

Collection #
SC 3478
DVD 1460–1462

**CHILDREN OF MARIA CARMEN VELASQUEZ
INDIANA LATINO HISTORY PROJECT INTERVIEW
25 JUNE 2017**

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COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION: 1 manuscript folder; 3 DVDs

COLLECTION DATES: 25 June 2017

PROVENANCE: Velasquez, Adamson, Bertram, Masterson, Mitchell, and Vasquez de Bertram Families, Muscatine, Iowa, August, 2018

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ACCESSION NUMBER: 2018.0239

NOTES: This forms part of the Latino Oral History Project

HISTORICAL SKETCH

Maria Carmen Juarez was born in Parsons, Kansas, in January of 1921. Her parents, Catalina Rico Juarez and Jose Juarez, immigrated to the United States from Mexico. Both migrated from the state of Guanajuato to Kansas at different times. The Rico family migrated sometime 1917 to escape the turmoil of the Mexican Revolution. Catalina and Jose moved to Chicago, Illinois, shortly after Maria Carmen's birth. Jose passed away in 1924 in a Chicago sanitarium due to tuberculosis. Catalina raised her children in Chicago. Maria Carmen's childhood was affected by polio, in which she spent her time in hospitals and convalescent homes up until the age of 14. Observing nuns and social workers planted the seed for her future advocacy work.

Maria Carmen met her future husband, Albert Velasquez, in the 1930s. His family consisted of farmers who lived in Elgin, Illinois. In 1941, Maria Carmen and Albert were married and they moved from Chicago to Fairmount, Indiana, to live with Carmen's family in 1947. Albert's father, Cipriano, was also a farmer in Fairmount. Soon after Maria Carmen and Albert started their family, they moved to Marion, Indiana in 1948. In total, they had ten children.

Carmen retired from migrant outreach work in the early 1980s and died in 1985 at the age of 64.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

Several of Maria Carmen's ten children, several sat down to tell their mother's story for this oral history interview; Catherine "Cathy" Velasquez Mitchell, Celestina "Tina" Velasquez Masterson, Charles Velasquez, and Mary Margaret Velasquez de Bertram recall growing up in Marion, Indiana. Additionally they recount Carmen's advocacy work with the migrant community in Marion. She first began as a sole volunteer in the 1960s, reaching out to migrant farm workers and their families to see what their material or spiritual needs were. She reached out to the community and the local Catholic Church to help assist those families. Her work garnered the support of St. Paul's Church and the Third Order of St. Francis priests. A seminarian by the name of Jim Bates worked with Carmen to write the articles of incorporation to develop the organization called AMOS or Associated Migrant Opportunity Services, Inc. AMOS was a not for profit that was funded by the Indiana Office of Economic Opportunities. AMOS had various offices throughout Central and North Central Indiana. In this interview, her children give a detailed account of a march from Marion, Indiana, to the Governor's Mansion in Indianapolis and a sit-in protest at the Indiana State House to raise awareness and advocacy for migrant farmer worker rights in the early 1970s.

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