because I do the cycle, and then, like this particular cousin, I haven't talked to for about three months, so we have a lot of catching up, and he's sort of my best friend, too, and he's going through a hard time, so he, he's about my age, we went out, I got married with my husband, he was also getting married, and we did a lot of things together. We, we went to, to Miami together by car We went to New Orleans by car. We, we used to hang out, see each other, visit each other a lot, and our children became also good friends.

Interviewer

Close cousins.

Iwanyshyn

Because it's not just they, they, you can be a family, and you still don't have a relationship. You have to also become friends, you know, in addition to that. So I haven't talked to him, so he called, and I said, "Okay I forgot about everything." And everybody was going to sleep. I said, "What time are you going to sleep?" Because I also take care of my son now I, oh, I go to the gym, I exercise, too, so I have a, a busy schedule, even in the weekday, and my, and I have to get home by 9:00, because my husband doesn't go to bed until I come home. Like, he gets up very early, so I have to be considerate, so wherever I am, I have to come back by 9:00 or 10:00.

Interviewer

Okay, now I'll ask you to remember Can you remember or describe maybe a typical day back home? Back in Peru?

Iwanyshyn

A typical day back home?

Interviewer

Maybe at any point you want to remember, maybe when you were a teenager or a child.

Iwanyshyn

Teenager probably I, well, you know, over there, you have about two, two hours for lunch. I don't know if you, in Mexico, that your parents have that –

Interviewer

They have like siesta or you just –

Iwanyshyn

In most countries.

Interviewer

Yeah, it's not one hour, right.

Iwanyshyn

It's not like that. So it's typical, like any young person, you're going to want to get up in the morning, get up. We were not, we didn't have that much money, and we didn't have,

we didn't have the accommodation that other people had, but even, even little class people, at that time, they will not have, let's say, a bathroom in your, in your house. It will be like you have your little room or apartment, and it was a bathroom for several people, you know what I mean? So you had to get up early and like make sure that the bathroom is available for you, and in Cuzco, it's very cold, so you, to catch up in time, you had to like use cold water because you don't have warm water. My mother sometimes would warm up the water, but it wasn't time, because also she has to make me breakfast, so, and we only have one little stuff, so you had to like not have hot water, and Cuzco is cold. It's very cold. So wash yourself and get yourself ready. We had uniforms and go to school, we had to be in the school at 8:00. My school, in Cuzco at that time, was not too big. You can walk with, one hour will take you to walk from one end to the other, but my school was almost to the other end, very close, it was, my house was one end to center city, Plaza de Armas _____ and then from the Plaza de Armas to the other end, it was, my school was halfway in between that, so it, it will give you an idea. It will take me about a half an hour, 20 minutes or half an hour, for either, but, back home we don't rush.

Interviewer

Each way, right? Right.

Iwanyshyn

So, you, you leave at 7:30 to get there at 8:00, okay? We got to school, line up at Wesleyan(?) High School in Cuzco, actually, and go to classes, and you are, it's not like here – you change classes. You are in one class. There was just A and B, the same grade, and the teachers would change, okay? So it was same, as chaotic, you have breaks in between so you can go down to the patio and talk, and then, my school was not very

rich neither, and sometimes we didn't even have water to drink because something would break, and used to have the water fountains, and if it would break, if they didn't have the money, they would not repair, you know? It was not a school --- although the schools are, public schools are supposed to be free --- but public schools were, uh, you had to know somebody. It was very political, as well. And I didn't know too --- I mean, my whole family knew someone, but they were, they would prefer someone who were a little better economically, which instead of helping me, that thing was --- so they would get the, the free ones, and I would have to pay, but this school was mainly for people who, with low income, which the founder of that school was a fantastic woman who gave her whole entire life to that school, never got married, we were her kids. That she, she founded this school and gave very minimum --- affordable to people who want to have education. That's what, and we took very pride, we have actually the best schools in town because as well people from the university, the, the professor from the university want to do a community, good people community service, so they volunteered their hours. They would say, "I'll teach philosophy to the last grade for this hour," so they, the school will accommodate the schedules of these big professors of the university, so we did have a good education, and she focused a lot in civic things that every weekend we use, every Saturday, part of the, the schooling was to hear from speeches at different events of the history, which I thought that was also for us to develop, to speak in public.

Interviewer

Oh, public speaking, okay.

Iwanyshyn

Exactly. And that was done from the very and earliest stage in that school. And then we will stop at 12:00, go home for our lunch, I would leave earlier than, we were released

very quickly because we would meeting in the the Plaza de Armas with all the girls, all my friends and the boys, but the boys were not, and not allowed to walk us together. We could not walk as, with the same thing. So they would walk, like, behind us or in front of us, and we would talk, but we could not show them we were walking together.

Interviewer

Together, side-by-side.

Iwanyshyn

No, that was a big no-no-no. That was just girls school. And it wasn't a Catholic school, per se, it wasn't a religious school. It wasn't a nun's school, but we were very --- they were very, very strict. The skirts has to be somewhere --- I think certain centimeters from the floor. So I had to, it was like way above our need, okay? Of course, the girls were like [laughs] ---

Interviewer

Rolled up ---

Iwanyshyn

Yeah. So, and then we would go early, and we'd have to rush for the school because we were having such a good time ---

Interviewer

Good time in the Plaza ---

Iwanyshyn

And school would finish at 5:00. And you was always, like I liked to be involved in activities, and I would either do some sport, which I wasn't very, very good, but because I was so dedicated, and they would always choose me, it was always some kind of activity, after school activity, and preparation for the, Independence Day, oh, that's big over there. You prepare like months and months, marching, all the schools, like, are

represented. So it was always something, and then you go home, and there's a teatime at home. You have tea. You're supposed to have tea right after you come to school, or from school, but because I was coming late, I would miss tea, so I would always have just early dinner. I always have early dinner, and then do my homework and chat with my mother. Family time is very, very important --- **[END OF TAPE 1, SIDE B]**

Interviewer

... You were saying that in the evening you'd either go out with your friend or –

Iwanyshyn

Or back home, it was like, the houses very colonial, like, you know, were made by, by Spanish, because when I see pictures, I think it's back home. The houses are like one big patio, and then there's like rooms all around, and there's a bathroom there, rooms all around if there is a second floor. So at night, and the rooms are rented, so, so you can rent one, it depends how, how large and how much you can afford, so it's, a lot of families are in one area, and sometimes they have *primero patio* --- the first patio --- *segundo patio, tercer patio* --- so you have a very big group, and this is in Cuzco, in Lima it's different. And most people used to live there. Not anymore. So if you go there, it's going to be different. So we were part of that compound, and in, at night, the, the mothers and fathers go in the middle of the, in the patio, and chairs and the, the guys stick together, the ladies stick, and we play with each other, the children, so it's like a community thing. I thought that was, I miss that. You don't, you don't have that. So we knew our, where our children are at all the times, and everybody was having fun, really, until it gets, of course, this is after dinner, it's somewhere between 7:00 and 8:00, and then people go, go to bed early in Cuzco, so by 9:00, Cuzco used to be a ghost town. Not anymore. There was really, a ghost, everybody was in bed by 9:00. If you, you are

reading and not necessarily sleeping, but you were in bed. And then on weekends, we always had also activities, get together, and my family's big about that. We usually have picnics, getting together was always in somebody's house, and we all had to help out, we all go early, and do different things, every weekend we have something, and my family is from, it's not really from Cuzco, even though everybody comes through Cuzco, it's from a small town called [Colsurite?], and they still have lands there. They don't live there, but they have land. So on weekends, we will go there a lot. If we didn't have no events or somebody's birthday or getting married or differing events, sometimes there is festivities in different areas, and you go, celebrations, parades, if we didn't have anything, we will go to [Surite?], and my mother's mother from her mother's side is from [Encawasia?], another small town near [Surite?]. My father, my grandfather's from [Surite?], my grandmother's from [Encawasia?], and we have family in both, and we used to have land, too, so everybody goes there and we also used to have nice get together thing kind of about, I don't know if you have like throwing each(?) on(?) water(?) and powder and we used to do all that and have parties, like just having, no food, I mean food too, but it was more gathering together, getting together.

Interviewer

Right. With the family.

Iwanyshyn

With the family, and [Surite?] is very a small town, so we would meet in the main plaza and just hang out and all the family, not just the children. So it's not, you can do nothing bad because it was –

Interviewer

Everyone was together.

Iwanyshyn

No. If you by accident will do something, somebody saw you and will tell your mother, believe me.

Interviewer

So you, you acted good, you had to –

Iwanyshyn

Yeah, so that was very typical. We didn't have nothing extravagant, occasional, once in a lifetime, a concert would come from, from another country. It was a big deal for us, you know? And we a lot of soccer games, Sundays are soccer games, very typical. We all would go to the stadium. Everybody as a family, everything is a family thing. It's not like guys go, like here, you know, guys go together and the ladies stay. The ladies go to a _____ . No, this is, together, together. Football? The whole family, yeah. That's when I got so interested in sports when I was young because I was brought up in that way, yeah. Always.

Interviewer

Well, what kind of ties do you maintain with home?

Iwanyshyn

With my family, my mother has a sister, which I always said they are twins. They are not. It's a year apart, I think, although now they, you don't know that age. They forgot. But I know when I was little, and I think I saw their birth certificates, and they are a year apart. My aunt now says, "Oh, no. I'm much younger than your mother." Not the aunt who brought me. They had three girls. And she is like a matriarch of the family. She, for her, see, my family came from, from Cuzco. All of her brothers and sisters came to Lima for her. She was the person who was very strong and take care of her family, and we came to the United States because of my aunt, the other aunt, okay? She is like a mother to me. She, I'm very, very close to her, and I go, I don't like Lima too much, I

don't find, like, I don't find too much, other than the museums and stuff like that, there's not too much for me in Lima, but I only go for her. For my, my aunt and one of my uncles, but mainly for her. And every time I go, I have to spend time with her. My father died when I was young, and my father is my aunt's husband's brother. So two sisters and two brothers, and my Papa, I called Papa, to his, he took care of me, not too much financially perhaps, because he, in that time, there was no money. They didn't like support me completely, but when my mother didn't have a job, we went, we stayed in their house, and my, my Papa always brought me little things, like a even a treat or an ice cream or different things, so I called him Papa because of that and because we lived with her for, whenever we, we couldn't afford our own, my mother lived also with families, we lived with her, so I could, I'm very close to her. And whenever I go, or even now, I call her from time to time, and we keep in touch with all the time so I, that is a very, very, like I go to Lima mainly for her. In Cuzco, that's where I, life was brighter for me, so we had a very hard life in Lima, and that's what, I went to Cuzco, and it was a good life, and that's where I, I think I put my roots. And I have great, grand uncles there who were very close to me, and we come, as a matter of fact, the, the last uncle just died when I was there last year around July. And I think from that generation, I only have one aunt, that's my mother's uncles and aunts. Only one aunt is left. Everybody is dead. And then I have a lot of, their children who we become very close, and cousins and friends, I have a lot, a lot in Cuzco.

Interviewer
So you visit?

Iwanyshyn

Yeah, I have the school, I was part, I go, the lady, the founder, the lady, who was so old when I was there, she's still the same. I mean, she's having, she's just slower, that's about it. She doesn't run the school anymore. I visit her, I try to contribute something for the school or for the, that school, that make my contribution, and I'm trying to some day come back and have like a reunion or something, so I keep in touch with all of my friends from school.

Interviewer

By visiting and telephone?

Iwanyshyn

By visiting and usually, periodically by telephone. And they have spread out, too.

Interviewer

Do you, do you ever email, do you email any of –

Iwanyshyn

Not too much because a lot of them, you know, are like old country still. A lot of those people don't have, even my husband –

Interviewer

Don't have computers, right. Or don't, right.

Iwanyshyn

So, not too much for email. With the ones who have, yes. The ones who doesn't, uh, yeah. So I have a lot of, my hope, my dreams are still to --- for retirement --- to move with my husband there.

Interviewer

Really?

Iwanyshyn

Yeah. And, and he'll contribute to that school and give me a chance to teach there. I have, and help people who can't afford education. That's my dream. I hope we'll do it. It's doable, I think.

Interviewer

Yeah. What are the, what are the things that you miss most about home?

Iwanyshyn

Oh, the first year, like I said, all the, the bonding and the attachment. The, the people are different here, and it was so funny, the language, you might not believe, and you might not have had this experience, you can never know until you have the experience, like I said, I was with just English-speaking people. It was something that holding, hold tight in me when I met my aunt on the weekend which I didn't have every weekend, it was every two weekends, oh my God, I would talk ... "Calm down, calm down," my aunt would say. It looked like I hold it too much, and I have to get it out.

Interviewer

And to express yourself.

Iwanyshyn

Yeah, and the food.

Interviewer

The food.

Iwanyshyn

Did I suffer with the food. They want sandwiches at lunch. I never – they have sandwiches at lunch. And that was, you, you eat a sandwich as a snack, not at lunch. Lunch is a main course.

Interviewer

Lunch is a meal.

Iwanyshyn

More than dinner. You know, we don't eat that much. Lunch we have appetites, so that we have salad, soup, main course, dessert, coffee, tea, lemonade, whatever you want.

Interviewer

That's right. You have the two hours, too, for lunch because it's an important meal.

Iwanyshyn

Big. Important. They want to give me sandwich, and then they --- and for dinner, they want frozen _____? Oh my God. I didn't find taste in any of the food. I still like love my food, but I got used to it, but I still will go any place for my food, even to Paterson. And food, people, well people first –

Interviewer

People first.

Iwanyshyn

It's, it's --- I find even though I have good friends, and I think they are as warm as they can be, I still find the people are not as close, as warm as we are back home. Back there we had the back porch(?), we are in each one's business all the time, which is _____. Here, you have more privacy. But one thing, always it's a big shock, you are a group. Community comes first. Here, you are an individual and the "I" come first. There, "we" come first, and that's a big change.

Interviewer

Okay. That's a big difference.

Iwanyshyn

Because everybody do their own thing, and you look as a newcomer that everybody's selfish, but that's just the culture. So it, that's a big, big thing, I think, for a lot of cultures, then that's a big difference.

Interviewer

How often do you visit, just –

Iwanyshyn

Well, actually, I went after I got married, I think a couple years after I got married, I went with my husband, and I, we, we didn't have any children, and we went for three months, which was wonderful, and I'm glad I did. He loves Peru. And then we went when my daughter was one year old, Wendy, we went for a month. She got, as a matter of fact, she

celebrated her first birthday there. After that, I didn't go for a long time. I think I went, oh, God, I have to remember. I think I didn't go for like eight years, and then I went, the last four years, I've been going every year, yeah.

Interviewer

How do you preserve or maintain your Peruvian culture here?

Iwanyshyn

You know, at the beginning, it's sort of hard because you, you're struggling with, with life, trying to bring an income, children, and, so it's hard. We, my family, thank God, I really am very proud of my family, and I am proud that I belong to this group. We do get together a lot, and years ago, it was even more, it was like almost every weekend was getting together. I think somebody drops a hat, and we get together, you know? And, and not just a couple hours. It used to be like the next day, turn to the next day, so I think the part with the food, between my mother who lived with us, I knew how to cook. She has a Spanish root, although I taught her a lot of, now she knows a lot of American food. The food part was maintained by my mother, well, because that's all we knew. The kids, they, they used to get upset and say, "Why aren't we, like, like a typical American eating hotdogs and canned soup?" I said, "Because we're not typical Americans," you know? And they, they, and now, they appreciate the food, but then, they wanted, you know –

Interviewer

Hotdogs, hamburgers.

Iwanyshyn

And my mother maintained that, she helped me maintain, and we taught them in Spanish. My, my husband is not Spanish, so it was hard for me, so my mother didn't know English, so it was sort of that make a connection with the kids in, in Spanish. So, and then we always like gather in groups, and we will tell them that this that, we brought

different pictures, and we would tell them, and we took a lot of pictures and we would tell them, "This is Tia Sol(?)". As a matter of fact, they didn't even know my Tia Sol(?) and my Papa Bense(?). When they got there, they thought they knew because they knew everything about her –

Interviewer

Because you had shared so much.

Iwanyshyn

Yeah, and they just hung out like they were, they knew each other for years, and my aunts say, "How come the other children are not like that?" Because they, I talk to them a lot, and I would call, I would make them talk –

Interviewer

Talk on the phone before they ever met –

Iwanyshyn

Basically see her, so we always talk, and my mother will go to Peru, bring always a little gift, and it was a big deal. They would take it to show and tell. I used to dress, that was a big deal for me. I brought suits from Peru, costume and our dress, and I will dress them up in different, oh, they were great, of course, you know, at that time. And basically that, and then, and, part of my life also is my girlfriend, my best girlfriend. She's married to a Puerto Rican, she, she's Peruvian, so also her, we try the food. You're right, the food is a big thing. So when she would make something from Peru, I will go, if I make something from Peru, she will come, and we will have the kids. One time we went all the way to New Jersey to, just to eat Peruvian food because here, you never have any. We get there, guess what the children want.

Interviewer

French fries.

Iwanyshyn

McDonald's.

Interviewer

You don't want that.

Iwanyshyn

So we, and I maintain, this is my very good friend, and then some day when you come to a party or something, you will meet, Margarita is from Peru as well, and she, she's the godmother of my Wendy, and she was very good to my children, and I'm very good, I'm very close to the children. Now my children really thought that we were related.

Interviewer

Oh, that you were cousin or sisters or –

Iwanyshyn

I mean, yeah. She, she's, and my son kept telling everybody that Julie's her, his cousin, and after they left, I said, "You know that they are really, really not your cousin?" And he was in shock.

Interviewer

He just assumed because of the closeness.

Iwanyshyn

Assumed that the closeness, yeah. So we have a lot of friends. As a matter of fact, Jason's mom was a very good friend as well, also a good friend of mine, but she, I think she come afterwards. I didn't know her for too long.

Interviewer

Okay. Are there places or events in Philadelphia where people could experience Peruvian culture?

Iwanyshyn

Right now or then?

Interviewer

Right now.

Iwanyshyn

Right now, yeah. Now, as you know, I'm the treasurer of an organization called AMPA. It's the Asociacion Nacional Peruanoamericano and we try to bring, to, to promote the culture of Peru, and we do, we have done several events, and we, specifically for Independence Day, July 28, and a friend of mine who worked for the Taller Puertorriqueño, she is pretty involved in, in do, in specific events, like now it's the exhibition of paintings and it's connected with my organization, and, but it's also part of the, their Puerto Rican, Taller Puertorriqueño is sort of like a sponsor, adds like different activities. We have two wonderful restaurants, I don't know if you've been there. One is in the 69th Street, 69th and Market, not exactly 69th and Market, but it's a couple of blocks from 69th and Market, but just to give you a general idea, and those were from a family, actually I think the lady's from Cuzco, who were wonderful, wonderful, but then I thought it was, they tried to like compliment with, with American food, and they did a very magnificent job on that. However, the lady got sick, and then it sort of passed to somebody else, and I'm not sure now if the food is as good as when the lady was, so in case you want to go.

Interviewer

What is it called?

Iwanyshyn

El Sol? Inca del Sol. Okay? And then there's another one, right back on, _____ on Taybor, not too far from Rising Sun Avenue, and also was original from Peru, Peruvian people opened that, but I, now it's a combination of, I think, Brazilian and Peruvian, but they have the typical food of, if you want to experience the typical food.

Interviewer

Okay. I'm getting hungry.

Iwanyshyn

I know. And we have to, I think it's up to us and to my organization to bring more things and, and to promote and to show the public that we are here and this is also part of this society, and that's our job, and we are working on it. Our mission.

Interviewer

Well let me ask you, if, if what way, in what ways, if any, do you feel that you have moved away from your culture?

Iwanyshyn

You know, my husband is Ukrainian, and I want the children, because they are part Ukrainian, to have something as well, so I did, well, there's not a school --- Peruvian school, *per se*, so it was either going, send to just a regular school or Ukrainian school, so I chose to send to Ukrainian school for elementary school, so they went to Ukrainian school, and they knew the language, but I think they forgot. So maybe in that respect, but anything else, I really don't think because now more than ever my husband is very supportive, he's fantastic in that respect. I feel that sometimes he's Peruvian himself because we even go to restaurants, and he'll say, "Oh, would you like to be part of my wife's organization?" And, like, he approaches, and he brought a couple of members to our organization as well, and when it comes to food, he sends me to the end of the world to get his ceviche – do you know what ceviche is?

Interviewer

Um-hm.

Iwanyshyn

So it's, he, he's really, he also sort of tends to be part of us, and he also promotes our culture. I think he, he really does. And I'm really proud of him because he, he's so funny. He's really, like he feels, he knows a lot, and he talks to people. "Oh, yeah, I went to this and that in Cuzco and Lima and this." "Really?" "Oh, I ate ceviche. I ate

[carapulca?, limon sultano?]," and people are looking. They don't even know, and they are married to, or the children are Peruvian or whatever –

Interviewer

Wow. So he's adopted very, very much adopted –

Iwanyshyn

Oh, he has, yeah. And he, he really likes the culture. He loves the culture a lot, and he wants to move some day to Peru as well.

Interviewer

Oh good. Then you won't have any problems.

Iwanyshyn

I hope that.

Interviewer

Do, do you have any concerns about your home country or friends and family in your home country?

Iwanyshyn

Right now, no. At one time with the Sendero Luminoso and other, other guerillas, of course, it was, it was not a very good place. It was a, that, maybe that's when I didn't go that much. I was so scared to travel there.

Interviewer

There was a time, right.

Iwanyshyn

Yeah. Now I feel that I have my roots, I can go any time, and they are there. They are happy, and I really don't feel any concern about, as a matter of fact, the funny part is everybody's moving back. My tia, my aunt, who I told you who brought me, she's back in Peru. She lives there now.

Interviewer

Okay. And I know Pilar's parents moved back.

Iwanyshyn

--- parents move back to Peru, so my Uncle Victor, and his wife, Celia, moved back to Peru. My uncles _____ moved back to Peru. So I think we will move.

Interviewer

Okay, so those are good signs of, of things happening there, too. I mean –

Iwanyshyn

The only thing, I still feel that it can be better. The economy can be better, so I don't think there is luxurious things like here, but they are happy people, there's still family togetherness, and the place is beautiful.

Interviewer

Okay. Do you have a favorite holiday to observe? American or Peruvian?

Iwanyshyn

American, believe it or not, Thanksgiving used to be, didn't mean anything to me, okay? Because we don't have Thanksgiving over there, but now, my family's too big, and we used to get together at Thanksgiving, but it was like, it grew so much that we can't, we don't have a house to have that.

Interviewer

Right. And your own, the generations have kids –

Iwanyshyn

Kids, so now we still, I know that my Uncle Victor's family are together. I know that, and if I wanted, I can stop over any time. They know that I have, and this friend, Margarita is my very best friend, so we have together with her and occasionally I always invite somebody who doesn't have any place to go or something, and, but we know that, we call each other and we know then if we want, we're in own house. As a matter of fact, Pilar stopped at Thanksgiving this year.

Interviewer

She came by?

Iwanyshyn

And it was funny, I'm saying, "Stay," and she don't want to stay. And I'm going, "Mmm, _____" but she want, she, her family got together, her brothers and sisters, and it was important, so, but at least she stopped by. And we know that we can stop and we talk to each other, so we are a small, definitely a small group, but, and we adopted Thanksgiving to, to get, to be together with the family. It's, my favorite I think probably Christmas. I love Christmas. Oh, I love Christmas. Easter, too. I like Easter. At the beginning it was sad because it was, at Christmas I used to cry because –

Interviewer

You were lonely.

Iwanyshyn

I was lonely. Now I'm so happy that sometimes we're there in the morning working out and say, "Why are you so happy?" I'm very joyful now in my holidays. I have my family now, and I know where my mother is, I know I can reach my extended family back home, and I'm happy. I can do whatever I want to do or be with anybody I want to be.

Interviewer

So is Philadelphia now home? Do you consider –

Iwanyshyn

Yeah, definitely Philadelphia.

Interviewer

When, when did it start to feel that way for you?

Iwanyshyn

Oh, that's a tough question. Even after I got, I got married in '69. The first year was, "I'm going home." The second year, I was, I was meeting more people, getting to know, getting involved, participating in different activities, more Latino because there was not

too many Peruvian. It was more general Latino – actually South American, Central American.

Interviewer

South Americans? Okay.

Iwanyshyn

Yeah. It's still, Puerto Rican, they, they maintain their own group, and they, they are strong. They are more.

Interviewer

Right. They have more of their kind.

Iwanyshyn

They don't need us. We will look for others, and I think we always got together with, big activities together, support each other's activities. So I guess in the second year I sort of started feeling --- I, I'm here, I might as well make a life here. Then I met my husband, got married. We still know we can go back, and maybe those three months was like maybe we can make a life here. And you can, if you have money, you know?

Interviewer

If you bring money.

Iwanyshyn

Yeah. We didn't have, we were just early couple, young couple, so we knew that we had to come back and we work hard. And I think I, I give, I went back to school, I had my children, and you don't have time for feeling sorry yourself or be lonely. I wasn't lonely anymore. And now I think I'm very, very comfortable. Like sometimes when I'm home, I miss here, so –

Interviewer

So it's a process it sounds like.

Iwanyshyn

Yeah, it's, it's a long process. I don't think it happened in one year or one event, but now I, I feel that this is home.

Interviewer

Okay. How would you describe yourself here in the United State when you tell people what you are?

Iwanyshyn

I am Peruvian. I am proud to be Peruvian. I feel I have adopted this country. This is my adopted country, and I'm very of, to be here. I, although I miss my country and, but I think this country has given me the opportunities to, to be a Peruvian American person, and, and I'm very proud of it. I don't think I'm giving up my country, or betraying my country, and I'm very proud to be part of those two cultures, and I always tell my children you have to take the best of both and make it the best for you and create your own little culture. And I, I think I'm a good citizen. Of course, I'm a wife, a mother, and a daughter.

Interviewer

Okay, I'll ask, make this quick. Do you, do you ever consider yourself Latina or Latino - --

Iwanyshyn

Oh yeah ---

Interviewer

or, or Hispanic --- which of those terms do you -

Iwanyshyn

Well, I always said I am Peruvian, and, but if you know the different questionnaires that come, and I check Latino. What's the other -

Interviewer

Hispanic.

Iwanyshyn

I don't think I see that.

Interviewer

Okay. You see more Latino?

Iwanyshyn

Latino, yeah. **[END OF TAPE 2, SIDE A]**

Interviewer

Well what does, what does being Latino or Hispanic mean to you when, in this country, you know?

Iwanyshyn

In this country, it means that you come from a Latin country – South America, Central America country, and you have, you do speak Spanish. That's what my discussion with Latino, a lot of people ask me, ask me that, and I do this, speak Spanish, and you have a lot of things in common, and the, the cultural part, probably the food, the, the dances, definitely the, the language is number one, and even religion, I think. The majority, I believe they're Catholic, and we, we have a lot of things in common as a, as a Latino person. So that's, that's what I think we –

Interviewer

Well, how, what are, what are some of the differences or distinctions that you see between Latinos, between groups?

Iwanyshyn

From groups to groups? Well, the biggest difference between what the big group is --- I think that we all feel that we're very much different than Puerto Ricans. I think Puerto Ricans are somewhat in the middle of Latino and Americanized. They really don't know, a lot of the people, even the ones who come from there, don't speak Spanish. The other thing is like in my country, we speak Castillian, that's the language. Only here we say Spanish. And that's more classical, more like a Shakespeare version I think, and the

I think we have, we are being faced almost every day with big challenges. For one thing, I really don't think we have the recognition that we deserve, and that's, I think we are now the, supposedly the largest minority group, and I think, more so than African Americans, and I think a lot of the things are geared to groups like African American, even though they say minority groups, than it is geared to other groups, and that including Asians. They are a minority, too. And I think that's a big change, and I would like to make, is if we are minority and we are going to include minority groups, minority group means a lot of groups, not just one large group. And because we don't, because they don't include us almost in anything, I think, also they don't talk, we don't get recognition, and I think it's, we're doing a good contribution to society.

Interviewer

Have you had struggles in your life here in the United States because you were an immigrant or, or, or Peruvian or Latina?

Iwanyshyn

I think people are prejudiced, and you can feel, I try not to, I try to, I learned to make life easy for me, you have to turn negativity to positive things. And sometimes I don't see those things, but I really think no matter where you go, there is always, as a matter of fact, just the other day, even the, they check, they didn't check anybody, and they checked my bag, and I did say, maybe I wasn't, I said, "Is it because I'm Latina?" And of course, they got very defensive, but my question was why didn't they check, it could have been, they could have said, "Oh, it's randomly," if that's the case, you know what I mean? And I think in that place, in some places, they do check more to Latinos over African American, and that, that is offensive. That is offensive. But it was my credit card. It was, they had to call somebody to recheck my credit card, so, and when they left,

and I think, "Oh man, that's not so." You never know. It couldn't have been, it, it couldn't not have been. But I wasn't overreacting. I just trying to make a point, and they got very defensive.

Interviewer

Do you, do you feel that there, there's a difference between the way you're treated now and the way you were treated in the '60s or '70s when –

Iwanyshyn

Oh, definitely. I don't think, even in jobs, to tell you the truth, because once I knew English and I learned, I took some typing and I thought I was capable to do any job, administrative job, and I think a lot of places not hire me because of that, but then again, another place was going to hire me just because I was Latino, and that also, I thought that was offensive, because you have to hire a person because, what they do, if they are qualified to do the job, not because, people would say that it was they needed a Latino. Of course, there wasn't a –

Interviewer

Like, like a quota? Or, or they needed someone that spoke Spanish?

Iwanyshyn

No. That was the funny part. I think they needed somebody, I just happened to know by accident, and they were, they needed, in one point, he had, I think it was all over the United States, and you had to have a certain kind of –

Interviewer

A quota.

Iwanyshyn

Of minorities, but again, they were concentrating more on African American, but they figured like one Latino, you can pass –

Interviewer

So you would be a token Latina.

Iwanyshyn

Yeah, exactly.

Interviewer

What are the things that you're most proud of?

Iwanyshyn

I think my family, and that's including my little family and my extended family. I'm really proud to be part of this big family, even though, like, sometimes they're getting on your nerves. I think I'm proud of my accomplishment, I don't, I'm not rich. I don't have too much money, but I think I have wonderful children, wonderful family, wonderful friends, and to me, that's more important than if you have \$1 million. And I think I have accomplished, I have a good balance of, my, my children are going to school, they don't get into any kind of trouble, they are, and they balance also. That's another part, and my children, even with, I see many families that the children don't want nothing to do with Latinos ancestor. My family are so proud, and I think I have conveyed that, to be part of that, and my son is trying to take his friends to Paterson to eat all the Peruvian food you can eat, and my daughter always, whenever she has the time, she helped me in all the activities. My daughter goes to Peru more than I do, and I think I pass it on and I know with me, which is unfortunately with many families, and I see it's going to die because your children are not as enthusiastic. My children, I think it will live, my culture and their father's culture as well.

Interviewer

So your grandchildren will.

Iwanyshyn

To the grandchildren, hopefully it will pass it on. So that, for that, I am very, very proud, and to have a really wonderful family. I got lucky.

Interviewer

That's nice. I guess we already talked about this. Oh, no, this is, what was the greatest adjustment that you had to make coming here?

Iwanyshyn

I don't know what is, I think to be, to be practical and realistic and face myself and look at myself in the mirror and say, "I think you have to start a life here." Because I always wanted to go back, it always was in the back of my head, like, "Make some money and go there." I say, "Why not just make it here when I don't have to struggle here?" I mean, you, you still have to struggle, but not as hard as I said, and go any time you have the opportunity to go any time you want to Peru. Really, what stop you? So I don't think I can have that, the same, the other way around.

Interviewer

So that was a, some –

Iwanyshyn

Yeah, I had to be realistic and said, "Give it up. Live here. You're here."

Interviewer

I think we already answered this one, whether you'd ever felt alienation or discrimination?

Iwanyshyn

Yeah, not very much though. Like, mainly like when I was maybe sentimental, and I, sometimes you, you _____ and you do, like I say, I always turn negative things into positive. Life goes much more easy that way because if you don't –

Interviewer

It eats you up.

Iwanyshyn

Yeah, eats you up, so I try to like give the benefit of the doubt to every person. "No, he has some good."

Interviewer

Were there any organizations that helped you adjust or, or helped you in your living here?

Iwanyshyn

Not really, because I was struggling also to make a living. My mother was ill, and she didn't have no money, so I really had to be a provider as well for her and myself, so I was too, too busy working and trying to get some money, educating myself as well. So I really, no.

Interviewer

Right. I guess the closest thing ended up being your family – I mean, your aunt and then

—

Iwanyshyn

My, like I say, my family, my aunt helped me enormously in the sense to just give me, fly me the ticket, who's going to give you? Nobody's going to give you. And when I was here, see, that's another thing you will learn. A lot of people think that I came and my aunt took care of me, sent me to college and that's what my other family thinks, which it wasn't the case. I worked for everything, but my aunt, for some reason, see, when you are from my culture, when you come to, with, with someone, you're sort of your own to that person in a sense, and you can do nothing for yourself. I had to ask permission. I went to Canada, for instance, for the Expo '67. I had to ask permission. It was my money, it was, it was my friend, my time, vacation from my work and everything. I had to ask permission to my aunt if I can go, and that's cultural really. I didn't have to, but I have to, and I think, and I always say I stayed with my aunt, meaning that she was my, my sponsor, you can say my mentor, my, my mother here perhaps because, but it wasn't because she was, she took me and supported me and feed me and send me to a school. She couldn't have helped me, if I, like, if I was broke or something. I am now hesitate,

but my aunt had a also hard life, and she didn't, she told them, "I have to be on my own," which was very good for me because I needed that, and I had to make a life for myself to support myself and do the different things. So she, I think she helped me tremendously at first by providing me the ticket and second by really pushing me because maybe myself, I was with the idea that she was going to take care of me, which that wasn't the case because she had also hard life, and she was supporting herself. She couldn't help me, but no chance, and I, I wasn't her child, and I had to also, that's another thing, I had to realize, "I'm with my aunt, but she's not my mother. She doesn't have the obligation to support me." But, see, when you come from another country, somebody takes the job and like, and I did have to ask when I met my husband for, if I had to go out, I had to ask my aunt, and if she would say no, I probably would not go out. So it was, she was my organization, I guess. She, I went through with my aunt for everything.

Interviewer

And your, I mean, she was your cultural, I mean you all, you, the two of you were, you know, part of the same –

Iwanyshyn

Bonded, yeah.

Interviewer

Yeah, a bond in that sense, and that you were, you know, so that was, that's an intangible kind of thing, support or, that you get, you know, from your own kind.

Iwanyshyn

She was a very supportive person, even in the, she's tough. She's hard. But I think that, that helped me to grow up very fast and say, "You are your own, Rica, and you have to make yourself, wherever you're going to be from this point on." And I will never forget her.

Interviewer

See, I think, I mean you've answered these, not directly but in other ways.

Iwanyshyn

One thing I just wanted to add with my center, that I feel this is my center also, even though financially, I don't have nothing, no ownership, I also now am trying to push my boss to consider hiring a Spanish-speaking therapist, and I, I'm mentioning, like, you know, we need that. The community is growing, and there's a lot of people who doesn't speak English, and she's keeping in her mind, but she just says it's hard for this particular type of work, so she, we are hoping in the next one will –

Interviewer

Can be a Spanish-speaking therapist.

Iwanyshyn

Yeah.

Interviewer

What, have you or your family been able to accomplish things that you would not have been able to accomplish in Peru?

Iwanyshyn

Oh, everything I, I, I have, really. I mean, that's, I don't have much, I don't think I could have bought or traveled or, or just buy myself a car or, or a house, for that matter, in Peru, definitely. The financial was so hard, the big part in Peru. Not, not anything else. I was happy, very happy.

Interviewer

Now, what are your aspirations at this point?

Iwanyshyn

Well, at this point in life, I have so many things in my mind, and so I told you before. My, my goal is a hope that one day we'll go as soon as can have an income, we're going to Peru and we're doing something for the community. That's one of the things. And my

husband wants to have a little farm, and that's doable. I want to, we can't do that, all that thing until my children are taken care of, and my children to finish their profession and be on their own. And I also want to learn so much, so much more, like I want to do a lot of things here for the community, for the Spanish community, and that's what I'm, with this –

Interviewer

With the therapist and the –

Iwanyshyn

I want to be able, and I think I accepted and I make sure _____ because I feel that we are unrepresented, and when I read this and I see they concentrate minority groups, I want to be able, which I already have said, why, if the majority in New Mexico are Spanish-speaking, how come we don't provide with, how are they going to do the conversion as Spanish? And that's my, different points in my reviews that I am pointing out and hopefully that –

Interviewer

Advocating.

Iwanyshyn

That will lead to something to, to protection, part of the protection from the rights is to include for this particular, to customize this particular group. So that and, and that's the reason, it's a lot of work. It's not fun, but I think that's one of my intentions because I think I can make a, a difference. I want to learn so, so much, you know, but, and I don't even know if I have the time to learn. I am going to go back to my culture. I, you know, I haven't taken Peruvian history for many years. I want to refresh my courses and, and promote, you have to know everything, and not just the food and the, and it's starting with that, but I'm really going to try to connect and try to hopefully write some grants.

Interviewer

Nice. Is there anything you would like to add?

Iwanyshyn

No. I'm just very pleased with my life. I think I, I have accomplished everything that people want to. I have a wonderful husband and without him, I could not accomplish half of what I have, I, or maybe none. He's very, very, he's very supportive. He, as a matter of fact, in AMPA, it, it takes a lot of my time, and many times I have to say I really have to go home, and, but he said, "That's okay. I'll handle here. You just handle whatever you have to do over there." A few times I have hosted, I was hostess for a group, and he was part of helping me preparing for, I told you about, there was activists from Peru for the African-American group, of the history month for Africans, they have invited different Africans from different parts, and a Peruvian was part of that, and

_____ brings him like just like that, and we had to fix things just like that. And another husband would not have to take, to take it. He came with me and started helping me out with, and we pull it together. And he always, like I, like I said, he'll help me about promoting, and with my education, many times I have to be out of the house, and he chip in as far as with the children and with taking care of the food and different things, so I think all my accomplishments is thanking to my husband, and as a result, I, I feel that I have wonderful children, too. He's not very like strict with them, but he, he was there for me when I needed him to step in and, of course, we have our problems, we have –

Interviewer

People.

Iwanyshyn

Like anybody else, but for the most part on the accomplishment, I think I, I, I have a wonderful family. I have a good marriage, I have a good, my family, even with my

mother, I still have problems as far as like her health and how to cope with it, because when your, when your parents who had been so active, it's hard like not being so active, it also reflects on you. You have to take care of them, not just –

Interviewer

Right. It's your turn.

Iwanyshyn

Not just you have to take care of yourself and your children. And she, she, she knows him, and certain days I go to my mother's, and he's also very supportive, so that's, that's one thing I feel very proud of me and myself, that I have a good family, and I guess and my extended family, I love it. We get together and I love to, to be with them and be part of them, and I think we give each other something. And when something happens, we are always there together.

Interviewer

Good. Well that's it.

Iwanyshyn

That's it?

Interviewer

Yeah, thank you so much. Thank you for sharing.

Iwanyshyn

Thank you.

[END OF INTERVIEW]