

Linda Garcia Interview, June 11, 2001
Conducted by Katie Cullen

Katie Cullen: Where were you in your life at the time that the Vietnam War broke out?

Linda Garcia: I was in High School, It was Hillsboro high school at that time it was called Thomas Middle School, during my four years that I was there we, our class mates knew that they were going to have to be drafted into the Vietnam War, there was no choice, your didn't go and you were not at a point of being enlisted. So psychologically there were two ways that we knew that there would be no drafting and that would be if a student had exceptionally good grades, and they got honor and they went on to college or they got married and had children those were the only two ways that you didn't go to Vietnam, unless you were a girl of course and then that would be a choice. That's were I was at this point of time.

KC: Did you see a lot of your friends and classmates choose to get married and have children as a way to avoid the war?

LG: Not really because the girls again were not subjected to it and so I don't believe that a girl would have gone out and married a boy just for that reason?

KC: But did, how about the school, going on to college, was that more...

LG: College, they worked very hard for good grades because they knew that was the only way they would get out of having to go to Vietnam. I also saw at a latter point of time that if they drafted they would try to go to Canada, that was a place they thought was a safe place to hide, some of them would go and try to find jobs and not share with the government where they were at, and I had physically seen after I got out of school where they came to your company where you worked at and physically retrieved them and put them in cars and took them to wart, there was no choice you went to Vietnam that the way it was.

KC: You were at the age when you were younger in high school was that, or was it once they reached 18 that they were drafted?

LG: Alright, 18, and out of school no they did not come and get you when you were going to High School this was something that after you got out of school it was an automatic thing that you had to go to the post office and you had to give your name and where you lived and all the information so they knew where you were at when the time was there for you to serve your country.

KC: What you saw, did you have friends that tried to avoid the draft by going to Canada, I mean was that something that was common among people here in Hillsboro?

LG: No, not me personally with my friends I saw that more as an adult where I had a bigger horizon of what was happening out there, but no, my personal friends that I knew they went, some of them didn't come back and some of them came back with missing legs and arms, some of them came back with mental problems. It was not an easy war.

KC: How did that affect you psychologically, was it emotional to see your friends come back from this war that was not supported very well by the country be so, having had fought so hard and than come back?

LG: How did it affect me? Because at that time I was raised around it that was something that we knew that was going to be existing the only negative thing that you would probably have found out about it was by being in an environment if negative where someone would say they were against it, but as for me I came from a background with

my men family that were in wars so I just guess that I accepted that that was something that we were supposed to do, so I wasn't a part of that group, as you would say, that would have been stomping up and down and trying to make an issues of not going I didn't know that much about it other than that it existed and I felt that if the government said that we were supposed to do it we were supposed to do it and that was the way my family felt at the time, now as time goes on you learn more about it, but it was an accepted thing in my family.

KC: When you were in school did you see a lot of controversy among the war, anti-war, pro-war people... um I mean...demonstrations?

LG: no demonstrations that I can remember, no.

KC: So it pretty, just the accepted thing?

LG: were I was, I'm sure that the boys, the guys they were all scared but again the people that I associated with one on one just knew that they need to do this, the other things that I had explained on the reason, how you could get out of it just because we all knew that that existed, I mean if we're sharing for history sake that that is what and how it happened, not necessarily what I personally had experienced.

KC: Was your education at all influenced by the war in Vietnam, did you participate in any drills or um teachers to do anything with war coming up...

LG: the answer to that would be no probably our schools because it wasn't here in the states, we didn't have drills like what we would have fire drills in our school, no because we were not physically at war here in the states as far as anything else that we saw it no, it was pretty much that we knew we had to leave to go see it, it didn't affect me with my education because I was a girl. Probably boys would have worked harder for good grades, but the girls were pretty lucky in that way they just needed to be supportive, some of us married military later, I was one who did, my husband went to Vietnam for four years came back home after he was through with his four year term and in the process of the time laps he was killed in a car wreck and he got a letter, I should say I got a letter from the government stating that he needed to be reenlisted and it took me quite a while to be able to do the legal work that I need to do to prove that he was deceased, so if the military wanted you they wanted you and you and we just knew that I'll have to say that I did go through a lot of stress with that emotionally not loosing my husband but knowing that I had to deal with the government with the paperwork as well but other than that no, I hope I answered your question

KC: As far as you know was it common that after a man served his four yours he was asked to re-enlist, or re-drafted?

LG: Um I didn't know of I think that those were special events I didn't know that, that would probably be more for a man, he could answer that better than me because he would have been subjected to all that information, it's a little bit, you'll probably get different interview from women verses men because the men served lived it ate it slept it the women unless she was physically with that wouldn't know those information unless someone had shared to them.

KC: How was home affected by having the men at war? Did women take on different jobs or was it...

LG: Women took on different jobs to the point that I worked for a cabinet company at one point in time office and this is where I would physically saw where women would go and do the line work staple and where when the men would come back from war the

women would have to leave the jobs because that was one of the things the commitments that I need to share with you if a person man had a job and had to go to war when he got back home from war his job was left open for him, and it didn't matter how they had to replace it was by a seniority, so women or men, what ever that job may be he would be promised to go back on whatever employment he was, which is a good thing because if they were going to have to leave their job we didn't need them coming home and having to go out and try to fit and find a job.

KC: And was that just by company to company or was that pretty much just an accepted thing?

LG: It was an accepted thing.