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Los Del Valle Oral History Project

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It has been said we live in a Magic Valley. Some say its enchantment is in its flora, fauna and cuisine – what we see, what we hear, what we eat. Its real magic, however, is in its people, whose syncreticism and identity are indivisible. They give this place its cultural and historical soul.

Manuel F. Medrano

Los del Valle Oral History Project Brief Description and Edited Volumes

The *Los del Valle Oral History Project* began in 1992 with the objectives of collecting and preserving the historical recollections of people in South Texas researched by scholars and underdocumented in archives and published research. Some interviewees have received national acclaim, such as folklorist and scholar Americo Paredes, conjunto pioneers Narciso Martinez and Eva Ybarra, writer Carmen Tafolla and Medal of Honor recipient Jose M. Lopez. Also included are Benito Trevino, ethnobotanist from Rio Grande City and Mary Helen Berlanga, educational proponent from Corpus Christi. One volume focuses on the culture and heritage of the Charro Days celebration. Another is about the Brownsville shrimping industry. This is one of the first oral history collections about Mexican Americans in Texas to be preserved on videotape. Thirty edited volumes and numerous unedited profiles are on loan at the Latin American Studies Collection in the Nettie Benson Library at the University of Texas at Austin.

Volume One – [*En palabras de nuestra gente* – 28 minutes](#)

Antonia Medrano from Brownsville, Oliver Brenner from Port Isabel and Narciso Martinez from La Paloma speak about their lives, the 1933 hurricane and the importance of a formal education.

Volume Two – [*Dr. Américo Paredes* – 28 minutes](#)

This eminent, folklorist and scholar, speaks about his life in Brownsville, the importance of oral history and his professorial career.

Volume Three – [*Rolando Hinojosa, Tejano Author* – 28 minutes](#)

The Additionally, Hinojosa reads passages from his short stories and novels.

Volume Four – [*La música en la sangre, Sabino Salinas* – 28 minutes](#)

Several long-time friends and musicians of música regional, conjunto and norteña speak about their lives and their love of music. They also perform some favorite songs.

Volume Five – [*La música en la sangre, Joe Lopez* – 28 minutes](#)

Joe Lopez, co-founder of the acclaimed Tejano group Mazz, speaks about his life and musical career.

Volume Six – [*Charro Days, the First Sixty Years* – 28 minutes](#)

This is a history of a border celebration recognizing the friendship and common culture and heritage of the border cities of Brownsville and Matamoros.

Volume Seven – [*El huracán del Valle – 28 minutes*](#)

The pioneer of conjunto music reminisces about his musical career, his life in the Valley and changes in contemporary music. Fellow musicians and scholars comment about his legacy.

Volume Eight – [*Los camareros – 28 minutes*](#)

This history of shrimping in the Brownsville area includes comments by two generations of shrimpers with photos and footage. This business once made Brownsville the shrimping capital of the world.

Volume Nine – [*The Episcopal Day School, the First Fifty Years – 28 minutes*](#)

This school celebrates fifty years of quality private education. Directors, teacher and students comment about their experiences in the school and its legacy.

Volume Ten – [*Barbara Warburton, La maestra – 58 minutes*](#)

For over three decades, this biology teacher established a rich tradition of classroom teaching and research at Texas Southmost College. She helped to establish the Rancho del Cielo biological research station in northern Mexico.

Volume Eleven – [*Las raíces en los Ranchitos de San Isidro – 28 minutes*](#)

The Rio Grande Valley has a rich ranching heritage. Three generations of a small ranching family speak about their lives on a South Texas rancho in San Isidro. Historian Armando Alonzo comments about the history of Tejano ranching.

Volume Twelve – [*Los bomberos, medio siglo de historia – 28 minutes*](#)

The volunteer fire department in Los Fresnos, Texas celebrates fifty years of service. Firefighters across generations reminisce about their experiences, challenges and loyalty to firefighting.

Volume Thirteen – [*Benito Treviño, Lo que comemos, lo que nos cura – 58 minutes*](#)

This ethnobotanist speaks about his youth and his family rancho in the northern Rio Grande Valley. Additionally, he gives a tour of his Las Lomitas rancho and comments about edible and medicinal plants in South Texas.

Volume Fourteen – [*Carmen Lomas Garza, Chicana Artist – 28 minutes*](#)

One of the most successful Chicana artists speaks about her youth in Kingsville, Texas and her motivation to become an artist. Lomas Garza also presents and comments about some of her art.

Volume Fifteen – [*Celebrating Our People, Los del Valle – 28 minutes*](#)

This Hispanic Heritage Month tribute focuses on individuals who have enriched and preserved the history and culture of the Rio Grande Valley. Among these are folklorists Américo Paredes and Jovita Gonzalez. Individuals highlighted: Rosa Maria Hinojosa de Balli, Jovita Gonzales, Jose Mendoza Lopez, Americo Paredes, Chelo (Consuelo Silva), Rolando Hinojosa Smith, Frank Yturria, Mary Rose Cardenas, and Juliet V. Garcia.

Volume Sixteen – [*José M. Lopez, Un hombre valiente – 28 minutes*](#)

This military hero received numerous medals for bravery during World War II, including the Medal of Honor. Lopez and family members speak about his early years in Mexico and the Rio Grande Valley, his career as a boxer and his celebrated military career.

Volume Seventeen – [*Olga Lozano, Frontera Pharmacist – 28 minutes*](#)

This Harlingen, Texas native was one of the first Latinas to receive a pharmacy degree from The University of Texas at Austin. She recalls her early years in the Rio Grande Valley, her educational experiences in Austin and her later career.

Volume Eighteen – [*Américo Paredes, En sus propias palabras – 23 minutes*](#)

This great folklorist's life is chronicled through interviews, video clips and personal recollections. Comments about his legacy are included from colleagues and family.

Volume Nineteen – [*Día de los muertos, Two Days in November – 12 minutes*](#)

Images of the Day of the Dead celebrations in the United States and Mexico are presented with original music and popular recordings as a background.

Volume Twenty – [*Dr. Juliet V. García – Against the Odds – 28 minutes*](#)

A native of Brownsville, Texas, Dr. Juliet V. García is the first Hispanic woman to head a four-year university in the United States. As one of the most influential educators in the country, she shares her life story and her experiences at The University of Texas at Brownsville and Texas Southmost College.

Volume Twenty -One – [*Dr. José Angel Gutierrez – Never Let the Flag Fall – 52 minutes*](#)

A native of Crystal City, Texas, Dr. José Angel Gutierrez is one of the most influential civil rights leaders in Texas history. Founder of the Mexican American Youth Organization and La Raza Unida Party, he is currently a college professor and attorney in the Dallas area. In this autobiographical profile, Gutierrez speaks about his life as an activist and educator.

Volume Twenty-Two – [*Mary Helen Berlanga, Education Advocate – 28 Minutes*](#)

This immigration attorney and twenty- five- year member of the Texas State Board of Education has championed textbook and curriculum equity for children much of her professional life. Her life struggles and achievements are chronicled in this profile.

Volume Twenty-Three – [*Don Jacinto Tzab Chac, Pasó por aquí – 29 Minutes*](#)

At the dawn of the new millennium in January 2000, Don Jacinto Tzab Chac, a traditional Mayan shaman, visited a professor in the lower Rio Grande Valley. During his stay, he shared his life story and a ritual over 2000 years old, the bringing of the rain.

Volume Twenty-Four- [*Juan Luis Longoria, El Ultimo Vaquero- 28 minutes*](#)

Born on a South Texas rancho, Juan Luis Longoria worked as a cowboy and foreman at the McAllen Ranch for over 40 years. He reminisces about why he became a cowboy, his most memorable experiences and how cowboy life has changed.

Volume Twenty-Five- [*Carmen Tafolla, From the Whispers of Her People-28 minutes*](#)

This award-winning author and poet from San Antonio comments about how her family and barrio inspired her writing. Tafolla encourages young writers to find their own voices.

Volume Twenty-Six- [*Oscar Casares, Soy del Valle-28 minutes*](#)

Brownsville native and acclaimed writer, Oscar Casares uses his childhood memories and the culture of the Rio Grande Valley to create stories with a universal appeal. He recalls turning points in his own life that impacted his career.

Volume Twenty-Seven – [*David Montejano, Mi Vida de Roller Coaster – 29 minutes*](#)

With a professional career spanning over three decades, Dr. Montejano is a San Antonio native, Yale graduate and recipient of the prestigious Fredrick Jackson Turner award for his groundbreaking book, *Anglos and Mexicans in the Making of Texas, 1836-1986*.

Volume Twenty-Eight – [*Valerio Longoria: For a Quarter a Song – 29 minutes*](#)

Valerio Longoria, innovative and legendary conjunto musician, speaks about his life and career. Flavio Longoria, his son, comments about his famous father.

Volume Twenty-Nine – [*Eva Ybarra: Siempre La Reina*](#)

The Queen of the Accordion talks about her life and the many challenges of being a female conjunto accordionist.

Volume Thirty – [*From Accordion Roots to Conjunto Music – 28 minutes*](#)

The origin of the European accordion is traced to the Chinese sheng. South Texas conjunto music evolved from both.

Website -

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCgs6x_PIUsfMh3tfws72hMw

Suggested Reading –

Adams and Knopp – Portrait of a Border City

Zamora, Orozco and Rocha – Mexican Americans in Texas History

Gonzales - Mexicanos