E: Today is April, 26 2010 I’m in the International Studies Building, my name is Errick Spencer and I am interviewing....

A: Alejandra Seufferheld, nice to meet you

E: Nice to meet you too, I am interviewing this for the Latin American Caribbean Studies 395..... 395 course for the U of I

E: Um, so today, like I said I’m doing an oral history

A: Um hum

E: and so I know you are from Argentina,

A: yes

E: so tell me a little bit more about that and a little bit more about yourself

A: Ok yeah I was born in Mendoza, Argentina, Mendoza is one of the providence or states of Argentina, I born in south Mendoza, Mendoza has two largest cities, one is Mendoza City and San Rafael in the south. My parents both my mom and my dad families both were from San Rafael and my parents both grew up in San Rafael and they met over there and got married and we have five siblings and we born in San Rafael, Mendoza

E: ok um you told me where you’re from and when you were living in Argentina, how was life there as a child?

A: Was very nice (giggle) really happy, really nice as child because of my father’s work we lived in different places we lived in Mendoza, San Rafael, but we lived in other cities um especially when it was my first years and after that we lived in Buenos Aires for many years, I was very family life-style and very happy and I love family life-style and like any child I think I was good with things like playing and going to school and helping at home and in Argentina that would be family um times are very important and its very important for example to get together with the family every day and to have lunch together and dinner together it’s something that you didn’t question its everybody would have lunch and the meal with the family especially the lunch this is the time when everyone got together.

E: so lunch was an important time for family to get together

A: oh yes, yeah everybody gets together for lunch and only if the person cannot for working reason um but, it’s the time when the family gets together it’s the important meal of the day its more lunch than dinner

E: really

A: in Argentina um hum
E: so I heard you state earlier about your fathers work can you elaborate on that just a little bit more like what did your father do for work when you was living in Argentina.

A: he was working in the army uh on for this reason we were living in different places

E: so by..

A: and the

E: oh sorry

E: So by your father living in the army it cause you guys to travel and move around a lot

A: yes um hum yes....

E: So what would you consider your family status as in the social class during the Argentina, would you consider your family middle class citizens

A: middle class

A: you know when I was child in Argentina, the middle class in Argentina was very very large the majority was middle class, there was a very big number of middle class in Argentina. But we also (mumbles) with my family we always lived with a salary, and my mom all day she use to have a notebook were she took note of all the expensive and she stretched the salary to live uh and living with a salary yes she stretched the salary to... to live my ma yeah... we didn't have extra with one salary.

E: So the one salary is from your mother.... Correct?

A: my mother stayed at home with us basically.

E: So describe... describe school like growing up in school grammar school, junior high.

A: in Argentina, when I was child now it’s a little different but the school use to be elementary school only elementary school and high school no middle school elementary school from kindergarten or first grade to 7th grade was elementary school and high school was five years from 1st year of high school to 5th year of high school

E: that’s that’s a big difference from

A: but it’s the same amount of years in total its 12 years it’s the same like here instead of middle school. Uh one thing that is very important in Argentina is I understand know is the same that is very different here in the united states that at school you used to have the same class mates all elementary school and all high school you don’t change from year to year with class mates and this way you creates really good uh relationships really good friends for years and years because you were classmates for many many years the friendships are very strong.

E: did you have a lot of friends when you were in school and..
A: oh yes, um hum yeah and it’s very common to have friends and from your childhood in Argentina, because you went to school many years together

E: are those friends still in contact with you

A: oh yes um hum oh yes yes

E: and just thinking about you say it’s still the same amount of years because um elementary school here is from pretty much from kindergarten to eight grade and then high school is four years so if you still add it up it still equals the same amount of years

A: yes the same amount of years yeah, yeah but this for example in high school you go to high school and you choose for example I for high school I went to one um how do you say specification in business um and then for example my husband he went to one school that specification in agro in agriculture and agriculture uh for example uh there are specification in for example in education and the courses you take are you have the basic courses an more courses specialize in the subject and the high schools for example in my high school there were two divisions A and B but I always went to B with the same class mates from 1st year of high school to 5th year and we didn’t change the classroom was a same, some students maybe moved to another school or we have new student each year but you have the same classmate for years and years.

E: that kinda sounds like college here you know it seems like you pick the specific major and specific field you wanna study in and you have your regular classes but then later on you focus more on that particular goal or the particular major or specific study you tryna achieve

A: but one difference is that over there you have the same classes all together you don’t in the universities the same you don’t at the University of Argentina you pick a major for example and the major has a program and each year with the classes for the 1st year 2nd 3rd and you have to take these classes you don’t have electives and then the university you go together with the same classmates year by year taking all together the same classes

E: do you consider the your elementary school and high school do you consider it like a strict like strict based on education like do you go to school year round do you get breaks or is it this like work work work and you know is it kinda hard for the students is it like the principal they determine everyone to be smart and they want everyone to come out to be bright bright students or is it kinda laid back like you go and you have gym and you talk and play with friends kinda describe how high school was in a way

A: no you have a lot time to go do homework and study but you have a lot of time to to yeah go to sports play to have to go to other programs uh I think in over there because of my daughter grow up here sometimes I saw here more pressure over here in the schools that they have to be the best that they have to have an A and be the best over there you don’t have this pressure

E: you
A: you have to pass the classes but it's not this pressure that to be the best (starts pounding fist) be the best be the best like for example we learned all this stuff here with my daughter all the grades that you have in high school are very important to go to university later it's like here the students have the pressure during the high school to have very very good grades every year because this affects when they wanna go to one university or another university pass their ACT uh in Argentina NO when you go to university doesn't matter what happened in the high school you have to take a test sometimes it's a course sometimes its half year sometimes its one year course um you have to take this course pass its exams to be admitted into university

E: did you have to take the ACT or SAT

A: no they did exist in Argentina, NO, no, no you have to take this test that we call pre like a pre-university test each school for example if you wanna go to engineer you need to go to these courses in engineer that's like during the last year in high school you takes these courses and take the test they are difficult test and you have to pass to be admitted.

10:41

20:06

E: now I did some background information on the country Argentina and one interesting thing that I found out once again this is an oral history and uh I like history and war history and country history and during class we came upon the war the Dirty War and I never heard of it and when I found out you are from Argentina Im like WOW I wanna ask a few questions about the Dirty War and so and I know you were living there during that time so can you tell me just like how was it living there was it scary?

A: um hum you know that im going to tell you what the things that I remember uh especially this was because this was in the 70's and I was in high school around this time uh you say around the 70's

E: yes this was around the 70's early 80's

A: I was in high school around this time you know this morning I was talking also to my husband to see what he remember and uh and something are very close I met my husband a long time after that uh he lived in another neighborhood and a lot of places over the city he used to live in a lot of places uh the thing I remember is uh about the this time uh yeah there was uh we were I was very afraid because every day or very often like a 3 times per week was very common the insecurity and it was a lot of insecurity in the city uh because of the attacks uh of the people of the people that they were uh...... they were uh how do you say the guerrero uh

E: guerreros, uh, war, the war people, like people fighting

A: no not people fighting no the people that attack argentina the peole that attacked from the guerreros for example they put bombs uh on they they uh um how you say secretary people uh attack people and they put bomb uh it was very common to be at home listen and bomb and you don’t know
what part of the city uh uh this this this years was very this time was very hard because the insecurity was big was

E: so they were like terrorist
A: terrorist!!! yeah um hum the terrorism um hum the terror the insecurity was oooohhhhh was very hard

E: so these were Argentinean people that Argentine people that were the terrorist
A: um hum yes um hum
E: so was
A: the majority

E: was it like a rebellion against the government or...
A: yeah they wanted to opposed this their ideals so so yeah rebellion about the government that they attacked the people they attacked the common people because in the city yeah it was insecurity was very very yeah you listen bombs anytime you know and was very insecure
E: so it was a scary time pretty much
A: oh yes um hum
E: and I also read something about the disappeared the disa.. people were coming up disappearing
A: um hum this is another thing that happened yeah um hum
E: did you know anyone?
A: no personally no personally, my husband he he say that he rememeber his block uh that two times that the police went in uh and uh looking in the house looking just asking and uh they like a closed the block and they were looking house by house but uh this is the only thing that I I I personally didn’t no nobody
E: did this affect the economy, like did it make prices rise or prices go low like in the grocery stores?
A: you know this happened but I cannot tell you right now maybe I need to study more story the economy in Argentina was worse for many years but I don’t remember if this is relating to this one or after or during during this time or after because in some communities after about the 80’s for example was terrible that the prices change (snapped fingers) in the same day 2 3 times uh but this was more in the 80’s
E: so like prices of milk could’ve went up 2 or 3 dollars in one day?
A: um hum no I don’t know this this amount but 50 cent yeah for example
E: um hum
A: uh in the time of the imperial inflation was this is this was another cause for insecurity there were no bonus there were no but this was insecurity over the imperial inflation was terrible for example there were in the supermarket in the line to pay and you listen you hear ok at this time everything goes 10% more or 20% more and the thing you were planning to to spend for example 10 10 dollars and at this time you have to pay 10 by 10 during in the same time for a few minutes would change this was another kind of insecurity was terrible

E: did did you meet your husband in Argentina or

A: yes in Argentina um hum

E: so what year what year did you come to the U.S

A: we came in 1987, we were married and um we met him i met well we met each other in the last year of the university

E: and what was your main reason for coming to the U.S?

A: ok we came because uh he had good grades his mom was living here in Miami uh and he he always had the dream to do a master and he studied English and he prepared for the 12/50 pass it and he applied to the university to a master and he was accepted to Colorado State University and if this reason we get married and we went to Colorado and he did his master degree and his PhD in Colorado.

E: now has your identity change since you have become to the U.S do you consider yourself more as an Argentine woman or do you consider yourself more Americanized in a way?

A: no I I still consider myself Argentinean uh when i go to Argentina now I realize that with all this 20 21 years somethings I don’t think I Americanized but I think for example that before was completely normal for me I realized things like for example things like the order that here everything is cleaner in order or the traffic is very in order over there the traffic is a mess the city is sometimes is a mess and and its like a your more aware of this stuff and when your inside you don’t be able to see this stuff

E: did did you come to the U.S with with goals or a plan like I wanna go to school here  I wanna have a big house

A: um hum

E: did you have the “American Dream”?

A: when in our case no when we came we came for two years only for the masters and that’s it and we always have the idea to go back uh but the things were not too easy he finished his masters but didn’t find his master over there and he had opportunity to work on PhD here and after he went over there he had opportunity to work post doc and he didn’t find any over there but yeah I have always consider myself Argentina and Argentinean and uh I’m still dreaming of (giggle) going back to Argentina
E: what when you lived when you lived in Argentina did you have a specific view of how it was in American did you view American people in a certain way or were you just you just didn’t know how it was over here?

A: you say when I go there or before?

E: before you came, here did you have a specific view of how America was?

A: no, but not specific over there the people think that all over here everything it’s very easy and uh all the people are very happy and all the people over here are living good and its very easy but the thing that I say it’s like get money so easy the thing that I say to everybody for years you know for many years when we were students with very low salaries uh and the 1st years for example for us uh very special thing we did uh (giggle) we never went to a movie no because we didn’t have money here uh we was uh tea urban tea and this was a special thing a night to drink urban tea

E: (giggle)

A: now we laugh but uh but um and I say to everybody here is no easier that the salaries are in proportionally are they a lot better in Argentina the salaries are very low they are I think very low and things are expensive here the salaries are more uh yeah just are better but it no easy like to have a salary it’s it’s no easy you have to work you need to work a lot to survive to but because because we didn’t have this dream to to stay we didn’t came to stay here for example we lived in the family housing when in Colorado we lived at the university and here also the 1st years here we lived in family housing and in total in our lives we lived I think 16 years in family housing that is crazy (giggle)

E: (giggle)

A: that’s to many years we were renting because we we didn’t thought to buy house if we were planning to go back.

31:30