

My father worked in the fields, as a bracero a few years ago. I was a child and did not understand why my father had to leave us, in Gomez Palacio Durango Mexico always, especially when the weather was fine. We only got to see him in the wintertime. But I knew he was a hero, in my eyes. He was working in the United States to help the economy, to bring food to the tables of many Americans who otherwise would have to send children or moms to work. My father did hard labor in the fields of California, Oregon and Texas. I do remember some of his letters even if I could not read them at that time. I also remember the pain of seeing him leave on those ugly buses, through the chicken wire fence that separated us from him. He was in a concentration camp, getting tested, being exposed to the elements. I am sort of glad I did not know all those details in those days, it would have horrified me. I remember asking him why he would not take us with him, to the "Land of Opportunity." He never gave me a clear answer but now I know. In those days Mexicans were the undesirables in the cities, in Texas most of all. In those days people were getting deported for no reason, the only known one was because she looked Mexican. Those people were called all kinds of names and were banned from many places, except for the fields. Well, as I grew older I made it my mission not to be discriminated as he was. I had to move from Mexico, in 1984 due to the lack of resources in my country. The peso was not good anymore and the articles of daily life were very expensive. I never knew when my children would eat meat or anything anymore. I was married at that time and my husband lost his job with a maquiladora. I was working but I was hardly making it. I brought the family to Kansas, to work in the meatpacking company there. Our life was very difficult but we made it. I think those difficulties my father went through made me who I am. I finally got my teaching degree in 1998 and I love my job. While I teach Spanish, I love English with all my heart... my next job is to be a good ESL teacher, if I get my masters degree.

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