

Immigrant Seafood Processing Woman- Interview #12

Anonymous

33 Years old

Female

Seafood Processing

New Bedford, MA

Guatemalan (Zacualpa)

Interviewer: Corinn Williams

Transcriber: Alba Contreras

Place of interview: New Bedford, MA

July 5, 2010

Keywords: Guatemala, weaving, coffee harvest, fish, skate, sea clams, temp company
Immigrant Woman Processor Interview #12

Corinn Williams (CW): (Spanish) I am here to listen to the story of your life if you are willing to share it with us. Every story is different and it helps us better understand the experiences of women that work in the fish industry and how the regulations of government and other factors would affect their lives and the lives of their families. This project is trying to reach people to get their stories out because we know that a lot of the time these stories are never heard. Your story and your reality, in truth, is not well understood and so your voice is very important in helping those who don't understand the lives of immigrant women in the fishing industry and that it is very different from those who have lived here for many generations. You are aware that we are recording this and we can utilize this interview to analyze the social impact of the regulations and for other purposes such as educational activities. Are you okay with us recording?

I12: Yes.

CW: Okay, that's good. Maybe we can start off when and where were you born?

I12: I was born in Guatemala, in Zacualpa

CW: Zacualpa, Guatemala? What year?

I12: Yes, in the year 1977.

CW: 77?

I12: Yes.

CW: Okay, well maybe you can tell us what life is like over in Zacualpa.

I12: Yeah, well I was born over there, but there really aren't any jobs. Women really don't have jobs.

CW: There aren't any jobs for women?

I12: Yes, sometimes men can get jobs, for a few days a week, sometimes they have to leave. They leave for a month to work and they only make 200 to 250 Quetzales, and that's not enough to eat or buy food.

CW: And in your family are there a lot of people?

(3:01) I12: Yes, my mother has about 10 kids.

CW: 10 kids? So you have lots of brothers and sisters?

I12: Yes, plus my dad and he is the only that works because since my siblings are small and they can't help, he's the only one that can work.

CW: So are you older or younger?

I12: I'm older.

CW: The oldest of all the women?

I12: Yes.

CW: How was life over there? Did you have to help out your mom a lot ?

I12: Yes, we did other things, we made I don't know what it's called there one right there *tejidos*?, the thing that's on the wall.

CW: Oh the *tejidos*? (weaving)

I12: Yeah, that's what we make over there but it takes us about 2 weeks to a month to make just one. Since we don't have much time and we don't make much from it. My brothers and my sister help my dad out a little but it's still not enough. My brothers don't have much; they don't have shoes or clothes, maybe 2 pairs. That's how life is over there.

CW: Yes, life is difficult.

I12: Yes.

CW: Did you get to go to school?

I12: No we didn't go to school.

CW: Was it far from your town?

I12: No, Well when I was born yes there was a school, but it was far and since we didn't have money to buy notebooks or pencils my dad didn't want us to go to school. But my younger sisters went to school, it was closer then and they were able to go. Thank god I was at least able to learn how to write my name.

CW: So did your dad own his own land?

I12: Yes.

(6:00) CW: Would he work in the farm and your mom would weave, and you had to learn?

I12: Yes

CW: So was it only you and your mom that would weave? Or would others help?

I12: No, well I'm the oldest and the kids after me are boys so they couldn't do it because they were boys. They would help my dad with the men's work instead.

CW: Well tell us a little about the work you did? How did you make them?

I12: It's been while I haven't done it.

CW: You don't remember how? Hold on I have something, it was a gift from someone. (shows her a weaving).

I12: Oh

CW: They told me this comes from Zacualpa.

I12: Yeah, it is this is what I use to make over there, I can make this.

CW: It's like embroidery?

I12: Yeah, it was larger though and we would get paid 10 Quetzales.

CW: 10 Quetzales after it was all finished?

I12: Yes.

CW: And who would you sell it to?

I12: Well, we made it but the thread and the material was bought by this other lady, and she would give it to us to make it, and she would pay us. So she bought everything and we just made it gave it back to her and she would sell it.

CW: Did she have other women doing this too?

I12: Yes

CW: But 10 Quetzales for all the time it took you?

I12: Back then it was good.

CW: How long did it take you to make it?

I12: It depends, if you worked on it all the time 2-3 days. Nowadays 10 Quetzales is not enough to last a week.

CW: And how big were they? Like a table cloth?

I12: Like 3 times the size of this one (approx. 18 X 36 inches).

CW: Wow!

I12: Yes, they're big, that's what we would do to help out in the house.

(9:01) CW: But you didn't earn much from it?

I12: Not much, and it was lots of work

CW: Well did you live close to other families or alone?

I12: In Guatemala we were close to other people about two blocks away from the other houses because each house only has a little bit of land.

CW: So until what age were you at home helping you mom? And what other things did you do at home?

I12: Well, there were other people that would make, what are those called, like braids/fringes and other would make hats.

CW: Hats?

I12: Yes, but we would only make the braids, and they would sell them in Zacualpa, and Quiche, and they would sell them there.

CW: Like the *petate* (straw mats) ?

I12: Yeah, that's it.

CW: So it was a lot of work making the braids.

I12: Yes, but I could also make- I don't know what it's called, the stuff the women use in Guatemala.

CW: The blouses, traditional outfits?

I12: Yeah, that's it?

CW: You would do the embroidery by hand?

I12: Yes, like that one but different styles and that's what I would do back over there, but since it doesn't give you much money either. The blouses it would take me a month to make it and it would leave us with 200 Quetzales, and you would have to spend all day doing these, from 6 in the morning to 6 in the afternoon, because if not- it would take you longer, like 3 months.

CW: And in Zacualpa would you speak Spanish at home?

I12: No, we don't speak any Spanish. That's why I'm learning here because over there we speak our dialect, K'iche. That's all we learn.

(12:02) CW: And you would wear your typical outfits all the time?

I12: Yes, that's why here I'm learning Spanish little by little.

CW: Yes, well life was real different over there, the clothes, the language, and how to earn a living. Did you ever think you would move here next to the ocean?

I12: (laughs) Never.

CW: Did you know about the sea or of fishing?

I12: In Guatemala?

CW: Yes

I12: No, nothing.

CW: Nothing? Did you eat fish over there?

I12: Sometimes, but the little ones. The ones you find in the water. Over there we have waters, we don't have washing machines, and instead we go down to the water.

CW: The river?

I12: Yeah, sometimes when you go down to wash clothes you can see the fish.

CW: So you would see them while washing your clothes and catch them?

I12: Yes sometimes if you go in a little boat you can see more fish, but not like the ones here that are big. Those are the only ones we see over there.

CW: So the first time you saw fish and the sea was when you came here?

I12: Yes, I mean we have it over there, but it's only for people that have money that can go on vacation, and since we don't have much we can't go.

CW: So you were with your family and your mom, but did you work outside of the house before, or did you always work at home?

I12: Sometimes we would go to the coast, because they have a harvest date in May, and you can go harvest. There is corn so we have to grow, well we don't have money to buy the fertilizer so we would borrow money about 1,000 or 2,000 quetzales and the interest is at 10% so we have to go to the coast to harvest coffee

(15:24) CW: So you would harvest coffee in May?

I12: Yes, that's why we would go to the coast, and we would use the money to pay back the money we had borrowed for the fertilizer. The rest we would use it to buy food, and then when it's harvesting time we would go to the coast again.

CW: And all of you would go work in the fields? The whole family?

I12: Yes, all of us.

CW: How was it to work in coffee fields? Was it hard work?

I12: Yes, it was hard because there are a lot of mosquitoes, and they bite you a lot. And if it's raining you have to keep working through the rain.

CW: Through the rain?

I12: Yes Ma'am, and you don't make lots of money but what can you do? You have to work because I'm the oldest one and I'm the only one that can work, and my siblings are very young. I have one brother that can work but he can't help out much. Over there all the people that are there don't have much money. There are a few that have some money but the rest have nothing. There are some that only have one or two sets of clothes, there are some that only have 10 or 20 quetzales to buy a pound of tomatoes for a week, others don't even have that and just eat beans with salt and tortillas. Life over there is sad, because everyone lives like that only a few have money and the rest have nothing. But the difference over there is that everyone over there has babies, there is no such thing that

someone will give you so that you can't have a baby. Women over there always have babies, some have 10,12, or 15 some even have 18 babies.

(18:25) CW: 18 kids? And why do they have some many kids?

I12: I don't know, well we don't know how to prevent from not having babies.

CW: Is that something you learned here?

I12: Yes, well times are changing because people don't want to have as many babies anymore. But before it were always at least 12 or 15 kids. Now they don't want to have more than 10, but it's not God that prevents them from having baby. I think it's slowing down though because women don't want to have so many kids. And here they only have one or two kids.

CW: Do you think it's because they live in the farms instead of the cities, and they can use the help in the field?

I12: Well there is not much land over there. All we have is corn and the corn doesn't last for 10 or 12 kids.

CW: or 18 kids?

I12: Yes (laughs), sometimes you have to end up buying some because it doesn't last, and that's life over there.

CW: And how is it that you came here? I'm sure it's an interesting story, how was it that the opportunity came up to come over here?

I12: Yes, well there are some that come here first. There is this guy that went to school, and he works in the capital of Guatemala, and they told him, I don't know who but they said he could come here. The guy's father lent him some money so he could make a trip over here, and when he got here there was lots of work available he had two jobs he was working days and nights.

(21:33) CW: So you knew the guy over there? Was he your husband?

I12: No , he was just a neighbor. He came first, and the guy already had a wife over there and he sent money over there to build two big houses made with bricks. He was the first to build a house with bricks in the neighborhood.

CW: And what are the other houses built of?

I12: Some are made with wooden poles. But his was with bricks, and it was a pretty house, and his wife would say he's was able to make money over here. He would send her 500 or 1000 Quetzales. We noticed she would buy clothes, and before she didn't have much, so we knew there was more ways to make money here. There was another guy, his

brother in law who left and he started sending money too- to his mom and they would have more money to buy food, and clothes and shoes for his siblings. So we knew it was true that there were job opportunities here, and not jobs like the ones we had over there we would work all day and not enough money. So that's how we noticed we could find a better job here.

(24:10) CW: And you wanted to help your family?

I12: Yes, and then more and more were leaving to come here. I couldn't leave because we didn't have money to make the trip. Because back then it cost 30,000 quetzales- that was before.

CW: To come here?

I12: Yes.

CW: And how much is that in dollars?

I12: Like 6 or \$7,000 thousand dollars I think. So we couldn't find the money, but there are some that have money and they lent it because they wanted to charge the interest.

CW: How much do they charge for interest? 10%?

I12: Yes, 10% percent so if you borrow 30,000 Q. that's a lot of interest. That's why we were afraid to borrow the money because some can pass through (the border) and others don't make it.

CW: Yes, so if you can't cross how can you pay the money? You have to keep paying the money?

I12: Yes, that's what we thought, so we noticed that a lot were taking the risk to cross, and some would send for their wives, so we thought maybe I can make it.

CW: So first the men cross (the border) and then the women?

I12: Yes, first it was the men and later some would go together at the same time, and others would send for their wife, and the wife would go alone.

CW: And how was it for you, how did you take the trip?

I12: For me, my husband came first.

CW: So you were already married in Guatemala?

I12: Yes.

CW: How old were you when you got married?

I12: I've been married for, well before or now?

CW: How old were you when you got married with him?

I12: How old was I? I was 15.

CW: Yes, 15?

(27:00) I12: Yes, I was 15 years old when I got married.

CW: How did you know him? Was he from Zacualpa too?

I12: Yes, that's how we met but he didn't have his mother or father he was alone so he was paying everything at the house.

CW: How long had you guys been married when he came here?

I12: About seven years

CW: Seven years now? But how long had you been married when he came here?

I12: Yes, seven years, because my son was already about 6 years old when he left.

CW: Oh okay.

I12: Yes so we had been married for seven years. Then some of his cousins left and made it and he wanted me to come here, but my kids were still little, because when he left I was two months pregnant.

CW: When he came here for the first time?

I12: Yes.

CW: So you had the little one and the one coming?

I12: I had three already.

CW: Three? They're over there?

I12: Yes, because one was a year and 3 months, so plus the one when I was pregnant that was four. So I had three little ones and the one coming, four, that's why I didn't want to leave. So when I had the baby I didn't want to leave because they were so little and I didn't want to leave the kids with my mom. So when the little one turned four, my

brother was coming and I left with him, because I didn't want to take the trip alone because I was scared.

CW: So you came with your brother?

I12: Yes because I didn't want to come alone.

CW: So you had to leave the four kids behind?

I12: Yes.

CW: And what was that like leaving your kids behind?

I12: It was sad, because they were all crying, even I was crying during my trip because I left them and they are so little. And the other thing is that when the men leave first they find other wives here and they forget about the family back home.

(30:18) CW: Do you think it happens a lot?

I12: Yes, some do, I mean they come and stay here for 3 or 4 years. Like I said you have to borrow the money so it takes like 1 or 2 years at least to pay the money back depending on the work you find, that's why they stay here for so long. So the men find another girlfriend here, so they have one here and one over there.

CW: So in the meanwhile you just waiting for him to send money and you don't get it, that's sad.

I12: Yes, so that's what I used to do, and I use to think –“oh maybe that will happen with my husband” so that made me wonder and made me want to come, but it made me sad because my kids are back there. I wanted to make money and send it over there, but now I have two kids here so I only make enough for the kids here and only a little for the four kids over there. I thought “oh well, I have some money maybe I can go over there”, but I know the money it's not going to be enough. You can't save anything. You know when I got here it took a while for me to get here, it wasn't fast.

CW: How long did it take you to get here?

I12: It took me 3 weeks.

CW: 3 weeks? That's a long time, you were always with your brother?

I12: Yes

CW: So was the trip difficult for you?

I12: Yeah, it was hard, because I'm not from here.

CW: So you didn't speak Spanish at that time?

I12: No, I didn't speak Spanish at all.

CW: Did your brother speak Spanish?

I12: My brother spoke only a little bit because over there we speak in dialect. My brothers went to school but the teachers spoke in dialect too, so you don't really learn Spanish.

(33:22) CW: So everyone that came here, the neighbors, and friends, did they all come to New Bedford?

I12: No, some would go to other states like Oklahoma, Nebraska.

CW: And what would they work in?

I12: Some said they were killing the cows, and pigs, and others with chickens.

CW: So they were working with meats?

I12: Yes

CW: Some worked with meat and others fish, or some type of food?

I12: Yes, I have a brother in Nebraska, and he works feeding the pigs, and that's his job there, but they are all different jobs.

CW: But some would come here to New Bedford?

I12: Yes, and some to other states. So when we got here it was a little difficult.

CW: So what was your first impression when you got here? Did you come straight to New Bedford?

I12: Yes

CW: You had your husband here right? How were the first few days?

I12: The first few days it was sad, because I kept thinking of my kids over there and that's why I was so sad. Maybe if I hadn't left them behind I would have been happy to see my husband, but I wasn't happy at all. When I left them with my mom they were crying so much, so when I got here I wanted to cry too. Also it was hard because I didn't find work that quickly, it took me 6 months to find my job. That's why, you know like I

mentioned we had to borrow the money and as the months went by, the interest kept adding up.

(36:24) CW: So you had to pay the money? And what was your first job here?

I12: Yes, my first job was in a fish company, I worked there for like 5 or 6 months and when the snow started coming, the worked slow down and they got rid of the newest workers because there was work for only a couple of days.

CW: And what did you do there at that job?

I12: We would cut the fish.

CW: You would cut it?

I12: Yes

CW: And had you done the work before, back home in the river?

I12: Oh no the fish here is really big (chuckles).

CW: How did you learn about the work?

I12: Well they tell you, the boss shows you how you're going to cut it. There are some fish that have a worm inside, and we have to take it out with a special tool.

CW: So you first cut it and take it out?

I12: Yes

CW: And then what do you do?

I12: Then you put it in a box, and another person weights it to see how much it weighs, and that's the work, it's not too bad.

CW: But this is your first time working outside of home, well you use to cut coffee too right? But you never worked in a factory?

I12: Yes, but it's not the same, but here I saw the work and I could do it and I worked less. When I got here I made \$300 in a week, and in Guatemala I would make 200 a month and those are quetzales, it's not dollars, and here I make that in a week so I keep \$100, and send \$200 to my kids in Guatemala.

(39:04) CW: So out of every \$300 you keep \$100 and you send \$200 to your kids?

I12: Yes

CW: And was your husband working too?

I12: Yes

CW: And he used his money for the house?

I12: Yes, he paid the rent and the bills.

CW: So he paid the bills and you used your money for the kids in Guatemala?

I12: Yes, and later he made \$300 a week and we saved money and we were able to save some money and build a house over there.

CW: So you built your house over there?

I12: Yes, it cost like 350,000 Q to build it. But that was before when it was just us two here, but now there is not enough work and I have two kids here too, so now we barely send money we only enough for us to live here.

CW: So you worked in that first company for 6 months and then what happened?

I12: So then I left that company.

CW: So you left the company because there was no work?

I12: Yes

CW: What year was that?

I12: I think 4 years ago.

CW: What year did you come here?

I12: Oh, I don't remember.

CW: We're in 2010 now.

I12: Maybe 2006, yes because it's going to be 4 years now, so I worked there then I left to another fish company too, but another type.

CW: What type?

I12: It's the big fish like this.

CW: It's like a butterfly?

I12: Yeah, that's it,

CW: Maybe it's skate? It has like wings?

I12: Yeah! It's really big they call it a fish but it's really big I don't know what it's called.

CW: Skate wings?

I12: Yeah I think, you know like I said when I came here I didn't even know Spanish so I don't know what it's called.

CW: So was the fish big, and looks like a snake?

I12: Yeah, like a snake, and the men would cut it or something, I'm not sure what they did we just put it in a box, or bags.

CW: Were the men skinning it?

(42:10) I12: Yes, I think and we would put it in a bag. So the big ones we put in a box and that was it.

CW: How long did you work there?

I12: For about 4 months, and then there was no more work so I stayed home for like 3 or 4 months without work and then I found a job with Sea Clams.

CW: And how was the work there?

I12: There the cutter cuts it for you so we just take out the meat and the worm (foot).

CW: Take out the meat out of the shell?

I12: Yes, that's how work is there but there is not much work there either, 2 or 3 days a week.

CW: How many hours a week do you work? Do you still work at that place?

I12: Yes, it's like 20 or 25 hours a week.

CW: How much do you make a week?

I12: \$150 a week.

CW: So before you made \$300 and now \$150?

I12: Yes

CW: Did you work directly through the company or through a temp company?

I12: With a temp company.

CW: But you always got paid with checks?

I12: Yes.

CW: How long has it been making just \$150 a week?

I12: Well in the summer it varies because there is a more work available, so some weeks you can make \$250 or \$300 and others \$400.

CW: By summer you mean the months of July, June?

I12: Yes, you always make more in that time- not all the weeks but there are days that are better. It's been a month already making \$150 or \$100 like this week we only worked two days with 6 hours we only made \$50.

(45:21)CW: Oh that's not much, and your husband, what kind of fish does he work with? Is his work slow too?

I12: Yes, he works with fish in a company called (company name mentioned) and now he works in at another place but the work is slow too. Before he used to work a lot too, like 7, 8 even 9 hours. Now they work 5 or 6 hours.

CW: And who lives at the house with you?

I12: My two brothers.

CW: So your two brothers, you and your two kids?

I12: Yes.

CW: So you got pregnant here in the US, how was it different having kids here than over there?

I12: At first I was scared.

CW: You were scared?

I12: Yes, because over there in Guatemala you have them at home, and the midwife comes and checks on you.

CW: The midwife takes care of you?

I12: Yes, and they are the ones that take care of you. But here it's not like that. That's why when I got pregnant with the first kid here I wanted to go back to my country.

CW: You wanted to go back to your country when you were pregnant?

I12: Yes, because some people were telling me that if you have your kid is born here the government keeps the baby here.

CW: People were telling you this?

I12: Yes, people were saying that and I thought it was true and I was scared because I didn't want them to keep my baby here.

CW: Yes, you were scared, but you had to go to the hospital and the clinic so that was all new?

(47:57) I12: Yes, I didn't want to go to the clinic or the hospital so I was sure I was going to go back to my country. But I have this friend that told me "no don't leave this is the best for the baby, over there it cost too much money to buy clothes and shoes and here it's cheaper", and since my husband didn't want me to leave either I started thinking, and so I made an appointment at the clinic. There was a lady there, Mrs. Marta (explained) if you, how did she say it? Like the other people that receive help from the government you're not going to have problems. Some women were applying to government for help so that's why some had problems, I think.

CW: So those who were applying for government help like welfare?

I12: I think that's what it was.

CW: So she told you that if you applied you wouldn't have any problems?

I12: Yes, so since she told me that and explained I decided to stay.

CW: So you trusted her? She explained everything on how to have a baby here?

I12: Yes she told me that I could get his birth certificate, and I could get him a Guatemalan passport and an American passport and I could take him over there without a problem.

CW: Oh so you wanted to know in case you wanted to travel with your child?

I12: Yes, and she explained it to me and I decided to stay here, and I was already 8 months pregnant so they scolded at me (at the clinic).

CW: Oh wow you were already 8 month pregnant? That's why they scolded you?

I12: The nurse asked me if it was my first baby and I told her no I already had 4 more and the nurse yelled at me.

CW: Yes and they told you to take your vitamins and that you have to go for check-ups?

I12: Yes, and with that baby I got sick and I wasn't eating as much so I lost weight, so they scolded me and then they sent me to St. Luke's (hospital) and they told me I needed an ultrasound and I didn't know what that was (laughs).

(51:02) CW: So you got an ultrasound, and you saw the image of the baby and what did you think?

I12: I didn't know what it was and they explained to me that it was the image of the baby, and how he was growing. They told me it was a boy and I didn't believe them because I didn't understand how they knew what it was because in Guatemala you don't see the baby until it is born.

CW: Yes it was different because over there you can't see the baby before but here you can see it in the machine.

I12: Yes, that's why I didn't believe them, but when it was born it was a boy.

CW: Was it difficult to go to the hospital and have the baby?

I12: Yes, because over there I had never been to a hospital, so here I was scared I didn't know what they were going to do. I was just scared.

CW: So you were scared to go to the hospital? Did your husband go with you?

I12: Yes, but after I had the baby and then I got pregnant with the second one.

CW: So you had your son, how old is he?

I12: He's three

CW: And how old is the girl?

I12: She's two.

CW: Do you think you'll have more?

I12: No more (laughs)

CW: No more?

I12: No, no more (laughs)

CW: You have six already?

I12: Yes, and over here it's harder because I work so I have to pay the babysitters, so I don't make enough. If I have more babies I have to stay home and my husband doesn't make enough to pay the rent and everything.

CW: And now for example when you work, who takes care of the babies? Do you leave them with a babysitter?

I12: Yes

CW: Is she a woman?

I12: Yes.

CW: Is she Guatemalan?

I12: Yes.

CW: So you must have lots of friends here? Did you already know a lot of the women you met here, or are they new friends?

I12: Yes, I met them at work.

CW: Through work?

I12: Yes, some are from Chinique others are from San Andres.

CW: Oh they're from different parts of Quiche?

I12: Yes

CW: Did you meet people from other countries too?

I12: No they're all from Guatemala.

CW: Only from Guatemala?

I12: Yes

CW: And do most of you talk in the dialect or in Spanish?

(54:03) I12: We always speak in dialect.

CW: So in dialect with all of them?

I12: Yes, but we talk in Spanish with the ones from Honduras and the others.

CW: Oh okay, and how did you learn Spanish, here?

I12: Yes, Well at work like I said since I work with fish there is not many Guatemalans where I work mostly Mexicans and Hondurans and some Salvadorans.

CW: And they only speak Spanish?

I12: Yes they all speak Spanish.

CW: And the men? Are there some Guatemalans?

I12: Yes, but they don't speak dialect either.

CW: They don't speak dialect either?

I12: No, they just speak Spanish.

CW: Only Spanish.

I12: Yes, there is one guy that I know from back in Guatemala but he doesn't talk to me in dialect.

CW: He doesn't talk to you in dialect?

I12: No, and since I don't know Spanish (well) I talk to him in dialect. One time I needed help where the phone was because I needed a ride, and then he spoke with me in dialect and called the taxi for me but I was the one that was talking to him in dialect he always speak Spanish.

CW: So all the Spanish you learned, you learned it here in New Bedford?

I12: Yeah, but now I'm not speaking a lot of Spanish either.

CW: You're not speaking a lot of Spanish? For example when you're home with your brother and your husband you speak in dialect?

I12: Yes.

CW: And what about the kids- what do they understand? Do they understand both languages?

I12: Yes, I think both, because when they are with the babysitter, she speaks Spanish and she has about four kids here and they speak Spanish very well and they speak English too, and the kids are pretty good.

CW: The kids understand everything?

I12: Yes.

CW: And when they start going to school, they're going to learn English.

I12: Yes, I know.

CW: And do you think you will study English one day?

I12: Sometimes, but now I would like to study more Spanish.

CW: You want to study Spanish?

I12: Yes, because there are still things that I don't understand and others words that I don't know how to say.

CW: I see, so maybe you would like to study both languages and learn English too?

I12: Yes, that's important, but right now I'm not studying.

CW: So you still have your house in Guatemala? Do you call your kids often?

(57:01) I12: Yes, I call about 2 or 3 times a week.

CW: Oh okay so 2 or 3 times, do you call with phone cards?

I12: Yes with phone cards.

CW: Do they have a phone in the house?

I12: Yes, we got them a cell phone for them over there.

CW: They have cell phones?

I12: Yes.

CW: So you are always talking to them?

I12: Yes, now that I have the two kids here I don't call as often but when I didn't have them I would call almost every day. I felt like something would happen I would always

get worried and I feel better talking to them. Now that I have the two kids here I call just 2 or 3 times a week.

CW: That's good, well you talk to them on the phone but you haven't seen them?

I12: No, not at all.

CW: Do they ever send you a video or something?

I12: Yes, sometimes they send and we send them a video back and we can just watch them and that's it.

CW: It must be hard.

I12: Yes, it's not the same as being over there and now they are growing up fast.

CW: How old is the oldest one?

I12: The oldest one already turned 14.

CW: 14 already?

I12: Yes, he's going into 5th grade.

CW: How old was he? He was 6 already when you came here?

I12: When his father came?

CW: No when you came here?

I12: Oh he was already 11.

CW: 11 years old?

I12: Yes, he was a little older when I came here.

CW: And you left them with your mother?

I12: Yes with my mother.

CW: And does your mother have your siblings in the house?

I12: Me and my brother?

CW: Your mother.

I12: No it's my mother.

CW: You're mom and your dad?

I12: Yes, and my siblings.

CW: So your siblings are still at home.

I12: Me?

CW: Yes

I12: Yes, I have my 3 sisters and 2 brothers that are still young.

CW: So it's 5 of your siblings your mom and dad plus your 4 kids?

I12: Yes

CW: Oh that's a lot.

I12: Yes, plus my sister that got married but has two kids and then he (her husband) left her so she's there with my mother.

CW: Oh wow, so you're the one that is helping them all over there?

I12: Yes

CW: And your brothers that are here, they're helping too?

(1:00:00) I12: Yes, he's the one that helps my mom the most because he isn't married yet so he can send them more money.

CW: Yes, he can help out more. So what are your hopes for the future for your family?

I12: Well now I'm not sure what to think because we can't save any more money.

CW: It's difficult to save money now.

I12: Yes, and since we already have the house over there and we wanted to buy more land.

CW: But do you think you will go back to Guatemala?

I12: Yes, I want to leave already but my husband says that I shouldn't take the kids without going to school first, he would like for them to study here for a little bit.

CW: He wants them to study here, and what if the opportunity came up to get papers, like a work permit?

I12: Do you think I could do that?

CW: Well, I don't know maybe if there was immigration reform.

I12: Yes I guess but I didn't think of that.

CW: Thinking of the impossible, well but what if it was possible?

I12: Yes, I wish but I don't think of any of that I just think of my kids I want to be with them already.

CW: Yes you want to be with your kids it has been a long time of being apart.

I12: Yes

CW: But what would you if you went back to Guatemala? Would your husband stay if you go back?

I12: Yes well that's the problem he doesn't want to go back he says that everything is too expensive like meat like chicken breast is like 20 Q a pound and here its only \$4 a pound. So if you have \$100 that's enough to buy food. Over there you can't buy anything with 100 quetzals that's what he says why he doesn't want to go back. He says that if the kids are big enough then they can come here but if they were to come, the trip is now 45,000 Quetzals, where are we going to get it from? That's 8 or 9 thousand dollars and we have four of them over there.

(1:03:05) CW: Wow that's a lot of money.

I12: Yes and its four of them.

CW: Only if you had the chance of getting papers you can bring them by plane instead of land.

I12: Yes, that's what I say but that might or might not happen, and I'm worried that if they come by land they might not make it through the dessert because some people don't make it.

CW: Yes it's dangerous.

I12: Yes, that's why I don't want them to come here- I suffered a lot when I was in the dessert it was difficult.

CW: You struggled too?

I12: Yes, and I don't want them to struggle too.

CW: So your hope is to have the whole family together?

I12: Yes, that's what I want but if I leave my husband will stay here.

CW: Yes it's sad.

I12: Yes and the kids already want to see their dad- the youngest one the one that I was pregnant with when he left she says that she doesn't know him, she wants to meet him she was demanding that before.

CW: Yes it's complicated, it doesn't seem it- but it is especially with the family.

I12: Yes.

CW: So what do you think about the working with fish? Do you think it was something good or bad?

I12: I think it's good because we always make a little bit of money, like I said, before it was better for me because I didn't have kids and I didn't have to pay a babysitter but now I have to pay so I only have \$100 left for me.

CW: \$100, so you make \$150, \$50 to pay the babysitter and you have \$100 left for you?

I12: Yes

CW: Oh wow that's too little.

I12: Yes that's only enough to buy diapers and other things that's why sometimes I want to leave- but sometimes I think I'm better here because over there in Guatemala I would only make 10 quetzals but I have my kids over there so I don't know what I'm going to do.

CW: But is working with fish dangerous? Do people have accidents?

(1:06:02) I12: No I don't think so , where I work now there haven't been any accidents.

CW: Do they push you to work fast or is it a calm (pace at work)?

I12: How do you mean?

CW: Do they expect a lot from you to work hard?

I12: No not a lot, not like the other place where I use to work that I told you that they used to rush you hurry, hurry and they were always yelling at you.

CW: Yes? They yelled at lot? That was working with fish?

I12: Yes, and when we had a break they would only give us 15 minutes and if you didn't finish eating they didn't care- they would still get you back inside. But where I am now it's not like that, we get 30 minutes. They don't pay us the lunch time but at least we eat in peace.

CW: Yes that's true (laughs).

I12: (laughs) Yes.

CW: Well I don't know if there is anything else that you would like to say to give us a better idea to help improve the situation for the people that work with fish?

I12: No I don't think I have anything else.

CW: Okay well thank you for sharing your story with us, we learned a lot.

I12: Okay well I think that is it.

CW: Okay thank you again.

I12: No thank you!

(1:07:48)