



RELEASE FORM

I hereby give and grant to the Butte Historical Society as a donation for such scholarly and educational purposes as the Society shall determine, according to the regulations of the Society, all rights, including copyrights, to my tape-recorded memoirs, except for such restrictions specified below.

I also specifically grant Teresa Jordan, for valuable consideration, the right to use all or any part or paraphrase of any of my statements (with the exception of restrictions listed below) in connection with her proposed work of non-fiction provisionally titled Butte, America: Lessons From a Deindustrialized Town, as well as related articles. I understand that, unless restricted below, my name and photo may be used in the work and in related advertising and publicity.

Restrictions:

4-2-86  
Date of Agreement

Lula A. Martinez  
Narrator

128 1/2 N Idaho  
Address

Butte mt  
City, State, Zip

Teresa Jordan  
Interviewer

Butte Historical Society  
PO Box 3913  
Butte, MT 59701

12 Apr 1988  
Accession date

Mary Murphy  
Archivist

## NOTES ON USING MATERIALS FROM

### "IS THERE LIFE AFTER COPPER?" ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Because of limited funds available for this project, audited transcriptions of the tapes were not possible. However, there are detailed notes for most of the interviews. The user should be aware of a few limitations on the use of these notes. Unless otherwise specified, the notes were taken at the time of the interview and were not later audited against the tape. They can give you a good idea of what was covered in the interview. However, if you find something specific that interests you, you should verify it with the tape. Because the notes were taken quickly during the interview, they may include inaccuracies. If you use information for attribution, you must go back to the original tape.

There are rough transcriptions for many of the interviews. Again, because of time and funds available, these transcriptions were not later audited against the tape. They are more accurate than the notes, but again, if you use information for attribution, check it against the original tape.

A few interviews have restrictions against use of the tape. The notes for these have generally been read and corrected by the subject of the interview and are accurate. Check the releases for further information.

Lulu Martinez and Angelina Costello, interviewed in Angelina's home, April 2, 1986, by Teresa Jordan.

[Just as I finished an interview with Angelina, Lulu came over. We all continued to talk and this interview resulted. (See interview with Angelina Costello, April 2, 1986) Lulu and Angelina are half-sisters.]

Notes taken at time of interview; not audited against tape; not a transcript.

During 30's, Lulu's step-father (Angelina's father) got job with WPA. Lulu lied about her age and got a job with the National Youth Administration. She worked in a WPA sewing room; did same work as WPA workers, but was paid less. She never got her own check; rather, it was included in her father's. She doesn't understand how they could do that.

Q: Has prejudice in Butte decreased through the years?

You can get a job now, but it's just as bad. You can put your resume in, but it will sit there unless there are no whites for the job. If you confront that, they are upset.

Angelina took a family of migrants into welfare; they needed money to leave. They got \$5 apiece from welfare. Angelina's family raised about \$75 apiece for them. There are Federal funds to help migrant workers, but the welfare wouldn't use those funds as they should have.

When Lulu first came back to Butte, she tried to get assistance. They told her, 'you're from out of town.' But this is her home.

Angelina was over-issued food stamps once. The welfare department demanded she pay it back in cash. She said she wouldn't pay it in cash; she would pay in stamps. She never heard from them again.

Lulu says that the law says that if you are overpaid by welfare or social security and can show that it would be a hardship for you to pay that money back at a later date, you don't have to pay it back. The law is good, but the people dispensing the funds abuse the law. One woman came into the Butte Community Union, told Lulu she had been overpaid, was now having to pay it back. She had made a payment in cash, had not gotten a receipt. Lulu said; you continue to make the payments, but get a receipt. Both Lulu and Angelina wonder what happens to that money. There is no record of it.

Two years ago, a law was passed saying that to receive benefits, you had to sign a form that said YOU were liable for any administrative mistakes. Angelina just crossed that sentence out on the form before she signed it. She doesn't think it is right that she should be responsible for their mistakes.

Federal monies come into the welfare department. Those people have to keep enough people dependant on them to keep their own jobs.

Tape 1, Side B

Queenie Lynch, who just resigned as administrator, was there for years; she refused AC and LM's mother help! She told AC and LM one time that they were proof of generations on welfare. They told her, that was what kept her job for her. Welfare isn't changing for the better; they just reword the same laws and regulations.

Q: How did your mother cope?

When her family was young and welfare refused any help, she had boarders. Also, other people came to eat. She never charged; they would put money under their plate, whatever they could afford. Some left a lot, others very little. She had two that lived in the house, two rooms; the others were from town, would come for meals. The hardest thing was to clothe her kids. She got clothes from the Salvation Army. At Christmas and holidays, the church would bring second hand clothes, cookies, and broken toys. Sometimes, their mother would have to throw out the clothes because they were so dirty. Lulu remembers how she hated the church because they never did anything good; they never brought anything usable. Their mother was very, very religious. If she had a good day, she would send one of her children to church to put 25 c in the box. Yet the church never helped Mama when she needed to pay rent or the light bill.

When Mama was sick, the priest never showed up at the house. They were poor, they didn't have anything to give him, so he never showed up.

One of the things that people remember about their mother; During the depression, she had a social security check from Lulu's fathers' death. She would make big pots of soup and beans, and feed all the kids in the neighborhood. Sam Mazzola remembers her. They all went to Grant School. They would fight together, eat together, go to school together. Mothers would send kids to play with LM and AC and their brothers and sisters because they knew Mrs. Aguilar would feed them. She helped adults, too; would send big baskets of food. Yet later, when she had hard times, when she lost her property, nobody helped her.

Yet she believed with all the goodness she did, it was paid back. If you have it and someone needs it, the Lord will provide as long as you share. Whenever the trains would come in, their brother would take beans and tortillas down to the the trampitas, the bums. Or if there was just one that came in, he would bring him back. Mama never turned anyone away.

Lulu says that to this day she doesn't know how their mother did

it. It was a miracle. She had 11 kids, four boarders. She fed them beans, potatoes, tortills, chicharones (pork rinds).

Frank Harmody, an Arab, would go to the railroad each day, pick up vegetables and fruits in broken boxes. What he couldn't sell, he would bring to Mama.

When she died, so many came to her funeral that they couldn't fit in the church. All the kids she fed and had helped remembered. Her name was Petra. She hated doctors. She died at 52 of a ruptured hernia. She went to the County Hospital, where St. James East is now; she knew she wasn't coming back. She was mean to nurses, but they were good to her; they knew she was in pain. Every day, the doctor would say, she won't last through the night; but she lived six months. She was very stubborn.

AC says that they were raised poor, and they are survivors. They know what it's all about. They are not going to commit suicide. One of her brother's friends committed suicide after he was laid off. But they are not like the middle class who have always had everything. A lot of people think that being poor is humiliating; they don't realize that it's a state of mind.

Lulu says that people should learn to survive by their wits, not by their job.

Lulu and Angelina volunteer to work at the Food Bank. In return, they get food. That lets them keep their dignity. You find ways.

People learn to survive. In Portland, where Lulu lived for many years, several single mothers got together, rented a house, paid their bills together. Those who worked paid into it, others took care of the kids. They survived because they shared what they had.

Here, that coordination is lacking except for Dallas Doyle's mission, and that is only for three days. If people learned to share, it wouldn't be so difficult, especially for single parents.

Sister Kathleen has said that someone is here who wants to start a program; she wants to discuss projects for senior citizens, perhaps pair up people with similar interests so they can live independantly.

LM feels there is so much potential here, but something is holding it down.

Q: Lulu, Angelina said that at one time Butte was a town of Hispanics. What do you remember of the community then?

Baptismals were big. You did them at home, and invited everyone. Children were included, there were no baby sitters. There was lots to look forward to--parties; Christmas was a big

thing; everybody cooked and cooked and cooked. People did a lot together, even made costumes, clothes together. There was music in every home.

Angelina says that families then were happy. Now, both parents work, and kids have cars. They get taken to school.

Mexican philosophy is different than American philosophy. American philosophy is that if you are in need, you are depressed. Mexican philosophy is that when you are in need, you should be the happiest; you don't want to show your hurt because it will hurt others.

Tape 2, Side A

There are ways to hurt worse than to be poor. Your spirit can be poor. Hunger is one thing; to be poor is another. If you've got a belly full, then you're not poor. There are others who are to be pitied.

Q: What do you remember of Christmas?

They would have a Christmas tree, and dress and undress it 15 times. They decorated it with decorations made at school. You didn't see differences in other neighborhoods. Nobody had more. You made angels in school out of the Readers' Digest; every home had an angel made out of the Readers' Digest.

There wasn't the peer pressure to have more. Angelina's grandson hangs around with rich people. He doesn't go without.

Angelina and Lulu say, we have a lot; we are actually very rich.

Lulu remembers going with her stepfather to dump the garbage. She loved that. She would find magazines--the Saturday Evening Post, National Geographic. National Geographics always had maps; she loved that. She would bring them home; they would cut out pictures, made dolls, dress them. When they were through playing with the magazines, Mama would have them crinkle up the paper to use for the fire. Evrything was saved and used. Their mother used newspaper for wallpaper; the kids could write and draw on it. They say I will laugh, but they used the tissue wrappers that came around fruit for toilet paper. They had an outhouse.

Q: What sorts of things did you give each other for Christmas?

They made things in school. The art teachers always helped them make a picture for Mama. They made candy from watermelon rind. They always saved things for each other--like a piece of candy. Or they would do something for each other--like the dishes or clean up the room.

Their mother saved the pine needles from the Christmas tree, would put it on the back of the stove. It smelled nice, disinfected the house.

Once, their mother had four in diapers at the same time.

"We didn't have time for peer pressure."

The girls were the oldest in the family; they had to help--chop wood, etc. Lulu still likes to chop wood. Mama made so many tortillas that she wore her knuckles down. The little bump that you have on your wrist; their mother had worn that bone down to nothing.

She never sat down until all the kids had eaten.

She left a legacy; none in the family would ever turn away anyone who was hungry. Lulu, her daughter, and her granddaughter all do community work. It's something they can not NOT do. They would feel guilty if they didn't.

Lulu and Angelina educated themselves, because the schools were glad to get rid of them. Miss Erickson was the only teacher they remember as being different, and she was nice to them. She is still alive. Angelina took classes to get her GED from Gina Esperanza several years ago; she gave classes, she let people go at their own pace, wouldn't let them take the test until they were ready. And she was Hispanic, so she understood them.