



1980-09-03

Bossana, Maria Interview

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Stockton Immigrant Women Oral History Collection

by Sally Miller

BOSSANA, MARIA (Argentinean)

September 3, 1980

Interviewed by Abby Hicks

Transcribed by Tien Ho

[Digital Dub Part 1]

Start of Tape One

Start of Side A

HICKS: I'll get started about your early life and that's before you came to this country. Place of birth is?

BOSSANA: My [birthplace] is Las Perdices, [Provincia] Córdoba, Argentina.

HICKS: How long did you live there?

BOSSANA: In this country is 23 years, I live here.

HICKS: No, I meant to say how long did you live in the country, your country back at home?

BOSSANA: Oh, 37 years.

HICKS: Was it in the country or in the city?

BOSSANA: It's a small town.

HICKS: And what is your birthdate?

BOSSANA: My birthday is November 8th, 1923

HICKS: When did you come to the United States?

BOSSANA: I came in 1957.

HICKS: And directly or by [visa] or...?

BOSSANA: Well we came in this country for just a visit, for two years. With green card, for the visa and everything, you know. But we came just for two years.

HICKS: And how old were you at that time?

BOSSANA: Thirty-seven years old.

HICKS: How many brothers and sisters did you have?

BOSSANA: I have two brothers.

HICKS: That was when you [arrived], and then afterwards?

BOSSANA: It was the same.

HICKS: Did your immediate family all arrive together?

BOSSANA: Yes. My husband and I and two children.

HICKS: How many [persons] arrived with you?

BOSSANA: Four.

HICKS: Did you all live together when you got here?

BOSSANA: Mhmm.

HICKS: Did you ever go to school?

BOSSANA: I went a couple years. A couple years just a couple months each year. Just a few months every year you know? Three or four months every year. Maybe I stop, and next year I [and]. But just two or three years, that's all.

HICKS: What kind of school was that?

BOSSANA: It was in Stockton [High] in Harding Way and San Joaquin.

HICKS: How much did you go in the old country?

BOSSANA: In the other country I went until sixth grade.

HICKS: How about in the US? How many?

BOSSANA: [No I don't even know] How many I went here? Maybe I went two years altogether, that's all.

HICKS: What kind of classes did you take?

BOSSANA: Just English to learn a little bit of English, but it was very hard for me.

HICKS: Did you have anything else that helped you out besides [the high school]?

BOSSANA: No.

HICKS: How about your parents' educational background?

BOSSANA: Very very poor. My father just I think maybe second grade [or something like that], and my mother the same.

HICKS: Your parents' religion?

BOSSANA: They was Catholic. Yeah.

HICKS: How about yourself?

BOSSANA: When I married my husband he was [], I took him [].

HICKS: Have your religious views changed since then?

BOSSANA: No.

HICKS: Did your mother work outside of home?

BOSSANA: No.

HICKS: How about when you were in the United States? Did your mother work?

BOSSANA: Well my mother, she came to help me [when I have the second] family in this country. She not work.

HICKS: Okay, but she came.

BOSSANA: She came yes, but she came in 1960. Not when I came.

HICKS: Right, and she just helped [around with things]. How did you feel about your mother helping you around here?

BOSSANA: Oh I was happy [for this] because there was [no] way I could do my job to [help].

HICKS: [What kind of things] helped you adjust to this adjusting to your mother helping you out?

BOSSANA: Well it was okay because she used to help me in my country over there too.

HICKS: How did you feel when you were leaving the old country?

BOSSANA: How I feel when I lived in the old country?

HICKS: When you were a baby.

BOSSANA: Oh, I was very sad because when you change a new country it's very hard because I came here I [can not] speak one word of English. Nothing. So it was very hard for me for the first couple of years.

HICKS: What helped you [the most] to overcome [that].

BOSSANA: To help me for?

HICKS: What helped you? Did your feelings change when you got here?

BOSSANA: [I feel] change, you say?

HICKS: Yeah. You said you felt terrible and...

BOSSANA: For the first [few] years.

HICKS: Did you feelings change once you got here? [Feeling bad]

BOSSANA: When I feel bad and sad for the first couple of years because I left my family over there, you know? After came and adjusted, and I like it.

HICKS: What helped you most adjusting to...

BOSSANA: Because I make lotta friends in my business. I communicated with a lot of persons, you know?

HICKS: Did they help you with your English?

BOSSANA: Yeah, [a little bit]. Oh yeah, a lot of people they help me [].

HICKS: Could you say anything that really helped you the most [] trying to [break through] [] once you got here?

BOSSANA: I don't know. I cannot say what the most [] [good change].

HICKS: So you say a lot of friends and [colleagues]?

BOSSANA: Yeah, [this is true].

HICKS: Did your husband was he able to speak English?

BOSSANA: No [worse than me]. He was worse than me [for] English. He can write it, and he can read it better than me, but he cannot [speak it].

HICKS: So it's just time?

BOSSANA: Yes. The time we start to adjust to [talking and everything]. Really right now I cannot write it really well neither. I can just write a few words, but not make a big [sentence] or []. I cannot do it.

HICKS: But you [picked up] English really well.

BOSSANA: Yeah, not bad. [Compare] really in so many years in this country, really I need to do it better, but I am too busy with my job.

HICKS: What is your job?

BOSSANA: I am dress designer. I [just make it] and, now [10 years] I start to make wedding cakes. [This] is a beautiful job. I love it.

HICKS: [Yeah but] That's a lot of work.

BOSSANA: Oh, you could say [that].

HICKS: I could imagine. What did you like most about your life in your old country?

BOSSANA: What do I like more over there?

HICKS: Yeah, about your life?

BOSSANA: I like it because, one thing, I can understand everybody to speak and everything. I was I have my own school teach sewing and I enjoy it.

HICKS: Where was that?

BOSSANA: In Argentina.

HICKS: I mean was it like here in high school or junior high or [just private]...?

BOSSANA: Oh no, I [have] my own school. It was a private school.

HICKS: Was there anything about the old country you didn't like?

BOSSANA: What I don't like in the old country. Where I used to live [no] is because we don't have too much [comfort] in the houses you know? We didn't have too much air conditioner or heating in the winter time or refrigerator or washing machine. Here, in every place when I came in any house you would find everything. Washer and dryer and this and that. Over there, no. Over there it was a [little bit] more hard you know?

HICKS: I guess it's [mostly] when you live out [in a rural area].

BOSSANA: In a small town [you imagine], and the transportation too. We have a car, but before we didn't use to have a car so we need to take the bus or train or in the town we just walking and walking and walking.

HICKS: Were you ever able to do anything about it?

BOSSANA: No, no. It was very difficult to do all this.

HICKS: What kind of things did you expect to find in the United States?

BOSSANA: The reason we came in this country was because we wanted our two children, [we used to have kids], they learn and speak and write in very professional English. [You know and the idea] it was [going back] to our country. But after, I like it so much I don't want to go back. I don't want to go back anymore. This is the [really good thing].

HICKS: So it was for your children.

BOSSANA: Yeah, we came for our children. For me now because I have my good business and it was fine. I was very good adjusting over there and my husband said [well why don't we do something different] c'mon where []

HICKS: What did you think when you got here?

BOSSANA: [Oh] everything was beautiful. [I tell you from here] it was all gorgeous.

HICKS: Did you come here directly?

BOSSANA: To Stockton, yes, but we leave in one month to the [Anchor] between Lodi, Stockton and [] for one month. Then after we move [] because my husband find another way [].

HICKS: That was right when you got here so you did live [] really.

BOSSANA: Yes.

HICKS: Was there anything in the United States that surprised you?

BOSSANA: Well to tell you the truth, everything they surprise me. The way the store was made over there we were not used to it. Now, yes after twenty-three years I went back last year and I saw lotta stores they are the same here, but before over there you never going to find them. Clothes, with food, and all this the stuff [] here. Everything was "Oh, look at this! Look at this!" was my husband. It was very very impressed and everything.

HICKS: Lot of advertisements.

BOSSANA: Yes, lot of advertisements, sales. Over there we never find the sales. Especially in a small town. Now in the city, yes, but we not used to go too much you know? But I used to go once a month for my business, but not [].

HICKS: Yeah, you went to [].

BOSSANA: Yeah, oh yeah.

HICKS: Did your family settle in Stockton when they first arrived?

BOSSANA: Oh yeah.

HICKS: Right, they [].

BOSSANA: Yeah.

HICKS: Did your family [stay with] relatives in the old country. That was your uncle?

BOSSANA: Yes, uncle and cousin.

HICKS: Did you live in neighborhood mostly with persons from your old country?

BOSSANA: No. Never. Never, never. I was [] just American people.

HICKS: Yeah, what other groups were [present in your neighborhood] ?

BOSSANA: Americans, yeah.

HICKS: [Mainly]?

BOSSANA: Mhmm.

HICKS: Did your family encounter any problems when you got here?

BOSSANA: No, no problems.

HICKS: What language was spoken at home?

BOSSANA: We spoke Spanish and Italian.

HICKS: [When] Did English ever become the main language at home?

BOSSANA: Just when I come in this country.

HICKS: Yeah, when you were here.

BOSSANA: Yeah.

HICKS: Did English become the main language.

BOSSANA: Yes. For the children, yes because the children they start learning English. They spoke English all the time.

HICKS: Did you have it where they spoke Spanish [to you] when you were at home?

BOSSANA: Oh yes. When we came from the old [] boys would speak Spanish all the time, but they start speak English after I have the second family here because I have two boys I [brought] from the other country, and three [kids are born] here. [] they born here they speak [only] English. They don't want to speak Spanish.

HICKS: They know Spanish?

BOSSANA: Yeah.

HICKS: When did this happen? The English becoming the main language?

BOSSANA: Well, let me see. Twenty years ago.

HICKS: Was that when the children were in an elementary [in the first grade you said]?

BOSSANA: Yeah. They started their second [term].

HICKS: What language was spoken in your neighborhood?

BOSSANA: In this country? English, broke English. [] I speak English because nobody speak another language.

HICKS: How was that when the children started speaking English? Did you have a hard time understanding what they were saying or did []?

BOSSANA: Sometimes, yes. Sometimes yes.

HICKS: Did you encourage them to speak Spanish [or] English or?

BOSSANA: Yes, I like to speak Spanish because this way they can communicate with my mother, you know? My mother, she cannot speak with nobody.

HICKS: Who lived in the household during your grown up years?

BOSSANA: When I grown up?

HICKS: Your grown up years, yeah.

BOSSANA: [Well] just father and mother and two brothers.

HICKS: Were grandparents, uncles ever?

BOSSANA: No, I never meet nobody.

HICKS: Okay, how many was that?

BOSSANA: Five we are.

HICKS: Did you ever live in a home of relatives or live with another family?

BOSSANA: No.

HICKS: No? Okay. How did your parents feel about having other family members living in the home?

BOSSANA: [I don't know this home] because we never had.

HICKS: [Other families]?

BOSSANA: No.

HICKS: Your parents.

BOSSANA: My parents what?

HICKS: Feel about having other families. They didn't have any other families?

BOSSANA: No.

HICKS: Did the children have regular chores? Did you have regular chores when you were growing up?

BOSSANA: Not [more] chores, just working. I came from a poor family thinking we just need working and working.

HICKS: Yeah, [well] okay. Can you tell me [what was expected] for your brothers or what was expected of the girls? Was there separate chores for them, the girls and boys?

BOSSANA: You say maybe for their pleasure or say? No, no because the only thing we had [] was in the summer time we go to the beach, and we go as a family together. That's all because we raised in different way [] here, you know? We have only one car for all the family. We need to go together.

HICKS: When you were growing up right? Did you have chores? You have regular chores to do around the house or [] chores. Could you tell some about these chores? What chores you had?

BOSSANA: You say maybe clean house, wash dishes, cook, and all this stuff? Yeah. And I raise my small brother. I almost raise him myself because my mother she was busy with the [store]. I need to take care of my little brother. He's eleven years younger than me.

HICKS: Can you tell me about what was expected in your family what chores the children are supposed to be doing?

BOSSANA: We used to be all the time together, our family. My brothers used to take care of the stuff with my father because they used to go out and... I don't know [in what way] I can say in English. The

second you see a man with a pickup truck, they sent [] everything. My father, he used to have [] with a horse, and my brothers they help my father in this way.

HICKS: Sell horse?

BOSSANA: No, sell [].

HICKS: Fruit stand.

BOSSANA: Yeah. And I help my mother in the store.

HICKS: And what about your children? What was expected of them?

BOSSANA: My children they was very young when they came here. They was only eleven and nine. [See] the only thing that they do is start grammar school. No, they was in second grade, third grade. [] just nothing. Just going to school there and make homeworks and stay in the house.

HICKS: Was there was difference between the boys and the girls as to what were their [expected]?

BOSSANA: Oh yes, a lot of difference.

HICKS: Can you tell us about that?

BOSSANA: The girls over there used to just work in the house and the boys outside. This is the way [they used to do] because they not used to going to work in the same [as] they work here. Over there, no. They used to just work in the house.

HICKS: Do your children do that too, somewhat? Right here, now.

BOSSANA: Here, no. Here they start to [] permit from the school they start to work, and they come to work. My daughter she babysitting and [clean] house and everything. A lot of difference [from] over there. Over there the girls until maybe they married, eighteen, nineteen or twenty, they stay in the house. Just clean the house and maybe [embroider], sewing. All this stuff. Knitting, all this stuff. They're not going to work outside. Now, yes, but when I used to be a young girl it wasn't this way.

HICKS: Did you ever work in job outside of home when you were growing up?

BOSSANA: Before married or after married?

HICKS: This is when you were growing up before...

BOSSANA: Before married I never worked.

HICKS: Did you work for a person from your old country? Yeah, I am saying [for] both places.

BOSSANA: When I work here, yes for another people. It was just now. I work three years in the first time I came to this country [Sterling]. [The dressing] [] in this country for three years. After I work for

my own and I start to learn a [little more English I start sewing], I work for my own. I never work for nobody else.

HICKS: In old country you didn't work at all?

BOSSANA: No.

HICKS: Okay. How was that when you started working for yourself?

BOSSANA: Oh, I was pleased because I used to do this in my country too. This is what I wanted. The first time I came here I cannot do it because one thing, I cannot speak well English. Another thing I don't know nobody. This way I start to work at this place in the mean time. Once in a while I find somebody speak Spanish and we start to talk and this and that. Or somebody speak Italian and this way I start to [kinda] know the people, and after three years I have my own customers [and I continue to work]. [Make] a lot of different.

HICKS: What kind of home did you live in when you arrived in the United States?

BOSSANA: I live just in a second floor house in San Joaquin [street].

HICKS: How many rooms did you have?

BOSSANA: Two bedroom, one bath, living room, dining room, kitchen, and [service porch].

HICKS: Did you ever move from there?

BOSSANA: From there I move in other house. It was all furnished. It was beautiful, but I lived just one year because the people they coming back from their vacation and so [] the house. From there I went to move another house. [] very small house. Just one bedroom, a living room, dining room and kitchen. My children they sleep in the living room.

HICKS: Oh, what a difference.

BOSSANA: Yeah, and the house [we live for one year], it was three bedroom, all furnished and everything. All the difference.

HICKS: You came here in?

BOSSANA: 1967.

HICKS: In this house?

BOSSANA: Oh, this house? No in this house, I came here in [1965 no 1965] 1967. Thirteen years. Yeah, '67. Now [here].

HICKS: How many [] rooms did this place have?

BOSSANA: This house is three bedroom, but they huge.

HICKS: I thought four or five.

BOSSANA: I have a big family room, big living room, big dining room and big kitchen.

HICKS: So that's where all the space went to. Who made most of the family decisions?

BOSSANA: We was fifty-fifty.

HICKS: Did your parents together make decisions?

BOSSANA: Yes.

HICKS: What influence did your mother have in deciding things about the family? Did your mother have an impact about decision about the family?

BOSSANA: She help a lot. She help a little more decision to my father all the time, you know? Because my father he was "Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah." My mother "No, no, no. We need to do this." And everything it was all the time. It was okay.

HICKS: Did your parents ever disagree on things?

BOSSANA: No, no.

HICKS: Did you ever disagree with your parents about things?

BOSSANA: No, not much.

HICKS: [What was the] customs and practice from your old country did you observe at home? Religious rituals? Did you practice those in the old country? Here?

BOSSANA: Yes, mmmm.

HICKS: Could you tell me what it is?

BOSSANA: This was when we had all the family together because now we're all spread out. The [], the use of that at the table and eating. We used to pray every meal. Now, one going that way, another going away, another has to go to work, another one is in school. So we quit the [praying].

HICKS: What about church?

BOSSANA: Church, yes too. The children, they didn't want to go no more. My daughter [] myself. [] the two boys [].

HICKS: How about recipes and foods?

BOSSANA: Oh recipes and foods, everything []. I want to keep it. Keep everything.

HICKS: Did you have problems with making meals in this country?

BOSSANA: No, no I never had problems. Wait, yes. To tell you the truth, yes. Sometimes I want to make some recipe. Something I [] from other dinner and [they don't work]. I have another friend and she told me the same story. "You know, Maria. I have a recipe from Argentina and I wanna make it. I don't know why, and I put everything that they say, but it's not working." []

HICKS: That's strange. Wonder what it is.

BOSSANA: I don't know. Is it the flour or what it is, but something. [Lot of difference].

HICKS: How about holidays? Do you have holidays you practice?

BOSSANA: Yes, we have holidays, but we have more holidays here than over there.

HICKS: Do you practice them?

BOSSANA: Oh yeah.

HICKS: Ceremonies?

BOSSANA: Yes.

HICKS: What kind?

BOSSANA: From weddings or funeral or.

HICKS: So you practice it for weddings and funerals?

BOSSANA: Yes, but it's a little bit different from here.

HICKS: How is that?

BOSSANA: Over there when you have one funeral [not the body]. Now they start in the big city. But in the small town, same mine, they still, the man or the woman or the person [they] die they keep in the house. They never bring [it] to the [moratorium].

HICKS: Do they keep it underneath the floor or just?

BOSSANA: No, no, no, no. The same [case] in the moratory house. They bring the flower. Everything is in the house.

HICKS: Oh, instead of taking it to the []. Then they bury it?

BOSSANA: Yeah, then after twenty-four hours [they bury]. They keep for twenty-four hours, that's all.

HICKS: And what about marriage?

BOSSANA: The marriage is a little bit different. Here, the bride pick her friend. Over there in Argentina they []. [] the girls they come in and [judge] three girls and three boys or two girls and two boys, it depends. But for going inside the village church they have the girls say this is their maid of honor and everything, then [].

HICKS: They don't have the girls [].

BOSSANA: They have the girls, but they [not use] it in this way they use it here. The girl they go with their father in the church, and the boy coming in [from the] mother.

HICKS: Your children, what kind of wedding will they have?

BOSSANA: One boy he marry [here] ten years ago and they [use the same as here].

HICKS: How about children's [game]?

BOSSANA: They have the regular game [that they use] with the children here. I don't know too much about games, you know, but they have all the games that they [have here].

HICKS: Is there any difference?

BOSSANA: Well a little bit. They have more here than over there []. I grown with one doll, and my daughter she have twenty, twenty-five [] the difference. [They leave it]. Over there I growing up with one doll. Could you imagine? And my daughter has twenty, twenty-five []. Could you imagine the difference, you know? It was a little bit []. Life [].

HICKS: How about folklore?

BOSSANA: Oh over there, yes they use a lot. [Dances and square dancing]

HICKS: [Square dancing]? How about superstitions?

BOSSANA: Oh yes. I tell you especially the people because they [] from over there not because they come from [] [Spanish people], but really they not [] over there they are including all this []. They believe all this.

HICKS: Do you practice [it here]?

BOSSANA: No. I never practice over there either.

HICKS: And the ceremony, you know like you were saying about the wedding, do you practice that here?

BOSSANA: No.

HICKS: You haven't [kept it] here.

BOSSANA: No. We not [].

HICKS: What have you practice kept here from the old country? You know out of all of those that are [].

BOSSANA: Well I cannot do nothing because over there what I say from the funeral is different here. This happened to my husband. I need to take to the mortuary home. I no want to do the same thing over there. Really, I like better in this way because [now they're over there].

HICKS: So you [somewhat] stick to the way out here.

BOSSANA: Yes.

HICKS: Do you regret any of that? Not being able to practice?

BOSSANA: No, no. I tell you the truth, I am very happy in the way [I am living here]. I am very pleased.

HICKS: What groups did you belong to while growing up?

BOSSANA: No, nothing.

HICKS: Were your friends mostly of same religious and ethnic background? Your friends?

BOSSANA: Yes.

HICKS: Did you and your friends often relate to and play with children of other backgrounds? [This is when you] were growing up.

BOSSANA: Oh yes.

HICKS: Could you tell me what other backgrounds that they played with, the children?

BOSSANA: Well over there the children [they play more with] [] in the [time]. No more, too much toys. [More] football, basketball, tennis. All more of sports, you know? [Something] in this way. More natural. Not too many toys. [] bicycle rides, all this stuff yeah.

HICKS: Okay, did you play with children of other backgrounds? You know, like ethnic backgrounds when you were growing up?

BOSSANA: Oh yeah.

HICKS: What other ones?

BOSSANA: Well like going to the beach [].

HICKS: What other backgrounds did they have? Other children?

BOSSANA: [] They no have too much.

HICKS: Well did your parents object to the children who you played with?

BOSSANA: No. No, no, no. Really, we not have too many children around. We have two or three families around the place [where I was].

HICKS: I see. Mainly were they your same ethnic background?

BOSSANA: Yeah. Most of them the same.

HICKS: Did you every bring your friends into your home as visitors?

BOSSANA: Oh yeah.

HICKS: How did your parents feel about your visitors and friends from another culture? Other cultured ethnic background groups.

BOSSANA: Well, over there we not have too many. All Italian [or Spanish].

HICKS: Did you [] very many whites? Black people?

BOSSANA: Over there we no have black man. When I left Argentina I see only one black man. []. Now I don't [notice], maybe [] I never see a black man. Chinese in [Buenos Aires], yeah I see a few.

HICKS: Did your parents set any rules about dating?

BOSSANA: [Well yes] Oh yes. []. When I going out for dancing or something I had a chaperone all the time, and the [guy must have been] []. You imagine? I never went alone with my boyfriend.

HICKS: Who was usually your chaperone? [Was it usually a relative]?

BOSSANA: It was my mother.

HICKS: Oh, it was your mother?

BOSSANA: Yeah

HICKS: Oh, I thought it'd be your relative or something.

BOSSANA: No, no. Sometimes I went with my older friend, you know. Was more older than me. But in the evening my mother [she tell me] [] or stay at home.

HICKS: What places would you go?

BOSSANA: Just down the [].

End of Side A

Start of Side B

HICKS: Did you parents have anything to do with who you married?

BOSSANA: No. They was [out]. I want to tell you, []. You imagine in the way I dated, myself, and the way they're dating, the young people right now. This is the [problem]. Sometimes I tell my daughter "Oh my god, I know you're not going to be the same me" because I no want to be too selfish, you know. But my goodness, sometimes I told my mother "[]. Well you not happy. I need to be []" because I never [].

HICKS: What was the reason why [].

BOSSANA: They used to do it this way. It's the way of living, you know. But I wanna tell you the truth. They don't give you no more freedom from that, but here right now it's a little bit too much for the young people. A little bit too much. My idea, in my opinion, you know. I don't know, maybe somebody all the same [].

HICKS: What do you think of [] when your mother went with you? Did she have a limit on how often you could go out because she would go with you, right? Supposed you wanted to go out every night or every afternoon?

BOSSANA: Oh no, no, no, no, no. The boyfriend he come in to see me in my house. I have only one boyfriend in all my life. It was my husband.

HICKS: Right, so that made it was easy.

BOSSANA: It was easy. [No worries]. I not change [] the girls they do it right now.

HICKS: Yeah, go from one to another.

BOSSANA: Yeah. No, no. I was very young when I marry anyways.

HICKS: Was it ever difficult for kids from your country to grow up in Stockton?

BOSSANA: No.

HICKS: Were there especially good things about growing up in Stockton?

BOSSANA: I cannot say. I don't know what I can say.

HICKS: You really didn't grow up in Stockton.

BOSSANA: No [].

HICKS: [Was it helpful] to have brothers and sisters when you were growing up?

BOSSANA: I was [] my brothers.

HICKS: That made it helpful.

BOSSANA: Yeah. It was nice because we need to do something and we help each other over there, my brothers.

HICKS: You were saying you had to take care of your ...

BOSSANA: My [husband] [].

HICKS: How was that []

BOSSANA: It's okay because we don't know nothing better so for us it was okay, you know.

HICKS: You said that you did go to school here in the U.S.

BOSSANA: Yes.

HICKS: Did you and your [family] have the same ethnic background when you went to school here in the U.S. When you were here and you went to school here, did you [] the same ethnic background? Were you [] in your class?

BOSSANA: Background, what do you mean?

HICKS: Nationality.

BOSSANA: Oh, I see. No, from my country I was just like everyone [in myself], and other people they come from Spain, the other people, Mexico, and there are people from Europe. We have lot of groups, all different.

HICKS: [Did] most of your classmates speak English. Was English spoken?

BOSSANA: Mhmm.

HICKS: Did you speak English?

BOSSANA: When I came, no. No, no. []

HICKS: How about other children in your country?

BOSSANA: No.

HICKS: Did the teachers appear to come from different backgrounds from yours?

BOSSANA: Yes.

HICKS: How did you learn to speak English?

BOSSANA: I learn when I went to school here and after every day, you know, start to learn [more].

HICKS: What was the hardest part?

BOSSANA: The hardest part for me is writing because you speak in one way, you read another way, and you write another way. This is the hardest part. At least in Spanish you read it and write it the same, but you write, you read. Here you have some words [know what I mean].

HICKS: Where did you learn [] [going to school here].

BOSSANA: Here.

HICKS: What was more harder, trying to read or write?

BOSSANA: Trying to write was more harder for me than reading. I can read it and most when I read it I understand it. Almost everything. Not everything, but most. But writing very, very difficult for me.

HICKS: And when was that you...

BOSSANA: All the time, still now it's difficult for me to write it.

HICKS: As you recall now, did the teachers seem able to handle languages different among the children when you [].

BOSSANA: Well my children when they came here in this country, in three months they learned English right away, and perfect. I cannot believe [they learn it right away]. They young, and they can learn right away. The old person, for me, it's more difficult because we need to think it through. We need to work it this and that, you know. This is the way to [] your mind, you know. And this is the way [] correct completely.

HICKS: When you were going to school was the teacher able to handle language differences?

BOSSANA: Well yes, he help me a lot. But I tell you, I went just couple months every year and that's all, you know, because I was too busy working.

HICKS: Oh, I see. Did you recall any funny incidents while you were at school?

BOSSANA: Yes, I want to tell you what happened to me []. Can I tell you what happened to me?

HICKS: Sure.

BOSSANA: Okay, I [no went] no more in the school because the [teacher] that we used to have, one night I as so tired and I was sleeping. You know, sometimes they [] sleeping, and you know, the teacher tell me "Mrs. Bossana, you want to sleep you go home." And [from that night] she never see my face again. I never went back. And you know what happened, after a lot of years later because this happened when we move. [Basically] maybe ten years ago I went to make the speech to the children member of the school of the history of Argentina, you know. And I told the history we have and everything, and you know one of the children it was the son of my teacher. It was funny.

HICKS: How did you find that out?

BOSSANA: Because they wrote me a note [every children], I still have it. Every children they wrote me a note and the children [tells me] "My father used to be an English teacher for [adult] education." And when I see the sign because he signed his name, it was [this was one of] my teacher. It was funny.

HICKS: Was there anything that bothered you when were going to school in the United States?

BOSSANA: No.

HICKS: What was your family's attitude towards school? [Your patents]

BOSSANA: My children? They used to like it going to school, but I don't like school and [this is the work]. I never go [] study from [teacher notes] from high school [] because I never liked school.

HICKS: You don't like the school system or?

BOSSANA: I don't like to study.

HICKS: What was your own attitude towards school? You said you didn't like to [study].

BOSSANA: I don't like to study so.

HICKS: How did you handle the difference between your attitude towards school and your parent's attitude toward school.

BOSSANA: I okay because they told me "You don't want to study, you going to work." This is what I [did]. Instead of study, I went to school and learn to sew. Fourteen year old, I sewed for all the other [].

HICKS: Did your parents try to help you with problems at school?

BOSSANA: No.

HICKS: Did you rely on anyone else to help you?

BOSSANA: I used to have a friend [].

HICKS: You know when you said you started sewing at fourteen, did you use somebody else's sewing machine or what was the []?

BOSSANA: No, my mother she buy me my own sewing machine. [] in [].

HICKS: That's how you got [started]. If you had brothers [and sisters], did the [girls] [or boys stay] in [school longer]?

BOSSANA: No, they finished just the sixth grade.

HICKS: What did your parents expect you to learn in school?

BOSSANA: Well they say at least can you learn to write and to read it, and do your own thing and you need to do it. It's okay. Really, they are people because they know what's too much educations, you

know. And this is the way [] longer and shorter []. [At least] you can write and read it and do what you need to do because my mother, she not went to much of the school, but she can read it, she can write a letter and everything, you know. The same with my father. But we no have no [what you call it when] for making something else, you know. A teacher, or lawyer, or something like that, we not have it.

HICKS: Was it that there wasn't that many schools?

BOSSANA: No, they have the school. They had high school and [].

End of Side B

End of Tape One

Start of Tape Two

BOSSANA:[] awake. [I want to put a new wedding gown in the window] and everything.

HICKS: Think of your life after you first got married, what did you expect to get out of life then?

BOSSANA: Well, I was [expecting] to be a good wife, a good mother. In the mean time [was] [] my son.

HICKS: Did your expectation change when you got married?

BOSSANA: No, it was the way I expected.

HICKS: It was?

BOSSANA: Yeah, mhmm.

HICKS: Generally, did your husband share these goals? Would you say?

BOSSANA: Yeah, mhmm.

HICKS: Have you become a U.S. citizen?

BOSSANA: Yes.

HICKS: When was that?

BOSSANA: This it was in 1965.

HICKS: How do you feel about the United States?

BOSSANA: Well, I am very, very happy and I feel good and this is the [way I] [] because I was pleased with everything.

HICKS: Considering your own life, what is the best age to be? What makes it the best?

BOSSANA: 60? No. Well, I don't know really.

HICKS: Can't ask you the second part until you answer the first part. What makes it the best age?

BOSSANA: The best age I think from eighteen to thirty-five, I think is a very good age. The very best part of life.

HICKS: What makes this age the best would you say?

BOSSANA: Why because you're young and you have a good marriage. You can share a lot with your husband and friends and everything, you know, and raise your children. I think it's a very nice part of your life to raise your family and everything.

HICKS: Again, considering your life what is the worst age to be?

BOSSANA: Worst age? [Oh my goodness] Well, it depends. You see so many people they already over sixty-five. I have my mother, she's seventy-nine and she is fantastic. She cooks, she [grow], she walk sixteen, seventeen block easy and it's okay. Really, the worst part in your life is when you have no health because you no have health. You can say sometimes lot of people at forty-five they already bad shape because they don't have health, sickness.

HICKS: If you don't have your health [your not]...

BOSSANA: Yeah, you don't have nothing. This is true. So really I [think I say] because I know a man, he is at eighty-nine and he is fantastic man. He going to Lake Tahoe, going forth and back, and he's enjoying his life very well. [You[can not say from "sixty-five on." You never can say this. So you have your health, I think it's the best thing.

HICKS: So what is the worst age would you say?

BOSSANA: I don't know. I know one lady because she is one-hundred and she is fantastic lady.

HICKS: You don't have no age.

BOSSANA: No, I cannot say age because I used to think that one lady because she died one-hundred three year olds.

HICKS: Oh my goodness.

BOSSANA: It's hard to say what the worst part of age. I cannot say this.

HICKS: Yeah, I understand [] [you don't have the health].

BOSSANA: Yes, you don't have your health.

HICKS: I have [] now. Eighteen and young because I was sick. You can't do much when you're always sick. You miss a lot.

BOSSANA: Yeah, you're right.

HICKS: Look back on your life now, can you think of some times where great changes that really changed your life or that gave it new direction?

BOSSANA: Well, when I start to have my family. After I had my first child. I can see great change a lot.

HICKS: Can you explain that?

BOSSANA: Coming a whole new direction for being a mother, take care of baby. It's a lot in your life.

HICKS: How old were you when you had your first?

BOSSANA: Twenty-two.

HICKS: What did you do about being a mother? Did you just... You didn't do anything, really?

BOSSANA: No, I not do nothing.

HICKS: Were you ready and you always?

BOSSANA: Yeah, mhmm.

HICKS: Did the depression effect you or your family? No, you were not? Okay. How about World War II? What there [anything] effected?

BOSSANA: No.

HICKS: Did any purchase made by your family change your life in any major way?

BOSSANA: No.

HICKS: Are there any government programs you particularly enjoy having?

BOSSANA: No.

HICKS: Have you ever heard of the Women's Liberation Movement?

BOSSANA: No.

HICKS: Okay, have any other Stockton events effect you and your family?

BOSSANA: No.

HICKS: Okay, that's it.

BOSSANA: That's all?

End of Tape Two