

Anonymous- Immigrant Seafood Processing Woman -Interview # 4
27 years old
Female
Seafood Processing- Shellfish shucker
New Bedford
Guatemalan, Mayan

Interviewer: Corinn Williams
Transcriber: Corinn Williams

Place of Interview: New Bedford, MA
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KEYWORDS: Seafood processing, shellfish, clams, scallops, Guatemala, *tortillas*, *petates*, *milpa* immigration, family

Interview #4 (I4)

Corinn Williams (CW) I'm going to start in English

I4- You are going to ask me the questions whatever I things I am going to answer?

CW Yes I'm going to start-

This is Corinn Williams I am going to do another oral history- It's February 10th, no February 11th It's

1 PM and we are here at the CEDC and I am here speaking to a seafood processing worker and she will be telling her story in Spanish.

(Spanish) I just explained where we are and the date, and as I explained a little bit before, as there are a lot of changes going on with the laws regarding fishing, this study is to find out more about the lives of these who make a living working with shellfish or fish, they are interviews that want to know more about the lives especially about women who work in seafood processing. The interviews will not include your name or personal data so that you can talk openly about your experiences, not just about working with fish but in general about your life story.

I4- But you can't record both of us at the same time? (she was accompanied by her sister – in-law)

CW- Well it would be kind of complicated to do it that way, but if we can do another interview after but if we don't have time today, maybe another day we can ask her the questions too.
Sister-in-law- But whatever she answers it will be the same as me.

CW- Well, everybody's story is a little different, but the question will be the same, more than anything they want to hear the your voice to help inform what kinds of laws will be passed, and if you say I don't want to work in shellfish anymore (laughs) no you won't say that but if there is no more shellfish it would affect you- so, How old are you?

I4- 27

CW-27 Maybe we can talk about before what was your life like? Where were you born, when you were born, you are 27 where were you born, your birth date?

[03:18] I4-In Guatemala

CW- Where in Guatemala?

I4- In San Andres.

CW- Well, can you explain a bit about what life was like? Your house, did you live with your family?

I4- Everything was good, that where I grew up (laughs), I don't know.

CW- But what was your life like in San Andres?

I4- Everything was o.k..

CW- Can you explain a little about your home did you live with your mother and father, explain to me a little about your family?

I4- We were all in one house and we all ate together (laughs).

CW- How many of there were you in the family?

I4- All together there are 11 of us with my parents 11 – five women and 4 men

CW- That's a lot!

I4- umhum

CW-And what position were you the youngest the oldest, what number were you?

I4- I'm not sure how old is the youngest now the youngest is 17 years old

CW- So you are like in the middle?

I4- umhum

CW And what kind of work did your father do?

I4- For now nothing, he's just at home, last year he had a broken foot and in addition he has an illness

CW- What did he do while you were growing up what did he do?

I4- Just growing corn (*milpa*) raised for us to eat, only that.

CW- So he had his own land?

I4- Yes he has his own land.

CW- So you lived from the *milpa*?

I4- Yes from the *milpa*, whatever grew from that.

CW- What was it like to live in a family of eleven?

[06:04] I4- (laughs) Well we all slept in one room the kids, every bed had three or more than two slept in a bed.

CW- Did you go to school?

I4- Yes we went to school.

CW- Did you live in the town?

I4- No in a village.

CW- And how did you go the school?

I4- Walking- it was close the school was in the village too.

CW- Did you like going to school?

I4- Yes.

CW And your mother, what did she do at home?

I4- She made the food for the children

CW Was she working day and night making a lot of tortillas?

I4- UmHum- One has to make the tortillas.

CW and did you eat shellfish or fish? Did you ever go to the ocean when you lived in Guatemala?

I4- No tiny fish but not big fish The fish near our house were just little ones (laughs) my sister in law thinks it's funny!

No there wasn't any shellfish.

CW- So before you came here you didn't know what shellfish was. So talking about life in San Andres, what was a typical day like, what time did you get up? What time did your mother get up?

I4- Oh, like at four or five when she had to work farther away she had to get up earlier.

CW Where did your mother work?

I4- Well, she worked at home she would have to make the tortilla dough to grind on the stone.

CW- How is the dough made?

I4- First you cook the corn the day before and when its cooled in the morning you have to clean it and then to grind it on the stone and after the stone you (*tortiar*) make tortillas and that how they are made (laughs).

CW So do you grind corn on the stone every day?

I4- Yes every day..

CW- And when the time are that there is no more corn left, do you have to dry and store it -what is that like?

[09:10] I4- Well, we dry the cobs and thats how we store it we store it all and when there is none left, you have to buy it (laughs).

CW And now it comes made in a bag (precooked tortilla dough).

I4- But where we're from it doesn't come in a bag, but they do have it in a bag, but my family doesn't eat it that way-my father says (the tortillas) have no flavor (laughs) he likes the real thing.

CW And can you get the real thing here?

I4- Here we eat (tortillas) from a bag.

CW- Why?

I4- Because you need a lot of things to cook the corn.

CW- And when did you learn to make tortillas?

I4- Oh like when I was nine or ten years old , when the kids ate small they are given a little piece of dough to learn how to do it too (laughs).

CW- Like a practice.

I4 -Yes, for the girls a practice like they do it here to teach little kids that what they do like here too.

CW- What other kind of work did your mother do?

I4-She made *petates* (straw mats).

CW- And what is that work like to make *petates*?

I4-I don't know what you call it but you have to take out the part that is inside (of the straw) and then dry it then make like braids because its wide it take a long time to make one. She did that work.

CW- And did the kids help too?

I4- Yes, we helped wash the clothes we would spend all day doing that -ah ha-washing clothes making *petates*, the food we'd spend the whole day.

CW- And your father?

I4-He'd be sowing, working in the field (*arreglando*).

CW-And did you you go to market?

I4 -On the weekends.

CW- What was it like to go to town to go to market?

I4- Well my mother would go shopping and we'd stay home.

CW -Did you go too sometimes?

[12:01] I4- Once and a while.

CW(I explained I visited San Andres during the fiesta).

D -Oh! (laughs).

CW- The fiesta was very lively/happy (*alegre*).

D(laughs).

CW- Did you ever go out to the fiesta?

I4- Yes-that I did-its three or four days long (laughs) I don't remember how many days long.

CW- What it that you miss most about San Andres?

I4-I miss my parents the most, to not see them.

CW- It's been a long time since you have not seen them.

I4- Yes a long time.

CW- Are they still farming do your brothers help him?

I4- No, now they have to pay someone to farm for them to raise corn if not they won't eat! Because my father can't do it has to look for someone to do it for him.

CW- And how are they supported now?

I4- By us (she and siblings in the US) we have to send them money so that they can buy their things.

CW- How many of you are here now?

I4- Six of us.

CW Do you still have brothers and sisters at home?

I4- Two little nieces/nephew a boy and a girl and my sister, the youngest.

CW and is she in school.

I4- Yes she is studying.

CW- What grade?

I4- In (fourth basic) eighth grade.

CW- Are you helping with her studies too?

I4- Yes, it's very expensive.

CW Do you parents still live in the same house you grew up in?

I4- Yes.

CW- What kinds of other activities are your family involved in do they go to church-or?

[15:12] I4- Yes they are Catholics.

CW- Do they work putting on the fiesta?

I4- No I don't think they are involved in that-I don't believe so.

CW- Do your mother work on the *petates* all year long?

I4- Yes every week she works on them.

CW- How many does she make in a week?

I4- To sell per week she makes three or four.

CW- How much does she sell them for- do you remember?

I4- Before she sold them for 35 (*quetzales*) but now maybe she gets a little more I don't know maybe 50 *quetzales*.

CW So she can make about 3 in a week.

I4- Yes , if she really gets to work on them but if she has other things to do its gets put aside.

CW- But when the kids can help.

I4- Yes but now she her working on them all by herself.

CW- But now she doesn't make them or is she making them still?

I4- Yes she still makes them, but not as much- more to just pass the time.

CW- Its kind of different how work is over here- one has to go out to a workplace, and over there it's more like part of your life at home.

I4- Aha (yes).

CW- You are at home but you can still earn a little money while at home, but at the same time one is cooking and taking care of the kids, it's different.

I4- Yes but it turns out that you don't earn almost anything.

CW- But overall, do you think you have a happy/calm family-did you have any family problems?

I4- No – my parents didn't talk about it-for me everything was o.k. It was good that they didn't fight.

CW-And when was the first time you were aware of the United States?

[18:06] I4- When my siblings were here, they called me to come and I came (laughs).

CW How many siblings came first?

I4- There were three when I came.

CW- Did they come together?

I4- No separately, one by one.

CW- And they asked you to come too?

I4- Yes, to see how they were doing to come here too to suffer in the cold (laughs).

CW- What did they tell you about life in the US ? How is they convinced you come?

I4- They said it was nice/beautiful here.

CW Just that- that it was nice?

I4- Yes thats was they tell you and you come and well (laughs).

CW So how old were you when you decided to come?

I4- I had just turned 16.

CW What were you doing at that time- were you studying (in school).

I4-- No, I wasn't studying anymore.

CW- What were you thinking about your future during that time?

I4- Nothing really, I wasn't thinking about that .

CW -So your siblings said to come , so how was it that you came here , what was the trip like?

I4- Well there was someone who brought us.

CW- Did you travel in a group?

I4- Yes in a group.

CW -With others from San Andres?

I4-Yes there were about seven of us who left from there and we all arrived here.

CW- What year was that?

I4- 1997.

CW- And you were 16 and during that time had you been other places in Guatemala like to the Capital?

I4- No I never went there.

CW- And how was the trip?

I4-I don't know I didn't think about it (laughs) I just came.

CW But you weren't afraid?

[21:04] I4- No I just thought about getting there so I came.

CW- And what was the trip like?

I4- Well, it was hard to come all the way here it is so far.

CW -Yes it's far.

I4- It takes a long time to get here.

CW- But how was it- you left home did you say goodbye to your parents and brothers and sister?

I4- I didn't see my brothers and sisters. I thought that maybe I'd return. I don't know, maybe I thought I would be back soon, maybe I wouldn't get through (the border) so I just left, my father told me he hoped I had good luck to not be turned back.

CW -He never made the trip (to the US)?

I4- No just my brothers and sisters-just us.

CW-And your brothers and sisters had been here already a long time?

I4-first they were in Guatemala (City) and then they came here. But not the two of us (refers to herself and sister-in-law still in the room).

CW -But were you sad I would imagine.

I4-Not so much, once you get accustomed to being here.

CW- But on the day you left?

I4 – Oh yes I think so.

CW- And the trip- what was the trip like?

CW- I almost don't remember too much about it (laughs) walking, sometimes in cars.

CW So you weren't caught (by immigration),

I4- Just when I came here I got caught.

CW When?

I4- I think in 1998 when I was working and I got caught.

CW- What company?

I4- (Name of company) do you remember?

CW- Yes -how did you case turn out?

I4 – I didn't go to court.

CW Why not?

I4- I don't know, I didn't think about it, They told us to come for appointments for two years and they said I didn't have a strong case so I didn't go- and now we just wait for the next day that we we get caught again (laughs).

CW- And so coming to New Bedford did you go to your brother's house?

I4- UmHuh

CW- What did you think about life here?

[24:17] I4- It thought it was better-everything was different, but things look very sad/grim(*triste*).

CW- What month was it?

I4- The month of June- July I believe one of those months I'm not sure if it was June or July.

CW- Was it cold?

I4- A little you felt the cold.

CW- Not like it is now (February) not like this morning.

I4- If I had known, I would have returned back (to Guatemala) soon! (laughs) Yes it was very cold.

CW- How have you adapted to living here- at first what did you think of the food- was it different did you like the food?

I4- Not at all.

CW And during that time you speak Spanish?

I4 _ I spoke it , but not much. When I was in Guatemala I was only at home, and we only spoke dialect (K'iche- Mayan language).

CW- But you spoke Spanish too?

I4- Yes at school I learned.

CW What was the hardest thing about adapting to life in The United States?

I4- I think English.

CW- But at first did the food seem different and strange?

I4- Yes you feel bad and you just stay at home closed up at home indoors.

CW- So you just stayed at home at first?

I4- Yes for a couple of weeks I didn't go to work, I don't know.

CW -And after that where did you get your first job?

I4- In seafood processing at (name of company).

CW- Great, at first you hardly ever ate fish and now what's it like to be in an environment working with so much fish what was that job like?

I4 (laughs) that was ugly/unpleasant (*feo*)- you stunk like fish (laughs) stinky.

CW -And you had never worked outside of home before that was the first time you were working -what was that experience like did you work with co-workers?

[27:10] I4- Yes that's who shows one how.

CW- Did you make friends there?

I4- Yes.

CW- Some that you knew before?

I4- No only some of the men I knew before, but not the women.

CW Were there many women working there?

I4- Almost all Portuguese women and some from Guatemala but from other villages.

CW Can you explain a little bit about your first job what is it that you did at work?

I4- Cleaning the fish.

CW- Was there a lot of work on did work slow down?

I4-Before there was more work. We'd go in at 6 AM and sometimes get out at 6 PM- it's not how it is now.

CW- What is the difference now?

I4-I think that now there's no more hours.

CW- How long did you work at (name of company)?

I4- Not long, I think it was about six months and then I left. And then I went back again, then I left when I got pregnant and then I didn't go back.

CW-So you worked there cleaning fish-how do you clean fish, can you explain a bot about that?

I4-You take off the edges cut it off were its been cut already.

CW Did they put them through a machine?

I4- No at the table we cleaned them- but they put them through a machine to take off the skin then they get brought to the table.

CW -They bring it to the table after the skin and bones get taken out-with a knife?

I4- Yes with a knife and then there are taken out when they are clean.

CW -But did you didn't have any experience in this before cleaning the small fish (in Guatemala)?

I4- It was totally new. No, they teach you how to do it (at work).

CW So you got pregnant in what year?

I4- 2000- 1999 I believe my little girl was born in 2000. I had left but then returned to work . But then when I became pregnant I left again.

CW-What was the work environment like did they rush you to work fast?

[29:57] I4- Well you always get bossed around they tell one to work fast.

CW-But was there more work during that time?

I4- Yes.

CW Were there days you worked 12 hours a day?

I4- Sometimes we worked more, sometimes we stayed until 8 or 9 at night during those times but right now you never hear about people working until 10 PM.

CW- There isn't as much fish ?

I4- Ah ha.

CW Yes, that's what we are trying to find out with this conversation for this difference and how much did you earn during that time?

I4- No we didn't earn much.

CW Did you get paid overtime?

I4- Yes we did.

CW- Did you work that way all year long?

I4- Yes .

CW- Did you work only with fish or was there shellfish too?

I4- No all fish.

CW- Was it fresh fish or frozen?

I4- I believe it came fresh yes but also frozen too.

CW-And after (company name) where else did you work?

I4- At a scallop company.

CW And what was that work like?

I4- It was different we had to sort the big ones from the small ones.

CW- They were already out of the shell and it was just to sort them?

I4- A ha yes- they were already cleaned from the boats there I worked for more than a year, I think. And later I went to the shellfish company and that's where I stayed (laughs).

CW- Was at the scallop place where you were caught (by immigration)?

I4- No it was another plant where they froze (scallops) another place where they caught me it was a shrimp and scallop (place) where they were frozen- there were a lot of hours. We'd go in at 2 PM sometimes we'd work all night or we'd work at night and go in at 4 PM sometimes we'd go in at 2 PM until 2 AM or 3 AM.

CW- A lot of hours.

I4- But for us it's good that there are a lot of hours! (laughs) it's not the same when there is no work.

CW At that time did you already have your baby?

[33:04] I4- No not yet, I was still single, working.

CW So was that the second job you had?

I4- No I think it was my third.

CW But you only worked one job at a time At the second place were there a lot of Guatemalans working there too?

I4- Yes a lot of Guatemalans.

CW- So it was a fresh scallop company, but the third company is where they froze the product?

I4- Yes they froze the shrimp and the scallops, just that frozen there.

CW- So during this time you were earning money, how did you live at home? Were you always living with your siblings?

I4- Yes with my sister and a sister-in-law, cousins, uncles.

CW -How many?

I4- Like five people (lived in the house).

CW And your little girl's father, was he your boyfriend? Did you meet him here or did you know him before?

I4- No I met him here.

CW- How did you meet -at work?

I4- He was a friend of my brothers.

CW- And he commented about you to your brothers?

I4- (laughs) Yes, he commented about me and he visited my brothers and we used to see each other.

CW- Did you like him right away?

I4- No we were just friends at first.

CW -Did you ever imagine that this would happen to you coming to the US?

D-No I only thought I was coming to work.

CW- And during that time did you have to work a lot to pay off your debt from the trip (to the US). How long did it take you to pay that off – how much did it cost?

I4- I don't know, I didn't pay it all. My brother helped pay and he told me to leave it at that, and seeing as we got caught, there was no other option than to leave the job. So he told me to forget it, because I don't know, there was no work, and we couldn't go back to work because immigration told us that we could no longer work.

CW- So what happened during that time when immigration came to the company- what happened?

[36:32] I4- I don't know, they said that someone told them to come.

CW- But they go in like at the other raid (Bianco)?

I4- We were just working and we found ourselves surrounded by immigration. There were about 15 of us inside, they made everybody stop what they were doing, they restrained us and took us away.

CW- But were you detained?

I4- No they let us go.

CW- But you had to go to court- but what do you think that someday you will be able to straighten this out , if someday there is a chance to get a work permit?

I4-That's what I used to think but I don't know in order to get into that you really have to think about it because if not it would be worse for me if I was told I would have to leave.

CW- And you wouldn't want to go back to Guatemala?

I4-In one sense, I need to be ready to go back, but to go back with nothing, that would be worse.

Imagine having to go back with nothing and with children, now I have a family and I wouldn't have a reason to go back to my mother's home.

CW- But what is your preference- to stay here?

I4- Of course for my daughter, for her.

CW- Is she big already?

I4- Yes she's already big.

CW How old is she?

I4- She just turned seven.

CW- Does she go to school?

I4- Yes.

CW- What was it like to have a baby in another country, to go to the hospital, did you have friends who already had babies?

I4- Um-hum

CW- Did they help you out?

I4-Mostly her (sister-in-law- still present in the room)(laughs).

CW- Do you still live in the same house together?

I4- No we live separately.

CW- And who lives in your house?

[39:01] I4- Just us, my daughter and her father.

CW -What's it like to support your family by yourselves? Are the expenses high?

I4- I don't know. Well we both work and we go half and half on the rent. He pays a half , I pay a half but we buy the food together. Like that- and that's how we pass the time...

CW- Does your daughter's father also have family in Guatemala that he helps out?

I4-Yes he helps out his parents too.

CW- What does he work at?

I4- He was working at a place that makes windows but now he's not working.

CW -Tell me about the work you are doing now- how long have you worked n shellfish?

I4- Well I went there after my daughter was born and then I went back and so now it's seven years.

CW It's kind of far how do you get there?

I4- its about 15 minutes by car.

CW-How do you get there? Do you drive?

I4- No, I don't drive somebody brings me.

CW- Would you like to learn to drive?

I4-I don't know with the problem I have with immigration, I don't want to get involved with that.

CW- How has it been to work with shellfish for the past seven years?

I4-Well I do it for my daughter, because imagine if you switch jobs all the time, it's not the same if it's only you working, and if you can't find work, what would you do? You know you have work every day.

CW What is the work like can you explain a bit? Where do the shellfish come from?

I4-From the sea.

CW- Yes I know from the sea (laughs), but for example, how do they get to the company -by truck?

I4- Yes a truck brings them.

CW- What kind of shellfish are they?

I4 -Well I call them all “shells”. But I think they have other names.

CW- Are they clams or oysters? What do they call them?

[42:07] I4- I don't know the ones we call “shells” are a ball and they have a nose attached- I don't know (laughs).

CW- They have a nose!

I4- Yes a little head with a nose but I don't know their real name.

CW- So its not clams?

I4- Not oyster either .

(sister-in-law -a coworker explains)

It's what they use in restaurants to put a batter on it and it comes out like onion rings-the long shells are like that and you have to cut off the head and split the shell in half to get all the meat out

(note see https://www.diggerschoice-seafood.com/about_us.php- I think she means steamer clams?)

CW- Do they eat them raw?

I4- No-they just make them fried.

CW only fried?

(Sister-in-law)In the restaurants that's how they prepared them.

CW- Do you like to eat them?

I4- I've never tried them.

(Sister-in-Law)- I've cooked them steamed, when they are cooked in the steam then they open up and that's how to eat them.

CW -And so the actual shell is a gray color , right?

I4- Aha (yes).

CW But are they are not big?

I4-Yes there are big ones.

(Sister-in-law)- There are big ones but they are long shaped.

I4- There not round.

CW -Are they smooth or spiny?

I4-No, smooth kind of like a scallop but a scallop is round-kind of like an oyster, the same size and lengths but its has its nose.

(Sister-in-law) They put them under hot water for about a minute and then they put them on ice.

CW- So that is what gets prepared fried ?

(Sister-in-law) That's how they are cleaned and ready to be sold.

CW- And the oysters too- do they prepared like that too?

[45:11] I4- No they stay in the shell .

CW- So they are clams?

(Sister-in Law) No clams are the black ones.

CW- The black ones are called mussels with orange inside?

I4- UmHum.

(Sister-in-law)- There is another one that is bigger than the black ones.

CW -There's another big one that they mix with bread crumbs and fill the shell.
So I guess it's what is used to make fried clams. So do you like to eat them?

(Sister-in-law)- I do! I like the littles ones when there are very fresh to stick them in the microwave-they come out very delicious.

CW- You can cook them on the grill too?

(Sister-in-law)- Ahum.

CW- That's how my cousin makes them. Well, what other questions do I have...what exactly do you do at work?

I4- Well, I take them out of the shell and cut off the little head, they have a little thread that it

dirty on the edge and I take that off- just that.

CW And you do that by hand?

I4- Yes by hand and with a little knife.

CW- How many people work there?

I4- There are 30 of us , more or less, of cutters (shuckers).

CW -Are there more of less than before, over the past seven years-what difference is there since when you started to work and now?

I4- Before there we only a few of us.

CW- And now it grew to 30 people, but is there more work?

I4- No there's less work because there are more people to do it.

CW- But are there times when work picks up?

I4- Yes in the summertime.

CW- Do you know where the product comes from? Direct from the boats from around here or from another place? Do you know more or less where it comes from?

(Sister-in-law)- I'm not sure, but I think they collect them at the beach and other people come by to sell them, but we don't know where they come from.

[48;39] I4- The truck goes to get it from the same company.

CW- Is that also part of the company those who collect (harvest) the shellfish?

I4- Yes its part of the same company.

CW -So are you pleased with working there for the time being?

I4- Yes.

CW- And to care for your daughter , how do you manage?

I4- I have to leave her early.

CW- When does work start?

I4- When there is a lot of work at 6 AM.

CW- What time do you get up?

I4- At 5 AM sharp to drop my daughter off early.

CW- And she goes to school?

I4- Yes she goes to school.

CW- Where do you drop her off- with a lady?

I4- I used to leave her with a lady when she went to school but not now -her father is at home, so he takes her.

CW -And so she can rest a little more?

I4- Um hum.

CW -And how is she doing in school- good? Does she like it?

I4- Yes she likes it.

CW -But everything at school in in English I imagine.

I4- Yes everything is English.

CW- Does she show you her homework sometimes?

I4- Well, when she was in first grade it was tough for her- she hardly spoke any English and she didn't have the mind to form the words and her homework didn't come out. But now that she is in second grade, she understands a lot better. Sometimes she doesn't know things and she asks me what is that in Spanish and then she puts it in English.

CW- But does her teacher speak Spanish?

I4- No only English.

CW Which school does she go to?

I4- Fadda Fadden..

CW- Hayden McFadden? Are there people at the school who speak Spanish to help the parents?

[51:05] I4- Maybe, but I don't visit the school, but if I need to bring her to school there is someone there who speaks Spanish.

CW -So when you work do you get there in time to pick her up?

I4- Yes .

CW- You always get there on time?

I4- Yes.

CW -Are you thinking of having more children?

I4- I don't know right now.

CW- It's a big difference here to have children when you work.

I4- Yes it's a shame to have to wake them up so early, they're so small.

CW -How do you compare childhood here to childhood for little girls in Guatemala-what's better?

I4- Well in Guatemala parents are able to raise there kids at home- its not the same here. Who know's what they are up to (when you are working).

CW- There you don't have to bring them out of the house to worry about them bringing them all over the place. And after all, do you think it was a good decision to come here to the US? Did you imagine that things would be different, would you have stayed in Guatemala?

I4- I think it's better to be here , over there you are working at home but no one pays you. But here as long as you are working, you are earning something.

CW- So as a family you are supporting your household and your daughter, but is there enough left to help out your family too?

I4- It's something you have to set aside because if not- they call and they have nothing, poor things.

CW- But it must be hard when work slows down.

I4- Yes that's true, you really have to make the most of it when there is work. You have to save some because when work slows down , they are not left without anything to eat.

CW- You are always thinking of them.

I4-You have to think about it because if not, Winter comes and you won't have it.

CW And your siblings are also helping out too?

[54:04] I4- Yes.

CW All of you help out a little bit.

I4-My parents ask them for help.

CW- And how much do you send?

I4- Since my father is sick, he has asthma so we send money often.

CW -Do you and your siblings send the money together or separately?

I4-Separately, because sometimes one doesn't have it, but if we get together and everyone agrees, we send it together. If not, each person sends money when they have it.

CW- Do you parents have a phone at home?

I4- Yes they have a cell phone at home.

CW- So how often can you talk to them? Every week, every two weeks?

I4- I call every week sometimes twice a week or at the least every 15 days.

CW- But your daughter has never met her grandparents?

I4- No, she has seen them only by photos or videos.

CW- But does she have a lot of cousins over here?

I4-Yes a lot of cousins.

CW -Do you have sisters here?

I4-Yes I have 2 sisters here.

CW -2 sisters and how many brothers?

I4- 4 brothers.

CW -2 sisters and 4 brothers, so there's seven of you and all of you are in New Bedford?

I4-Yes all in New Bedford.

CW -So do you all get together for holidays and parties? You have a big family here.

I4-Yes there's a lot of us.

CW -What do you celebrate- Christmas, birthdays?

I4- Yes Christmas, New Years , children's birthdays.

CW -And of your family members, how many of them work in seafood processing?

[57:01] I4-Almost all of us except one who works in a restaurant.

CW- And the rest?

I4- There work at the same place as I do -in shellfish.

CW- So after 10 years here one must be more accustomed to it here?

I4-Yes one knows when the cold is coming and to wait for the warm weather to come (laughs)
you know all about your job.

CW- Well, do you think it's a good job in seafood processing, are there parts of the job you don't like?

I4-I don't know maybe I'd like to have a cleaner job, but because of not speaking English, that's why you can't get another job. On the one hand, and on the other hand, because of not having your papers.

CW- Are you thinking of studying English someday?

I4- Yes I'm studying now.

CW -Where?

I4- At a school , I'm not sure what its called, its part of an organization.

CW- At Maya K'iche? (organization assists Mayans in New Bedford) .

I4- No, a lady who I met at City Hall registered me.

CW - Was it (person who assists immigrants)?

D-No a friend of (person) her name is (person) she a girl from Colombia.

CW- Yes , so she found the slot for you- is it the class at the church?

I4- Yes in the church basement.

CW -Yes I know the program- we used to work with that program.

I4-I don't know what it's called and I haven't asked what it's called.

CW- Is it a big class?

I4- Yes there are a lot of people.

CW -How many days do you go?

I4- 2 days- Tuesdays and Thursdays.

CW- Do you like to learn English?

I4- Yes its nice.

CW- Because you need it here.

I4- Yes you need it.

CW- So at home do you split up the expenses with your husband half and half?

[01:00:08] I4- Yes, half and half, so there is no one who is earning more. But if he made more money he'd have to pay everything! (laughs).

CW- But when it comes to money, do you make your own decisions? Like if you were say "my Dad needs medicine" he wouldn't say no or deny you this?

I4- No- what he earns is his, he has to help his parents too. What's mine is mine, I have my parents too.

CW -Do all couples work like that ? Because here it varies, there are couples where men are the only ones working and the wife stays home. Or else it's like that -each one who works manages their own money it depends on the family.

I4-That's true- I don't know how others manage it.

CW -But it like that in Guatemala.

I4-I imagine that it's only the fathers, because men go out to work and women stay at home. And the men go out to do the shopping.

CW-So here its different?

I4- It's different.

CW -So above all, speaking of work, I don't know if you hear it in the news that there has been

less fish coming to the companies because of some of the regulations at sea. do they talk about this at work?

I4- No.

CW- So more or less how many hours a week do you work?

I4- Now I don't work more than 30 hours, sometimes only 20 or less.

CW- But in the summertime it picks up?

I4- Yes then we work 40 hours.

CW- Do you work all year long or are there times when there is no work at all?

[01:03:07] I4- There is always some if it's a few hours, but there's always some, even if it's only one or two days a week. (Cell phone rings-music)

CW- Well, do you have any other comments?

I4- I don't know.

CW -So what are your greatest hopes for the next few years?

I4- Well with whats going on now I would hope that they would find a way to give us a work permit so we would have to be so afraid.

CW- Are you afraid these days?

I4- Yes it could happen that you could all of a sudden be picked up like nothing, if there could be something so that maybe we could work in peace.

CW -Would you keep working in shellfish if you were to get a work permit would you change jobs?

I4- I'd stay there I think.

CW- What kinds of hopes do you have for your daughter?

I4- That she stays in school, that would be best for her. Hopefully she we will be here so that she can complete her schooling- because if not...(laugh) you would just have to accept it.

CW- So she is in school now and she likes school?

I4- Yes she likes school, but if we were sent back she would have to study in Spanish too. But maybe there are schools over there in English too , but she would get used to it.

CW - So she speaks Spanish, does she speak in Mayan dialect too?

I4-No she just speaks in English and Spanish.

CW- But does your mother speak Spanish or only dialect?

I4- Just a little bit, she understands a little..

CW -Are you thinking of teaching your children how to speak dialect too?

I4- She know a few words, but its like she doesn't remember them, she asks me about how to say certain words because she hears us when we talk, so she captures some of the words, maybe someday if she wants us to teach her, she can learn.

CW- Do you speak Mayan dialect with your husband?

[01:06:01] I4- No he doesn't speak in dialect.

CW- Is he from San Andres too?

I4-No he is from another village.

CW -From where?

I4- from Joyabaj

CW- Joyabaj is in Quiche too.

I4 -He maybe speaks it , but he is too embarrassed to speak, his parents don't speak it anymore either.

CW- But are you thinking of teaching your daughters how to make *tortillas*?

I4 – Yes, I'm showing her already. She is practicing-one has to learn how to make *tortillas*(laughs).

CW -What else does she need to learn? She won't learn about *petates* here.

I4- No (laugh) what I teach her is making *tortillas*, washing dishes, cleaning the table- just that- is what she knows how to do. She is still little, but you have to learn what it is to be a woman (women's work) if not, she get used to not doing it, the way we learned, she has to be taught too (laugh) .

CW- But at your house (in Guatemala) did you have to carry water?

I4-Before yes, you had to carry water, bring it back , but not anymore, now they have a faucet at home, they have electricity. Things are advanced a little more, not like before, there was no electricity, it's better now.

CW -And for washing clothes?

I4-By hand.

CW- In the basin. So do you think women work harder here or over there?

I4-I would say over here (laugh).

CW -Why?

I4-I don't know (laugh).

CW- In spite of doing laundry by hand, preparing the *tortilla* dough-but here it's harder?

I4- Yes, because here you work the same as a man, there it's just the work making the food , in contrast here you have to work the same as everyone else.

CW- You work outside the home and work at home too.

I4- When you leave work, you have to come home to do the other work, you have to make food.

CW Does your husband help at home?

I4- Yes, on the weekends, he cleans the floors and cleans the house, so he helps, except for making *tortillas* (laugh). But he knows how to cook a little, but you have to watch him from behind (laugh).

CW -Great, if there is nothing else...

I4-Nothing else.

CW - Thanks so much, well, part of this study is about how all of you who work in fish or shellfish are affected and how important you are to helping to help grow the fishing industry, because you are helping the companies, restaurants and so that we can eat the fruits of the sea!

Many Thanks!

[01:09:59]

End