My Mothers Journey to America

My mother was born on June 9, 1964 in a small Mexican town named Cuatro Milpas in the state of Sinaloa. My mother lived there with her two sisters and brother. My mother didn’t recall much as being a small child in Mexico. My grandfather was a farm worker who began working in California in 1967. My grandfather entered the United States under the Bracero Program to work on the fields in California. The program allowed Mexicans to temporarily work in the United States in agriculture which is significant because the bracero program is an important part of Mexican immigration into the United States. My grandfather took this opportunity to bring his family to America. My grandfather would work long hard days in the fields for very minimum wages, but he was still making a better living in the United States than he was in Mexico. While working in the United States my grandfather saved enough money to apply for a visa for my grandmother. My grandfather dreamt of bringing his family to America to have a better education and more opportunities than that they would have in their small hometown. After my grandfather was able to obtain a visa for my grandma he decided to bring his family to California for a better life in America. My mother and her siblings were unable to
obtain visas to enter into America. When my mother was four my grandfather decided to bring them to America without documentation. Even though my mother and her siblings were unable to obtain documentation my grandfather arranged for his friend and his family to take my mother and her siblings to California. My mother kind of laughed when she told me how she came to America. My mother and her brother and sisters hid in the back of a truck passing through the border. My mom remembers being excited to come to America. She thought it would be a wonderful different place completely different from her home in Sinaloa. My grandfather made the decision to take his family to America because he wanted his family to leave Mexico in search of a better life in California. He had no other way to bring his family to America other than bringing them illegally. My mother and her two sisters and brother were taken to Paramount by my grandfathers friend to join with my grandparents. My grandfather believed that in Paramount that they would have a better life than living in Sinaloa Mexico but it wasn’t easy.

None of my mother's siblings spoke English and it was hard for them in school. When my mother began going to public school, kindergarten, she was held back a year because she didn’t speak English. My mother had a hard time learning a new language and it was very different for her to speak English at school and use Spanish outside the classroom. My mother's siblings also had a hard time with learning a new language. Although my mother had a hard time learning English she loved to go to school. My mother enjoyed going to classes and learning. During school vacations and breaks my mother and her family would travel back to their home town to visit relatives. My mom was always happy to visit family. Even though my mom liked to visit family she was excited to go back "home" to Paramount. My mother loved her new home and always referred to it as her home even though she was not a citizen.
While living in Paramount my grandparents had three more children, two boys and a daughter. All of whom gained citizenship while my mother and her siblings were still illegal aliens. My mother felt jealous about the fact that they were citizens, but her and her siblings were still not able to obtain citizenship. Later that year my grandfather returned back to Mexico in search of more work. My mother and her family were very poor at that time and my grandfather was feeling pressure about their economic situation. My grandfather was unemployed at the time and was told by friends of how to make easy money so he decided to join his friends in illegal immigration after they had persuaded him that he would be making good money. In Mexico my grandfather was helping Mexican citizens get across the border to enter the United States in search of jobs and a better life that relatives had told them about. My grandfather was making good money and was able to support his family still living in the United States. My grandfather was helping people cross the border for about two years until he was caught. My grandfather served time at Lompoc federal state prison for a few years. My mother told me about when her and her family would go to the prison to visit him a couple of times at the prison. My mom hated going there to see him and never liked to visit. She never liked the prison and thought it was an awful disgusting place. After serving time in prison my grandfather lost his citizenship and was immediately deported back to Mexico. About a year and a half later my grandfather reentered the United States illegally and came back to Paramount where my mother and her family were still living. My family never really talked about my grandfathers life until me and my cousins were older. Me and my older cousins didn’t really know what to think about when we were told that our grandfather was a "coyote". We had all seen the border patrol shows and how it displayed illegal immigrants as criminals but we couldn’t think of our grandfather as such. We never thought of our family as criminals entering the united states without visas. We thought it was the
right thing to do for our grandfather to bring his family to America because of their limited opportunities in Sinaloa.

In 1983 My grandparents returned back to Mexico and bought a house in the town of San Vincente in Sinaloa. My mother lived with her sister in Morgan Hill at the time where she met my father. They dated for a few years and finally, they got married on July 25, 1987. A few years later, my parents had me then my sister and my brother. My mother gained her citizenship in 1997, it took a very long time for my mother to gain her citizenship. The same happened for my mother's siblings as well. Unfortunately for my uncle he was always in trouble with the law. My uncle was sent to prison for five years. I remember when I was a small kid going to visit my uncle. When we went to go visit him for the first time I never really understood why he was there. When me and my family went to go visit him my mom never wanted to go. Going to the prison reminded her of when she went to visit my grandfather in prison. When my uncle was released he was deported to Mexico. Now my uncle lives in San Vincente with my grandmother. In 2007, my grandfather passed away and my grandma stayed behind in Mexico. When my grandfather passed away my entire family came to San Vincente for his funeral. I remember when we got to my grandfather's house it was very grim at first. My uncles and aunts all stayed with my grandmother to comfort her. My family was very sad about my grandfathers passing. Later that day when we arrived my uncles had all of us guys come help them. They didn’t tell us what we had to do until we arrived at the cemetery. My uncle had us come help him dig our grandfathers grave. Me and my cousins weren’t expecting it. We didn’t think we would be responsible to dig his grave and other people were supposed to. When me and my cousin were digging his grave all my uncles were sharing stories with us about our grandfather. How all the good times they had with him and all the bad times. When we finished we went back to my
grandmother's house where everyone was sitting with my grandmother. This was the first day I started learning about my grandfather's life. Before I never knew much about him and my families history. I thought it was sad I never got to know my grandfather and the second time I saw him was at his funeral. That night before his funeral my mother began telling me and my cousins stories about my grandfather. And my mother told us about her and her families journey to America.