

Who tells your story?

My name is Fidel Chávez. *Nací en Loreto Zacatecas.* I grew up liking *Loreto Zacatecas.* There, in El Tepetate. I worked as a farmer and worked in a junction so I don't have many favorite things since I worked. I would plant my father's land and work in the field with the animals because he was sick. When the harvest was in hand we would collect the corn and the beans to go and eat. But sometimes it didn't rain so the corn wouldn't grow. That's another reason I came to America because it never really rained in Mexico.



In Mexico I didn't do anything very fun. I would sometimes play baseball with cloth. I made balls with it. They were clothes that the women would put on. That's how we played baseball. My favorite memory is at night. We played *Los Enchanted, Al Timbays.*

On the farm I helped my dad work in the field where I planted corn. I would help sow and to weed mine to harvest. When mine was already ready, I helped my dad to sow and to work to cut the weed and remove the grass. When the bean's fell down we would club them with a stick for the trash to fly away. We made some dolls. I made some of them for the house and I made 5 dolls. I

threw the dolls to each of the donkeys, and that was what I had to do when I was little and also when I got older. I had fun playing the *roña.*



I went to Bartlett Adobe School. It was a school with little windows. The windows and roof had foil on them. I had very good teachers. They were very good people. Just once they got me in trouble, because one time me and a friend skipped class. We went to the river to fish. iIn the state of *Campeche* my grandfather went to the river. I went to the river for about three years, and I wasn't going to school. The teachers saw me and they talked to my dad and they told him I wasn't going to school, I was going fishing. Then the teachers talked to me and my Dad since I didn't go to school, but other than that the teachers treated me very well. My teacher's name was Betty.

I had a brother. We were very good to each other but they killed him. I never found out who killed my brother. I never once fought with my brother. We always had a good time. He helped me work although he was the youngest, and I truly miss him.

Later on into my life I came to the United States. I came when I was 17 and I arrived in Ciudad Juárez. I came walking to cross the Rio Bravo and I came walking for days. I ate little because I could hardly eat. I walked in the night. I walked at night and

during the day I fell asleep because at night it was easier to walk than during the day because the helicopter was looking for the immigrants who were passing through. I was hiding underneath some trees until nightfall. I began to walk towards the United States. I arrived at a field, but when I couldn't get there I got to work on the onion. When I was going to start working that day the migration arrived in the afternoon.

They had already told us that they were going to give us work. The migration arrived like at 7 in the afternoon, And they made us return to Mexico to Ciudad Juárez. I walked again, and it was the same thing. I walked for days and I couldn't get there, and that was when I returned to Zacatecas to Tepetate from where I was born, but those two days I walked, I only drank water and I didn't eat anything other than a lunch from a man in a field.

I didn't pack anything, and we were coming to the United States. Wherever we found water we drank. Actually I only had a gallon of water, but I ran out and there was no more water. We looked for water there. In *El Monte* there were lagoons and there we drank water. I wasn't able to pack anything important to me when I decided to come. I started thinking about working and raising money for my parents to help my parents. My home and my country Mexico I will miss it a lot. When I was 17 years old I left my home country. It felt good to come to the United States. I really wanted to come here so that I could raise money for my parents, to help my parents.

I expected that here in the United States they paid better than in Mexico and there were better opportunities than in Mexico. I worked in *Los Cuervos* where they killed animals And they folded them and threw them into the dairy farms, and they left them hanging, and we folded them, and we threw them in the train. I worked in *Los Cuervos*.

The people of America treated me well because when I arrived there they helped look for a job for me and they were happy that I was here in the

United States too and my friends who were here treated me very well too. My favorite thing about the United States was fishing. My American Dream was to be able to live a peaceful life here in the United States.



I met the love of my life in the 1980s here in the United States. I wanted to live a happy life with her, and that's what made me feel like she was the one I loved. I wanted to have children with her. So we had 2 children. Both of them are girls and I was so happy they could go to school because I thought schools would reject them for being part of an immigrant family. I was glad that my family could live in peace. I feel very comfortable, very happy here in the US. It was probably the best choice I ever made. I just want my grandson to study and be a good student, to be successful, something that I wasn't able to do.

story told by: Alex