

**Topic:** My father in-law's experiences in the farm land as worker.

**Abstract:** My father in-law worked as a farm field worker in El Paso Texas. He worked in the cornfields and chili fields of New Mexico. He also worked in Castroville California in the artichokes fields from 1953 to 2003. He never went to school because back then only the rich people can afford it. Everyone in the fields were Mexican, and the work was hard, plus he need to work harder to help his family. More important he needed to bring money to his family. Despite that he was often called name because he was uneducated, my father in-law never gave up.

**Keywords:** Working Conditions, Personal Optical Problems in life and at work.

I'm proud of my father in-law because he worked to have a better life for him and his family. Thanks to my father in-law working hard in the fields he was able to send my husband to a university. This is important to me because if it wasn't for him I would not be attending school right now. No mater how tough things got my father in-law never gave up. Even when he was insulted because he was Mexican he still pushed forward to meet his goals. My father in-law was born in a small town in Mexico called Conchos Chihuahua. It was the year 1940 when he was born in a small ranch of about forty acres of land. All his childhood was worked on a ranch taking care of his father animals. In 1953 something bad happen to his father past away of old age. This is when he began to became a man. It was hard for my father law to due this job because he had 12 more mouths to feed in his my family. The ranch was not doing good because the animals were getting sick and the crops were dying because they did not had water. It was really tough for him because he felt that he was loosing everything. He went to the bank to ask

for help and they laughed at him because he was child and not a man. So he decided to make the toughest decision in his life which was to leave his family.

He went to a place he called el Norte which means United States of American. At that time, United States was making contracts for Mexican people to work in the fields which back then they called them Braceros. He said that when he was Nogales, Mexico they were some people hiring workers that would take them to El Paso Texas to work in corn fields and chili fields in Las Cruces New Mexico. My father law had to lie about his age because if they found out he was young they would not give him work. When he was working in El Paso picking corn at first they looked at him as a child but his skills in working gave them a different picture of him. My father in-law had no choice because he needed to work harder than any other person. The rest of men that he was working with him started to like him a lot because he never give up working no matter how hot the weather was. When he would get paid he was sending money back to his family so they could buy food and pay bills.

Two years has passed and my father in-law got a letter from his mother telling him that they had no choice but sell all the animals and twenty acres of land to pay of all the bills that they owed. He was sad but he still keep working and trying to save as much he could to keep his land. He met a worker by the name of Juan and he was a school teacher and he asked my father law if he knew how to read and write. He never learned, so the teacher made him a deal “You teach me how to pick corn and I will teach you how to read”. So every night he would teach him how to read and write. My father law was learning quickly because he knew that the corn season was almost over.

My father law went back to his home town after eight years and he begin to work on his father land because his mother begin to get sick. He began to change with his twenty acres of land because the rainy season began to grow. He sold his crops and made enough money to pay a good doctor to cure his mother. Finally his mother was feeling good and father law he decided to rent his land because he knew he was going back to the Norte to work again. He went back to El Paso to work in the corn fields and the ranch owner he talk to my father law about getting his green card. My father law he said yes and the next day they went the to the immigration department. He was very grateful with owner that he work on his ranch for ten years.

In 1965 my father law decided to go back Mexico because he was tried of working in the United States. When he got to his home town he was very happy because he missed his mother. But when he was home his mother told him that they had to sell his last twenty acres without his permission. He was very upset but he start to cry because it was his father land. Well, my father law was a responsible person because he would go the store to buy some food for the house. He found love with young girl that was selling cheese to support her family. That year he married the young girl. My Father law decided to take her Juarez Mexico so he could fix her papers so she could have her green card. His wife had to stay in Mexico for a month until her green card was ready. After his wife got her green card my father law took her El Paso to work in the fields. Finally they had enough money live in apartment but nobody want to rent them an apartment. The manager of apartment's would say that he'd rather rent a dog lover than wetback.

So my father law decided to go to California and started a new life together. My father law found a job working in the artichoke fields in Castroville California. His job was to pick artichokes and load them into the giant wood boxes. My father law was happy but sad because nobody in Castroville wanted to rent him an apartment. He and his family were living inside his

car until they found a place to live. But no matter how bad the situation was he had a positive attitude because he knew that it would get better. One day they decided to go to Salinas California to see if they could find a place to live. But no nobody wanted to rent to a ‘wetback’. They would only rent apartments to white people. My Father in-law and his family had no choice but to sleep in the park or in his car until find place to live. The cops saw my father and his family sleeping in the park and they told them that they needed to go because if did not to go they were going to get arrested. He did not what to because he need to find place to live. The next day he went to work and friends at work asked him if he was okay. But my father in law told them that he needed a place to live because his wife was pregnant. One of the works heard him and offered him his garage to live in. He agreed because at that time he had no choice. Finally the settle in the garage and three month later his first born arrive.

My father law decided to go visit his mother so she can meet her first grandson. When his mother saw her grand child she was very happy. It seemed like everything was going well until two days later his mother passed away in her sleep and my father law cried of sadness. At the same time he felt alone because both of his funeral my father law said good bye to his bother and sisters because he was going back to California.

My father law began to work again in the artichoke fields and we was summitings application for apartments so he could find a better place to live. But no matter where he apply nobody wanted rent to a Mexican farmer. One day his boss had an open house to rent so my father law asked the owner if he let him rent the place for him. At first the owner laughed but later he told my father law that it was to rent the house for him and his family.

My father law was happy to had a find place to live in. As the years passed on by his wife was pregnant with his fifth child and something big happen. When his wife was in the hospital the doctor told my father law had a hard decision to make. The doctor told my father law that he need to make the decision of who he wanted to survive his wife or his daughter. My father law did not know what to do. Until he saw his little fourth boy playing between his leg. That is when he knew he had to the hardest decision which to have his wife survive the pregnancy. But the doctor saved his wife but he did something that was against law. He took upon himself to make sure that his wife would never have children again, by taking her tubs out of her body. Nobody knew what he did until another doctor saw her for her regular check up. My father was upset about it but he decided to talk to a lawyer but nobody wanted to talk to him. They make him wait for hours and finally one the lawyer listend to him about his case. The lawyer said to my father law that it was a good case if you were white but no respected lawyer was going to take his case. The lawyer said something to my father law before he left he said it one less wetback to worry in about the world. That when he realized that nobody was going to help his case.

So my father law went back to working in the artichoke field and started to get really good working in the fields. The boss had an open position of lead field manager and nobody wanted the job. My father law told the boss that he wanted the job because he knew the work very well. The boss told him to forget because he needed someone that talk English and Spanish. So they brought someone fresh from school but he did not speak Spanish. So father law asked the boss that what happen bilingual person he just laugh and walk away. Later that day he found out that it was his best friend son that need a job. The new lead was mistreating the workers by telling them that they were worst than wetback slaves. His words felt like someone using wipe

on our back. He tried to talking to the boss what was going on but he refused to listen. Finally one day the boss over heard his lead talk and he fired that lead for mistreating his workers. The boss he said sorry to his workers and he made my father law the led field manager and everybody was happy. My father law was happy because it took fifteen years to get this position. As the years passed my father law decided to retire from the led position and lived in Deming, New Mexico.

I think about my father in-law he was working hard in the field for have better live for his family. He never gave up no matter the things happened in his life. Although he was discriminated in his life he was patient. I can say the history about of my father in-law for me is an example in my life because he fought and in the end he realized his happy life.