

Interview with

Gloria Sias Perry

&

Mark Perry

conducted by Michael Kahan

for the “Understanding the History of Housing in Mountain View: Stories of Racism, Anti-Discrimination, and Movement towards Inclusion” project by the City of Mountain View’s Human Relations Commission,

in collaboration with Senior Lecturer Michael Kahan and team from Stanford University.

Mountain View Historical Society  
Mountain View Public Library

June 27, 2022

## INTRODUCTION

The purpose of “Understanding the History of Housing in Mountain View: Stories of Racism, Anti-Discrimination, and Movement towards Inclusion” is to document the history of discrimination and efforts to fight discrimination in housing in the city of Mountain View, California. Some of the information collected was shared with the public at an event sponsored by the Mountain View Human Relations Commission, held on July 26, 2022. In order to make the interviews available to researchers and members of the public, they will be added to the historical collection of the Mountain View Historical Association (MVHA) and/or the Mountain View Public Library (MVPL) and made available for public use. They may also be shared with other libraries and collections, including those at Stanford University.

## BIO

Michael Kahan is the co-director of the Program on Urban Studies at Stanford University, and a senior lecturer in Sociology. His interest in the historical transformation of urban space has led to publications on topics including the integration of streetcars in the 1850s, sanitation reform in the 1890s, the geography of prostitution in the 1910s, and redevelopment in California in the 1990s. His teaching includes courses on gentrification and on the history of San Francisco. He holds a B.A. from Yale and a Ph.D. from the University of Pennsylvania, both in history. He has been a resident of Mountain View since 1999.

## ABSTRACT



Gloria Sias Perry is the child of Mexican American parents, and born in Palo Alto in 1959. However, she was raised in Mountain View and her family lived in the Washington Street neighborhood until they were forcibly displaced in 1969 to Pettis Street, along with much of their neighborhood, which was a majority-minority community. In this interview, she speaks about how her life changed after her family's displacement, and how Mountain View has changed even today. Her husband, Mark Perry, joins to talk about the culture of the 1960s and its dislike for foreign languages, and why he and Gloria never learned Portuguese and Spanish, their families' native languages.

Date of Interview: June 27, 2022

Interviewer: Michael Kahan

Interviewee: Gloria Sias Perry & Mark Perry

**Michael Kahan:**

Hello hello, my name is Michael Kahan and I'm an interviewer working with the City of Mountain View's Human Relations Commission in partnership with the Mountain View Historical Association on a project entitled "Understanding the History of Housing in Mountain View: Stories of Racism, Antidiscrimination and Movement Toward Inclusion". The purpose of this project is to document the history of discrimination and efforts to fight discrimination in housing in the city of Mountain View, California. Some of the information that we collect will be shared with the public at an event sponsored by the Mountain View Human Relations Commission, scheduled for July 26, 2022. Today is June 29, 2022, and I am interviewing Gloria Sias Perry. Gloria Sias Perry was a child when her family was displaced from their home, along with many of their Mexican American neighbors, by the construction of Shoreline Boulevard and the overpass above Central Expressway and the train tracks in Mountain View. For safety reasons, during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, we are conducting this interview by Zoom teleconferencing technology. I am at my home in Mountain View, California, and Gloria, where are you dialing in from?

**Gloria Sias Perry:** [00:01:41]

I am in Morgan Hill, California.

**Michael Kahan** [00:01:43]

Terrific. And we are also joined by the research assistant on this project and I'll let her introduce herself and say where she is coming from.

**Kamilah Arteaga** [00:01:56]

Hi my name is Kamilah Arteaga, I'm the research assistant for this project, with Michael Kahan and the City of Mountain View for these interviews. I am calling in from Redwood City, but I am a student at Stanford.

**Michael Kahan** [00:02:11]

Terrific, thank you Kamilah. All right, Gloria, if I could just start by asking you to tell me your name, so that we make sure to get that correct.

**Gloria Sias Perry** [00:02:24]

Gloria Sias Perry.

**Michael Kahan** [00:02:26]

Terrific, thank you and you mentioned you live in Morgan Hill?

**Gloria Sias Perry:**

Yes

**Michael Kahan:**

How long did you live in Mountain View?

**Gloria Sias Perry** [00:02:37]

Up until five years ago, so from 1959 to 2017.

**Michael Kahan** [00:02:43]

Okay, so you were born in Mountain View then, in 1959.

**Gloria Sias Perry**

Correct.

**Michael Kahan** [00:02:48]

Can you tell us about the place you grew up in, the house or apartment that you lived in when you were a child.

**Gloria Sias Perry** [00:03:00]

Sure. My home was on Washington Street and we had a four bedroom, two bath home. And behind us, my dad built a rental unit. But the neighborhood was full of my family, so to the right of me was my grandmother, to the left of me was my grandmother's sister, across the street was my grandmother's brother, and then, you know, family and relatives were also on the street. So it was a, a neighborhood as a little kid you could just run around and stay out late like you can't do nowadays. [laughs] So, you know, it was home. A lot of family events happened there and it was just an idyllic childhood, for the first 10 years of my life was there.

**Michael Kahan:**

That sounds fabulous, can you tell us a little more about some of those events, are there some that stand out in your mind that took place in the neighborhood?

**Gloria Sias Perry:**

Just knowing that my grandmother – the property between my dad's house and his mom was actually to the right of me, there was just a hedge between the houses, so I had the freedom to go over there, visit with my grandfather and my grandmother. My grandfather died in 1966, but I still remember him. Mostly relied on the pictures, the family gatherings happened there. We also had a very strong community engagement with my grandmother and her friends. We actually had, I don't know if you've ever heard of Posadas, the reenactment of the Mary and Joseph pilgrimage looking for a place to stay. So the community in our neighborhood would reenact this. And I just remember - I don't speak Spanish - but I remember all of my grandmother's friends and my parents' friends just going around the neighborhood and singing in Spanish, so they could come into the different homes. So that's something that we were never able to recreate when we left. My grandmother had - it's like an altar, but we called it a nacimiento, which was Mary and Joseph, this whole ornate display of the Nativity. And it was almost a competition between her and her sister in law on who had the biggest display. So that I fondly remember. Then I also remember when my grandfather passed away, relatives came in from all over and people are just, you know, paying respect to him. And as I was six years old, having all these people come in and just, you know, the emotions with the family, its just something that stayed with me my whole life and how close to family was then.

**Michael Kahan [00:06:01]**

Were there also weekly events? Those times that you mentioned, are these very special times of the year, or life cycle events. I'm wondering if you could give me a sense of the, I don't know, the kind of day to day or week to week sense of what it was like to be in that neighborhood.

**Gloria Sias Perry [00:06:27]**

I just had the freedom to go out and around, you know. The trust was there, you didn't worry about, like, I would worry now about my niece or nephew going across the street without supervision. If there was a family event, be a birthday party, anniversary, the family would all be together and come over. We continue that tradition at wherever we live, we have a family gathering and it's easily a small gathering of 20 to 25 people. So it's something that I grew up with, and we continue that tradition, even though we're still not at the Washington Street house.

**Michael Kahan [00:07:10]**

And what would the - were there other kids in the neighborhood that you were friends with and what would the kids do for fun?

**Gloria Sias Perry** [00:07:23]

Play out, you know, play street ball, basketball in the backyard, pick flowers, pick weeds, catch ladybugs. I remember that. Stay out late. It was just a really close knit community, where I just could go across the street five houses down and go to my aunt's house, or my parents' good friends were the house next door to my aunt's house and we would just play together. Halloween; there was one lady, her name - she was Portuguese descent actually - and for Halloween she always made popcorn balls. So we always knew to go over to Sandy's house and get popcorn balls.

**Michael Kahan:**

That that kind of prompts an interesting question: what different kinds of backgrounds did people in the neighborhood come from? It sounds like it wasn't all Mexican American. What were the different backgrounds, if you can remember?

**Gloria Sias Perry:** [00:08:28]

I remember Puerto Ricans, because sometimes during the summer time we could hear them having parties behind our house and you could hear the music playing. And I always knew, oh, the Puerto Ricans are having a party. We did have a Portuguese - again I was 10 so I didn't know go out too much - but I know from now that the my parent's friends were Portuguese descent, but the wife was married to a Mexican, so it was mixed. I also had a fun memory - we had little stores that we could walk to. I remember walking to the little store to get the gum balls, not wrapped, but in a container, we just pick them out, and that was just a little neighborhood store that we had access to go to freely without worry of anything.

**Michael Kahan** [00:09:24]

And can you tell me a little more about your own family's background, because I know from speaking to Nick there's an interesting story about how your family came to Mountain View.

**Gloria Sias Perry** [00:09:39]

So, my grandparents on my dad's side came to Mountain View from New Mexico. New Mexico, Santa Rita area. They worked the open pit copper mines. My grandfather was actually responsible for the explosives. You don't go underground to mine copper, they just blast it open and that's why it's an open pit copper mine. They were actually trying to unionize for workers rights, so my grandfather on my Mom's side and my grandfather on my Dad's side, the whole, they all worked at the mines. But because they were trying to unionize, they kicked my grandfather out of his home. The company owned the land, he owned the house. So they had to leave. They fired him and when he left, he migrated down with his wife, my grandmother, but she had a lot of younger siblings that, from my understanding, ended up working the farms from New Mexico through California, and ended up settling in California, because the Supreme Court ruled the firing of my grandfather and others illegal, so they had to give them back his job. They gave them a settlement and it's my understanding that with that settlement my grandparents

purchased a property in Mountain View and the property was pretty large. So then, when my dad decided that he wanted to build a home - he got married in 1949. My grandfather sold part of the land to my dad, which is why my parents live next door to his parents. My dad built the house, he actually worked in construction. The house was built in Redwood City, but as a type of home where you could move it, So he worked on the construction, built the house, bought it, and moved it to the land that he purchased from his dad.

**Michael Kahan** [00:12:13]

I see. I think I follow.

**Gloria Sias Perry** [00:12:17]

So that's why they ended up settling next door to his parents. Then my grandparents had a small house behind them and as relatives came in and out, they would rent to like my aunt or my uncle. And then eventually later on, they rented to friends and family, and so there was always somebody there that we knew in the back house.

**Michael Kahan** [00:12:45]

So your dad was the one who was in the construction business?

**Gloria Sias Perry** [00:12:51]

Yes. My Dad.

**Michael Kahan.**

Okay.

**Michael Kahan** [00:12:53]

Got it. And what did your grandfather do after he was forced to leave the copper mining, did he find a new kind of work?

**Gloria Sias Perry** [00:13:03]

They worked the farm, they worked the fields. They just migrated down and then, when he got called back, I think - you know, my dad was pretty young. So they just were seasonal farm workers, or worked at the cannery. Then of course my dad was in the city, he was in World War Two. That affected, you know... he - not part of the story, but he ended up going back to New Mexico often. Which to me is really bewildering because that's a long drive, and people knew, from the community in New Mexico, where they are from, the community in Mountain View, They knew what was going on in both sides without cell phones, by letter writing. So they kept



in touch with that New Mexico family because my grandma, my mom was in New Mexico. And my dad was in California, since he was six or seven, but yet they met each other on the trips going back and forth, his trips going back to New Mexico. Which is like, no cell phones! Yet through letter writing and just people going back and forth and traveling, they were able to make a connection.

**Michael Kahan** [00:14:27]

Yeah they're strong networks. Tell me - I want to get back to your life as a child in the Washington Street area - where did you go to school?

**Gloria Sias Perry** [00:14:45]

So I went to Slater school<sup>1</sup>; and this is sort of interesting because Slater's pretty close to our house. We had buses of course back then, we had the luxury of having buses. But I did reach out to my siblings to ask them if they remember about the displacement from Washington Street. I didn't hear from my older ones, unfortunately, but my younger sister, who's two years younger than me, she recalled that we were bussed to Huff school<sup>2</sup>. Now Huff is on the other side of El Camino and she's like, "Why did we get bussed to Huff, you know, instead of staying at Slater?" And she was trying to look up information on that, and she didn't find anything. I always understood it's because of the housing for Moffett, it impacted the Slater school enrollment, where they were overcrowded. But for some reason they decided to, our little neighborhood, get bussed to Huff, which is pretty far, it's on the other side of El Camino, I don't know if - you're familiar with Mountain View. So here we are in Washington Street on the other side of Central, getting bussed to Huff. And then at that time Whisman and Mountain View School Districts were separate. So we were in the Mountain View School District, and they didn't send us to a closer school.

**Michael Kahan** [00:16:09]

And do you remember that? And do you remember sort of what it was like trying to adjust to the new school?

**Gloria Sias Perry** [00:16:14]

I was only there for one year, I was in fourth grade. It was different, but I was like "I guess I'm an easygoing". Like I don't remember throwing a tantrum or "No I'm not going", it just happened. And it was hard because I had so many friends at Slater school. But the interesting part is, as I went into middle school, I went to Graham. The people I knew at Slater went to Graham. So I got to reconnect with them. And then, when I was at Huff, when I went to Graham

---

<sup>1</sup> Refers to Kenneth N. Slater Elementary School, in the Mountain View Whisman School District. Was open 1980-2006

<sup>2</sup> Refers to Frank L. Huff Elementary School, in the Mountain View Whisman School District. Was renamed to Amy Imai Elementary in 2021

- because then I left to Castro school<sup>3</sup> when we moved to Pettis<sup>4</sup>. So when we went to Graham I was reconnected with - “I remember you”. So just having that experience and being able to reconnect with the people I had grown up with for, you know, kindergarten through third grade was nice. I mean, to this day, I still know somebody that I was in kindergarten with. We connected back in high school.

**Michael Kahan** [00:17:15]

That's great, I just reconnected with a kindergarten friend myself, so I know that that's a really nice thing to be able to do. Well you've kind of transitioned us into this topic of the displacement of your family from this neighborhood. Do you remember when you first learned that your family was going to have to move?

**Gloria Sias Perry** [00:17:47]

My parents didn't really disrupt us with worry, but I can only imagine how worrisome it was. At the time they had six kids. And my mom was pregnant with her seventh. So he was born in 1969 and that's when we actually physically moved, but up until that time, you know, trying to find my dad and his brother trying to find a home for his mother and his sister, because they live together in a house next door to us. And just trying to... I remember that, like , “Where's grandma going to live?” and “Where are we going to live?”, where I remember my parents looking for a home. And they wanted to stay - I always thought it was sort of funny - they wanted to stay in Mountain View, that was critical to them, because of the connections. We were on the other side of Central Expressway so my mom wanted to get to the other side of the tracks. So the property they ended up buying is on the other side of the tracks, but then she regretted not being on the other side of El Camino when they were looking for homes back then, because they could have found a home. But it was really hard for them, and when my mom - she ended up getting dementia before she passed away six years ago. But the one thing that really hurt her was that my dad had planted cherry trees on our property. And I remember climbing the trees, picking the cherries, and then we had apricot and kumquats and always, you know, going to the trees and and picking our fruit. To the day she died she's like “I used to have cherry trees”. And it's something that you know it's just, it hurt her to leave her - not the house because we took the house with us, but the neighborhood.

**Michael Kahan** [00:19:40]

That's very powerful. That's very vivid. Can you say more about moving the house, I think that is kind of a unique aspect of this story.

**Gloria Sias Perry** [00:19:56]

So Nick knows the logistics more because of his background - Nick's my son in the urban

---

<sup>3</sup> Refers to Mariano Castro Elementary School, in the Mountain View Whisman School District

<sup>4</sup> Pedas Street, Mountain View

planning. But when they were -, my parents were searching and searching for a place for house, where it was going to be. When they didn't find a place my dad knew that it was an option to move the house, because he had had it moved when it was built to that property. So he decided - he actually got an exemption from the city of Mountain View to put the house on its current address on Pettis avenue, because the lot did not fit the house size, the land to property ratio. So he ended up negotiating to buy a piece of property in Mountain View and placed our home - and he also had built a rental home, I'd say 10 years before - he moved both homes to the small piece of property and the distance between the two homes is a two car garage. So both homes were moved. I vividly remember trying to follow my sister, who was trying to drive a stick shift VW with our belongings and getting stuck on the railroad tracks because we're going around. But then I also remember that the houses when they were being moved – and no one took pictures, no one videoed which is like, ugh! I remember that, because a house had a bedroom, it wouldn't fit down the street, so it's actually in addition to the back of the house my dad had made to fit all us kids - they had to chop it off, and then they lifted up the house. And it came in two pieces. So I remember... the other interesting thing is that we had no place to live, when our house was getting ready to move. So my grandmother -who lived next door to us, she had a three bedroom home - we all six of us - no, 7, 8, 9 - of us moved into this three bedroom home that my grandmother had moved out of. I recall looking out the window and just seeing my home being lifted up and construction going on, and our stuff is in there, but it wasn't in there. As all this is going on there's a lot of vandalism going on in this neighborhood, because people were moving and just the city had bought the houses. But I just remember the home going down the street, seeing the bedroom left, and they came back to get the bedroom and that going down the street and they put it back together again. [Laughs].

**Michael Kahan** [00:22:49]

And do you remember how, did all this feel to you, how did you process all of this when you're you know, a 10 year old child?

**Gloria Sias Perry** [00:22:58]

It was an adventure. I think I was more preoccupied with my mom having a baby, at the time. 10 year old little girl going to have a new little sibling. He was born in May and we actually moved into the back house in July. So, in the back house, the rental home only had two bedrooms. So all nine of us in a two bedroom house, until the front house - my dad had it remodeled, he added another new kitchen and other things to it before we could move into it. So it was, like, exciting. Looking back, though, I realize it was such a disruption to the fabric of our family, of what was there when... it was like a little bomb just dropped in in and everybody had to disperse. And even though we still got together, it just wasn't quite the same, you know? My uncle had to move - my uncle stayed in Mountain View, he moved off Shoreline. My grandmother bought a house off Shoreline but it just wasn't the same feeling. My other aunt bought a home in Santa Clara. And then, I wasn't really close to the other people that lived to the right of me past my grandmother's house, that's why I was trying to ask my oldest sister, but she's got dementia issues right now, and just could not remember.

**Michael Kahan** [00:24:37]

Do you recall any conversations about this at the time with your parents, either you talking about it with your parents or maybe hearing the grown ups talk about it with each other? Or was it just something people didn't didn't really discuss?

**Gloria Sias Perry** [00:24:58]

The only thing is, afterwards, my dad felt like he was taken advantage of; after all the improvements he made into the property, that he didn't get the fair market value for it, of what you know... it's like, I guess if your house caught on fire insurance going to pay you this much, but it's really not going to get the replacement of everything you lost. So that set him back. He always felt like he was never made whole again with the move, and the money it took to do that. We also had construction problems with the builder and the mover, where they did things wrong, they damaged the house. There was something with the contract that they weren't going to do any more work unless my dad paid them and he said I'm not going to pay you because you did this wrong. So that caused a lot of disruption and it really bothered him. He actually used to work for the CEO of TransAmerica and during this time, when they had payment issues and construction issues, he got his boss involved and let his boss know what was going on. I remember the boss said, I was told the boss said, "Simon don't worry about this". He got the company lawyers to come and look at the house. I remember these men with briefcases - because I was like 10 - coming to inspect the property, because at the time, we lived in the back house. He did what needed to be done for my dad to make sure that things are made right in the house, because they dropped the house. They dropped the back house and it caused issues with the foundation and stuff. So I remember that, that part of it was hard for him. Then losing the property, the size that we had, always bothered him. Because he was forced - he felt he didn't have the time, his wife was having a baby, six kids. Finally found the property, didn't have a lot of time to get everything done, the house moved, help his mother move. Getting everything done was really... I think it had to be really hard for him. I can't, I couldn't imagine doing that right now.

**Michael Kahan** [00:27:22]

Yeah, nor can I.

**Gloria Sias Perry:**

[Laughs]

**Michael Kahan:**

Do you think that your parents felt, or that the adults in the community felt that they were treated this way because they were Mexican American?

**Gloria Sias Perry** [00:27:44]

I think so, yes, and I think so... I don't know if it'd be Mexican American, per se, or a community that didn't know how to raise their voice and make a difference. And that could be... to me that could be any ethnicity, you just weren't empowered to have your voice heard. So I think that's a big part of it. And it made me think about something that happened, I'd say, 20 years ago. They were going to close Castro school. And that was a school that I went to, it was walking distance from the Pettis Street house. When they decided that, "Well we're going to close Castro school", it brought back the memories of what happened to our community. My family got together and we just said, this is wrong, these people don't have a voice. A lot of the people that went there were, you know, non-English speaking people. They were going to have to be bussed, and it was ridiculous what they were forcing them to do, so we got together as a community and a strong Mexican American community got people together and we protested. I don't think we would have protested if - we probably would have, but it made the protests and made me get involved and my kids get involved, and my whole family get involved, because of what happened to us on Washington Street. So we stopped the closure. I mean this is a funny story, but I don't drive on freeways, I never - I do now, [but] I didn't have to drive on freeways. And my son, my younger son was at Davis, I think Nick was still at Cal. When we started this vigil to save Castro School, we actually went from Mountain View to Davis, because my son wanted to be there as part of the overnight protest. We'd pick him up to bring him back so he could be a part of the protests. It's the first time I drove on a freeway. [Laughs]. That far. I was a sheltered child.

**Michael Kahan** [00:29:48]

So it was an important event.

**Gloria Sias Perry:**

It was an important event. &273040031540&

I think it's because of that displacement we had in the neighborhood that caused us, a lot of people in my family to say "This isn't going to happen again".

**Michael Kahan** [00:30:06]

Did you also see that connection with the closing of Mountain View High school, because I know you were a student. If I'm not mistaken, you were a student when Mountain View High was closed as well, is that right?

**Gloria Sias Perry** [00:30:21]

Yup, we always felt that Mountain High School was closed because we were too diverse. It's like, when I think of Mountain View in my experience and growing up in Mountain View, I didn't look at my friends as a race or an ethnicity, I looked at my friends by who they were. It could be Betty, it could be Cheryl; I didn't say oh you're Chinese or you're Japanese. You are my friend. That's how I tend to look at people. I never looked at us as being diverse. It's just how it was. Looking back... Mountain View also had a reputation of being the tough school. We're

trying to figure out where that came from, but we don't know. When you look at the demographics of ethnicities between Los Altos back then, and, Awalt in Mountain View. Again, people did try to protest but it wasn't listened to. I think money was the biggest issue there and selling the land. And where it was. That was really upsetting, only because now when you think of the kids having to travel, there is really no high school in Mountain View. Except St Francis. Because the other schools are on the border of Los Altos. So if you live on 101 you're commuting all the way to Mountain View - Awalt. Which does not make sense for a community as rich as Mountain View is. To have a high school that far away.

**Michael Kahan** [00:32:02]

Yeah. So when you had to leave the house on Washington, you ended up on Pettis Avenue. You've mentioned that the community was now very dispersed, can you describe what was life like on Pettis? How was it different from your life when you lived on Washington?

**Gloria Sias Perry** [00:32:27]

I didn't have my family around me, and I mean, we had neighbors that we were close with, and we still call them neighbors but it's not that same community that we had on Washington Street. I gave you, when you first spoke, I gave you an example of, you know, security questions, "Where did you grow up on?" And for years I would put Washington Street. And then, as I got older I realized: why am I still putting Washington Street? I was only there for 10 years? I spent more time on Pettis than I did on Washington street, but that's how ingrained it was in me, that that was home. And I mean there's still dreams. I used to have dreams - not as much as my sister did - of trying to go back to that home and I'm like: but I'm still in the home, because the home came with us. So where are you going back to? I figured that would happen to anybody that moved from one place to another that was, you know, special for them. And the other thing that I thought about, because I know it came up in another conversation with my husband. My parents were landlords too, we had that rental home behind us; and it just occurred to me like two weeks ago we rented to a black family I never looked at them as being Black but I remember the Abels, they were Black. I'm trying to remember the other people that lived behind my family's house, but there was no looking at your background. It's like, "could you afford to pay the rent", I think, was more important than anything. My husband's family owned property on San Luis Avenue, they had like 8, 9, 10 units and they rented it to everybody, you know, so as long as you could show you know your income verification stuff; it really didn't make a difference to them.

**Michael Kahan** [00:34:31]

You'd mentioned that that second house often had some members of your family living in it back, at least, when you lived on Washington Street. Was that also true when you moved to Pettis? Did you still have your family in the main house and then some relatives living in the second house?

**Gloria Sias Perry** [00:34:50]

So correction: my grandmother had a rental house behind her house.

**Michael Kahan:**

She had the second house, sorry.

**Gloria Sias Perry:**

And that's where I remember relatives being there. When my aunt's, my mother's younger sisters, moved to California from New Mexico, they lived in my grandmother's back house when I was a baby. My dad's rental house, he did not want to rent to relatives. He had renters. And then coincidentally, when he moved the home to Pettis, at that point in time, my mother's sister became a renter in that house. Initially it was rented to just non-relatives, and then my mother's sisters moved into the home. And then, coincidentally when Mark and I, my husband, had a family, we lived in Santa Clara for two years after we got married, we've been married 42 years. We lived in Santa Clara. And when I had Nick, we brought him back to Mountain View for my mom to take care of them, because I worked. And then, like a year after he was born, my dad let us rent the back house. My aunt bought a house in San Jose, so Nick, Chris, Mark, and I, for the majority of our lives, lived on the rental house that has a different street address - it's Dana, because it's on the corner of Pettis and Dana. So the rental house is Dana and the front house is Pettis. So Nick pretty much grew up on the Dana street house - which is on Pettis, if that makes sense. [Laughs] So in a way we sort of recreated in that little duplex what I had grown up with, with my kids growing up next to their grandparents.

**Michael Kahan [00:36:44]**

How do you think this experience of being displaced affected your... How did it affect you afterwards, I guess. Let's just put it that way. In the future, you grew up... or even, as you look back today, what impact do you think that has had on you?

**Gloria Sias Perry [00:37:13]**

Thinking about that, the fact that my parents decided to stay in Mountain View didn't impact as much as it could have... moving to another...you know, I still had my same friends like when I went to Mountain View High School. I had that connection with the people I went to at Slater and had in Castro. So, if I had moved to another city like Sunnyvale it would have been totally disruptive. But because of that, them making that decision to stay in Mountain View, because that was their home, made it my home. So ... I thank them for that, because it just kept that continuity of being in Mountain View. And on the flip side, Mountain View has changed so much when we made that decision to move to Morgan Hill. First of all there's a walkability factor that Nick ingrained in me, you have to be a place where you can walk to places. So where I live, you know, we can walk to downtown. What I miss about Mountain View, is that cohesiveness means centrally located. It's changed so much with the technology of what it used to be, that I don't miss the place it is now. None of my family's there, but I miss how simple it is

to getting anywhere you need to go. It's like, "Oh, I can go to either Stanford to go shopping or I can go to Sunnyvale", that used to be there, but I just could go in any direction for 20 minutes. Now when I have to go somewhere here, I have to constantly think about "Where am I gonna go to make my errands?" It was home. It was home to me. But it's not like my home on Washington street, even though the house is still on Pettis, it's not that same home because the fabric of my family's not there.

**Michael Kahan** [00:39:16]

Can you say a little more about how you think, how Mountain View has changed. What do you think is different about the city today from the city you knew in the 1960s and 70s?

**Gloria Sias Perry** [00:39:32]

The one thing that changed when I used to walk downtown, I used to know people. We used to go to the Mountain View Art and Wine Festival, and I used to bump into people I knew and say hi. Everyone when you walk down Castro street - and I do it now - is like this [puts phone in front of their face]. They're on their phone, they don't look up, they don't say hi. When we moved to Morgan Hill - I tell people that Morgan Hill reminds me of what Mountain View used to be. I can tell you that the longtime residents of Morgan Hill don't like us all being here. But people will walk by and say hi to you. They'll look at you and smile. And I just didn't find that anymore in Mountain View, with the change of the technology and everyone coming in. It seems like a place where you are for a little while, but you're not going to stay there long enough. Like it's a stepping stone to go somewhere else.

**Michael Kahan** [00:40:33]

Do you have thoughts about what people can do to make Mountain View a more inviting or inclusive community?

**Gloria Sias Perry** [00:40:46]

I think the hardest thing is economics and the price of housing. I mean you got the haves and have nots. You keep on hearing that the middle class is gone. People can't afford to buy. And they can't afford to stay. So that has impacted Mountain View and a lot of cities in that aspect. The weird thing is when we went back to downtown a month or two ago, the downtown doesn't seem as upkept as it should be, I don't know if it's because of COVID and all the temporary restaurants that they do. But, it just feels different. Like, I can go to Ava's, I like Juan, I love Juan. Going into Ava's and talking to him, that gives you the old town feeling, but it's not there. It's hard, I don't go there often enough anymore.

**Michael Kahan** [00:41:44]

Are there, I guess, are there other institutions... you know we didn't talk so much about, I don't know, churches, clubs, stores, that made Mountain View home for you or your family when you



were growing up here.

**Gloria Sias Perry [00:42:05]**

A lot of that's Nick probably told you the story that when my parents and grandparents settled into Mountain View my grandmother was involved in forming a social club, called the Club Estrella, she was one of the founding members. They also started for the Mexican American community a federal Credit Union. And my dad was really involved in that, and my uncle and my family, they were board members. It was brought about through the priests at the Catholic Church. So it was Father McDonalld who was a primary person that helped the community back in the 1940s, 1950s, form these social clubs to benefit the community. So when our little neighborhood was sort of exploded it just sort of broke up the fabric of that. The credit union probably disbanded, I'd say, 10 or 15 years ago. The club is still going on, but they're having trouble getting new people into it, you know, the members that carried on, they're dead, the next generations going, and now it's like my generation that's keeping that going. But it doesn't feel the same to me, I never joined it myself, I don't speak Spanish, which is part of the reason. But those are part of the community back when, prior to me being born and growing up. That was the community that is gone.

**Michael Kahan [00:43:47]**

Are there other people you think we should talk to about this? About the Washington Street neighborhood and what happened there.

**Gloria Sias Perry [00:43:58]**

I was trying to uh ... I don't know who lives there now. A lot of the neighbors I had, they were my parent's friends and they passed away, so I'm not sure who's there. I was trying to ask my siblings and I didn't hear back from them. Because my sister, brother who are like six, seven years older than me, they were in their teenage years when that happened. My one sister that I see on a weekly basis, she has a different perspective on it, because she wasn't sent to the Mountain View schools, she was sent to Palo Alto school because she's hearing impaired so she doesn't have that same feeling about the high schools and the community, because she was bussed out and had to come back in. She even told me, she said "Well, I'm having my 50th reunion, I don't know anybody there I'm not going. I'm like okay! [Laughs] But I still stay in contact with my high school friends, you know I married my high school sweetheart so I stay in contact with one of them. But I was trying to think about it, and I was trying and recalled that our renter, and my sister was in contact with her, the Abels, was black. And I was like, well what brought them to Mountain View? And were they part of the base, because we had talked about that. But she didn't remember. It's not like I'm going to reach out and say "Hey, you're Black what's your...", it didn't feel right. What brought your parents to Mountain View? She thinks they moved to Fremont after they left Mountain View, because they were displaced too. Because you know my dad had to move the houses and everyone was evicted. That was scary, that part. I remember people couldn't, buyers and houses, because everybody had moved out.

**Michael Kahan** [00:45:59]

I'm sure Nick has already asked you this, but do you have any materials, any, I don't know, newspaper clippings or old scrapbooks or things that remain from that period?

**Gloria Sias Perry** [00:46:20]

Nick has images of the pictures because of his "Now and Then" books that he's done, so if he had any those that would be them. Interestingly enough a lot of the pictures my grandmother has are school pictures. What I found really interesting is that I have pictures of my great grandfather in the mining town with my grandmother and her siblings. So looking at these pictures they must have had a photographer come around often to take a lot of these pictures of them. Because you're talking about the 1900's in New Mexico taking these pictures? But they didn't take as many pictures of the neighborhood, the events that happened. So Nick had those pictures, like of the parade, the Club Estrella parade that we would have.

**Michael Kahan** [00:47:20]

Okay, thank you. Let me turn to Kamilah and see if she has any questions that she'd like to ask you herself.

**Kamilah Arteaga** [00:47:35]

I think I'm just little more curious about how not speaking Spanish, like, how did that play a role with your connection with your community? Less your family because I'm sure you were able to communicate with your grandparents and you had a good relationship with them. But maybe, like, with other things like Club Estrella, because maybe it's kind of difficult because you don't speak Spanish well and don't really know the new people there. But maybe when you went to high school, was there ever like a disconnect between others in your area or did everybody else also not speak Spanish?

**Gloria Sias Perry** [00:48:13]

I think a part of that is when my parents, they went to school in New Mexico and they had the white section and the brown section, and they were not allowed to speak Spanish in school. It's generational. My parents were born in the US, and then they had their kids, so they made a conscious decision after my oldest sister started school - she was born in 1949. When she started kindergarten, they only spoke English to us. They only spoke Spanish to themselves when they didn't want us to understand. And the same thing happened to my husband's family, he's Portuguese descent, his grandparents only spoke Portuguese, but when his parents had kids, they only spoke English to the kids. So, it was done to help us not have problems when we went to school because everybody was English speaking. So everybody, all my friends, even though they're different nationalities and ethnicities, English was our primary language, so I think it's a generational thing. A lot of people - I used to work at Sears on San Antonio Road and that people would say "What's wrong with you how come you don't speak Spanish, you think you're too good?" I'm like, no, we weren't raised - I wish I spoke Spanish, I probably could've tried to -

I mean I took Spanish in high school, but it didn't stick, probably because when I tried to speak my parents corrected me all the time. But my oldest sister spoke Spanish and she picked it up again because she was a school trustee and she learned how to speak it again. I can understand it, so I can understand - that's my husband - [husband enters room] I can understand my grandmother. But I never spoke to her in Spanish, I spoke English, so again, I think it's because of how my parents grew up.

**Mark Perry** [00:50:18]

I would like to inject in that one because, in that era you weren't encouraged to speak another language. You weren't encouraged to teach your kids another language. It was the melting pot theory, you're supposed to assimilate to the United States and they discouraged - so almost anybody my age that grew up with parents that spoke another language, don't speak that language. It was a negative, it was to assimilate. And it's something sometimes I wish other people...like the same thing, there's all kinds of words or, you know, "being brown on the outside white on the inside" - not so complimentary. Because you don't speak Spanish. And what they don't understand is if, like let's say Trump really became President again. He wouldn't encourage anybody to speak any other language, English, we'd go back, we're stepping back now. And then you were highly discouraged to speak a second language, it was a negative. If you spoke more than one language it was a negative, it was English only. And that was encouraged throughout the country. The only problem was, you know, Portuguese, some are fairer skinned, so we could assimilate better, but if you were darker skinned, you can't really assimilate. But they thought, okay, you speak English only. And her parents [signaling to Gloria], I mean, they had to go to school, they would get trouble. Simon said her husband said they'd get wacked on the wrist if they spoke English in class.

**Gloria Sias Perry:**

No, spoke Spanish.

**Mark Perry:**

I mean, spoke Spanish. So when they came - and same thing with my parents, you didn't even try to teach your kids a second language, it was just, you know... Sometimes I wish...I think a lot of people don't realize, because I worked with a lot of Latinos, and they would always ask "How come your wife doesn't speak Spanish?" And I have to explain that to them. There's kind of the idea that you're a snob because you don't speak Spanish; you didn't learn it, why didn't you. But they don't realize what it was like then, you weren't encouraged. Her father would have to go to a movie theater in New Mexico: Mexicans sat on one side, white people sat on the other. A good story that he told about that is -

**Gloria Sias Perry** [00:52:48]

He almost got arrested for sitting on the wrong side of the theater in Santa Rita. His friend was a police officer and told them, you know your side, you're in the wrong area and it's like, "okay",

and he went back to the other area. I mean it was very... I want to say, like it was Black and white, it was Brown and white in New Mexico. There's a study, I read a paper that somebody was doing a study about the prejudice against brown people in this region of New Mexico, and that's where my parents are from.

**Mark Perry** [00:53:22]

You'd think with the name New Mexico, Mexicans would be more accepted. [Both laugh] The whole town, the town disappeared, there was a Mexican town. And the mine got bigger-

**Gloria Sias Perry** [00:53:40]

I think I heard another reason that my parents didn't speak Spanish to us because my older sister was hearing impaired that would make it harder for her to speak the two languages and understand it.

**Mark Perry:**

But anybody that grew up in the 60s that grew up with their parents speaking a different language. No one's going to be speaking that language.

**Gloria Sias Perry:**

I think the difference is where your parents are born at. So now, I think if my parents would have been born in Mexico and had me they probably would have been speaking Spanish to me. Versus them being born here, being raised here and then raising their kids.

**Mark Perry:**

But I think the main thing it wasn't encouraged

**Gloria Sias Perry:**

Yeah.

**Mark Perry:**

It was frowned upon. Discouraged.

**Gloria Sias Perry:**

Did that answer your question Kamilah?

**Kamilah Arteaga [00:54:30]**

Yes, definitely.

**Mark Perry:**

I'm sorry to inject.

**Kamilah Arteaga:**

No, no, no, thank you!

**Mark Perry [00:54:33]**

I grew up with my parents speaking Portuguese only when - same thing - when they didn't want to let us know what they were talking about. My grandma tried to teach us Portuguese, but my parents didn't. I think that's the way it was then. You'd probably, if you talk to anybody that's around 60-65 and they grew up with their parents speaking different language, I'd say 95% of them don't speak anything of that language. That's the way society was and that's what they were trying to do. They didn't want you speaking a second language. Our country is the only country where you're frowned upon if you can speak more than one language. It's changing a little bit, but things are going back the other way around.

**Gloria Sias Perry:**

Arrogant, Americans.

**Mark Perry:**

And then one thing - Mountain View High, that was very special to me. You know I have friends, it was kind of, sometimes I think it was kind of like Hawaii in a way, with all the different cultures and such and we got along real good. We were aware of the different nationalities and you would poke fun of each other sometimes. I think because we were working class, where the other schools weren't, and so you're all working class, you were all the same income.

**Gloria Sias Perry:**

Social-economics have a big [inaudible].

**Mark Perry:**

-part of why we got along. But with Mountain View High disappearing - you're asking what Mountain View is like. Well, the Mountain View High used to have parades downtown, you

used to have your marching band. I was surprised when my niece went to Mountain View High to find out that it had a band of more than 300 people. When I went to Mountain View High we had a band of 35, 40, 60 all together with drill team, but a small band. And people that live in Mountain View don't even know that Mountain View High has a band. It's kind of like, what happened, you know. And so that's that's one thing I'd like to see is... like we brought Mountain View.

**Gloria Sias Perry** [00:56:38]

Well Michael, you were asking what brings the community together, I think what brings a community together is a high school where they come together. And that can't happen in Mountain View because it's so dispersed.

**Mark Perry** [00:56:50]

It's like we have two schools in Los Altos.

**Gloria Sias Perry:**

That's every [inaudible]

**Mark Perry:**

She's right. And so I understand that [inaudible] afford the downtown Los Altos, but it doesn't do anything in Mountain View which is really strange, you know. So that's kind of something that I'd like to see Mountain View High be more involved in the city, they have a great choir. My nephew was in that and I didn't even realize that.

**Gloria Sias Perry** [00:57:24]

I think the high school makes a sense of community without having a central anchor. There's nothing - like in downtown Mountain View where people can come together. I think that that's sort of missing.

**Mark Perry** [00:57:33]

In Mountain View High, it was like we had like Friday nights. We had Friday night lights before anybody else did. And even if you didn't go to high school, that was a big event, to go to the football games. Then the lights came down and we didn't question that either. The thing everybody, used to say is it's not earthquake safe, so they took down the lights. Now I kind of think back... Maybe they didn't want us gathering together on Friday nights, I don't know. Then school gets knocked down and you're thinking maybe they didn't want a school so diverse, I'm not sure, you know. The same thing - they told us the school, or everybody thought the school

was not earthquake safe, and that wasn't why the school got knocked down. The funny part is my wife and I talk about it, we kind of just, in those days just accepted it. Okay, you know, the man says, they say the school needs to be knocked down, what can we do.

**Gloria Sias Perry:**

There was some protest.

**Mark Perry:**

Not very much, not very much, not as much you think there were. There was a lot of hurt feelings. But it was kind of accepted because we thought - I don't know if that was the excuse that they'd like to send out there, but we thought it wasn't earthquakes.

**Gloria Sias Perry [00:58:48]**

There's controversy there because even the board of trustees was a Latina woman and she firmly believed that herself, we talked about. She does

**Mark Perry [00:58:55]**

Still, some people still think that. It was old school. But the funny part is the ones that, when they tried to knock it down, the - what's it called, the big ball that knocks it down - it just bounced off. The school stayed up. They had a hard time knocking it down. Everybody felt like "Yeah Mountain View High stayed, it tried, it gave it a stand, man, it's trying to stay up there". It made people think, "that's pretty strong man. Not earthquake safe, what are they talking about? That things pretty tough."

**Gloria Sias Perry:**

Mark.

**Mark Perry:**

But anyway, that's it. I'll let you go.

**Michael Kahan [00:59:33]**

Before you go, I think I need to get your name, so if we transcribe it so we can get your name right. What's your name?

**Mark Perry [00:59:43]**

Mark Perry.

**Michael Kahan** [00:59:45]

Thank you so much, Mark. It's really nice to meet you.

**Mark Perry** [00:59:49]

I really feel strongly about why I don't speak Portuguese and it upsets me. It was the way it was, it was, you know, very discouraged, speaking a second language. Which now it's great, my nephews and nieces, they're teaching their kids both. The ones that can do it, so that's cool.

**Gloria Sias Perry:**

Great nieces and nephews.

**Kamilah Arteaga** [01:01:17}

Thank you so much. Did you say his name was Mike or Mark?

**Gloria Sias Perry** [01:00:18]

Mark, M-A-R-K. Sorry.

**Kamilah Arteaga** [01:00:20]

No you're good, I just want to make sure for the record.

**Michael kahan** [01:00:25]

Kamilah did you have any other questions we didn't talk about?

**Kamilah Arteaga** [01:00:30]

I think just a few details. I just want to make sure the dates, just to make sure, So can you say again what exact year you guys had to move out, or the month if you remember.

**Gloria Sias Perry** [01:00:49]

I recall moving - it must be July 1969. I just remember the Fourth of July.

**Kamilah Arteaga** [01:00:56]

Okay, I guess, this is a little bit less relevant, but you mentioned that your grandfather died



before you moved or after you moved?

**Gloria Sias Perry** [01:01:09]

My grandfather died in 1966.

**Kamilah Arteaga** [01:01:22]

Okay. I think that's it. Yes. Thank you so much.

**Michael Kahan** [01:01:25]

Thank you, thank you Kamilah for keeping us accurate. That's really, that is super important. Well Gloria, is there anything that you would like to add that we haven't spoken about?

**Gloria Sias Perry** [01:01:39]

No it's just there's just so much. Different communities in Mountain View that have settled and I think in any community people will come to where - you want to be by somebody that came from another area and you start settling. And I think that's what happened in my neighborhood. My grandfather came from New Mexico and everybody that he knew and had to move out too, they settled around in Mountain View because of that.

**Michael Kahan** [01:02:12]

Thank you, thank you so much for your time. I do, I have a few demographic questions if I could just conclude with. What would you say is your racial or ethnic identity?

**Gloria Sias Perry** [01:02:34]

I always have a hard time with that because I me. You're white, but then, of Mexican descent, is what I would say. You hear Latinx now and Chicano, I'm like, I'm me. Mexican descent.

**Michael Kahan** [01:02:54]

That's perfectly fine, Thank you. And what would you say is your gender?

**Gloria Sias Perry:**

Female

**Michael Kahan :**

And do you mind telling us your age?

**Gloria Sias Perry** [01:03:06]

63. I said I was born in '59.

**Michael Kahan** [01:03:10]

Born in '59, alright, that's fair enough.

**Michael Kahan** [01:03:13]

Thank you, thank you so much for taking the time to speak with us today, we greatly appreciate it. This will be shared with the city with the History Center. I would be delighted if you're able to join us on July 26 for this event, which will be at the community Center in Rengstorff Park. It'll be starting at 6:30 I believe, on July 26.

**Gloria Sias Perry** [01:03:51]

I've never been there. I think they rebuilt that too

**Michael Kahan** [01:03:53]

Yes, it's very pretty. I got my COVID shot there. That's the only time I've been so far. But they did a very nice job with it, it looks great.

**Gloria Sias Perry** [01:04:03]

Thank you, Michael, you guys have a good evening.

**Michael Kahan** [01:04:05]

Yeah you take care Gloria, have a great evening yourself.

**Kamilah Arteaga:**

Thank you so much Gloria.