

TRANSCRIPTION RE:

**CSUMB Founding Faculty
Oral History Project 1995-98
Rina Benmayor, Project Director**

**Interview with Janie Silveria, Librarian
CSUMB Tanimura and Antle Family Library**

**Interviewer, Kristen La Follette, Lecturer
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Narrator: Janie Silveria

Interviewer: Kristen La Follette

1 **La Follette:** *So this is Kristen La Follette. I'm here interviewing Janie Silveria in her house in*
2 *Monterey. It's July 30, 2019. And this is for the Founding Faculty Oral History Project. So thank you again*
3 *for being willing to talk about the early days at CSUMB.*

4 **Silveria:** Oh. Yeah. It's not exactly fresh on my mind. I brought some things to remind myself.

5 **La Follette:** *That's great, yeah.*

6 **Silveria:** Like that biography I sent you was big on the things I did in the early days, not things I did
7 recently.

8 **La Follette:** *Yeah. It was really helpful to read through that. Okay. I like to situate a person first*
9 *before we get into the topic of the interview. So usually the first thing I ask somebody is to tell me their full*
10 *name and if there is a story behind, any meaning their name or how they got their name.*

11 **Silveria:** Well, my full name is Janie Barnard Silveria. Barnard is my maiden name. I kept my
12 married name, Silveria when I had kids. It's Portuguese, *that* name is. Barnard is English. But the spelling
13 is unusual. It's S-I-L-V-E-R-I-A which was apparently a mistake that happened when my father-in-law was
14 in the army. They misspelled it. [Laughs] And it was too much trouble to change it back. Most Portuguese
15 **[1:45]** people have it spelled, with "eira" instead of "eria." Anyway, I thought about changing my name
16 back, but that's too much trouble. So I'll leave it.

17 **La Follette:** *That's really interesting. Yes, so maybe could you tell me a bit about where you grew*
18 *up and describe where you grew up?*

19 **Silveria:** Sure. I was born in Tulsa, Oklahoma, and we moved to Texas when I was four, lived a
20 couple of different places there, once down on the border in Brownsville, and then when I was seven we

21 moved to the place where I mostly grew up which is called Texas City. It's on the coast. It's about 10 miles
22 from Galveston, 30 miles from Houston. When I was growing up it was an okay place to live. I had friends.
23 But then when I left to go to college and came back, I realized this place is so polluted because there were
24 chemical plants there. Everybody was there because of the plants. There was Amoco and Carbide and
25 Monsanto and all those biggies, and they were going night and day. So, I haven't been back, really. My
26 parents lived there a long time, and they finally retired to Tennessee. They've passed away. So most of my
27 growing up years were in Texas City. I have to say that now, I have a group of friends that meets every
28 year from those days. We reconnected in our, you know, retirement days, and it's been great. We've visited
29 each other. They came here one time. Went to Santa Fe, New Mexico. Shreveport, Louisiana. Dallas. So
30 we visited each other and it's been really good to keep those connections or remake those connections.

31 **La Follette:** *That's great.*

32 **Silveria:** Anyway, I went to college and started out at SMU, Southern Methodist University. I
33 mainly wanted to get a little farther away from home and my best friend was going to go there so I went
34 there. It was a private school, very much even in the late sixties/early seventies, fraternities and sororities
35 were big. And they were...[sigh] you know. I mean everywhere else the hippie movement was started, and
36 things were changing a lot, and there were protests about the war and everything else. Dallas? Nothing
37 changed. I mean it was like this island of conservatism inside the larger world. My friends and I went to a
38 Harlem Globetrotters game and wow! There's people of different colors here. And different ages. And
39 they're not all dressed right. So anyway, it was not the right place for me because on my dorm floor the
40 social strata ranged from me to, like, H. L. Hunt's daughters, who are actually very nice and have done
41 some good things for women and stuff like that. It was strange. It was strange to me. So I transferred to
42 [5:43] Rice, in Houston which was a much better fit for me. A lot of smart, weird people. [Laughs] I loved
43 it there. After I graduated from there I got married. My husband was in the Air Force. He had a low draft
44 number so he enlisted in the Air Force, and we came to Riverside, California. That was another sort of low

45 point in my life. But I suppose, you know, it got me up here. [Chuckles] He hated being in the Air Force.
46 And I couldn't really get a job because I was an army wife. I mean an Air Force wife, a military wife. I did
47 some temping. That was actually interesting. I worked at UC Riverside in the Plant Pathology Department.
48 It was okay. We had a nice little house and everything. But his dad died and he got a discharge, a disability
49 discharge or something. So he wanted to go back to Texas and I did not want to go back to Texas.
50 [Laughter] So I moved to Berkeley and started Library School. [Chuckles] And that was fun, a fun time,
51 too.

52 **La Follette:** *Yeah, I was kind of interested in where you think maybe your interest in libraries and*
53 *books kind of started.*

54 **Silveria:** Well, I was always a reader. My parents didn't have very many books in the house,
55 interestingly enough. They were both college educated, which was I guess sort of unusual. My mother was
56 the first in her family to go to college. First and only, I believe. But, I don't know. They read magazines
57 and newspapers. They didn't really read books. I started visiting the library when I was little. And I vowed
58 to read every book in the Fiction section at the Texas City Public Library. I don't think I got very far. But it
59 was interesting. I made myself read everything. And so. [Laughs] All the As through Cs, I probably got a
60 good taste of what was popular fiction of the day. So, I don't know, I just, I had a degree in English and I
61 [8:27] didn't really want to go to grad school. I didn't want to teach. I was a copy editor in Houston for a
62 while and that was kind of fun. But I thought about what can I do. I was temping in a law office and they
63 said, "Oh. We'll pay for your divorce if you go to law school." [Laughs] Maybe I don't want to go to law
64 school either. So I thought about well, what do I like to do? What can I do that would be a good fit for me?
65 Ta-da! Library School. Going to Berkeley back in those days, they don't really have a Library and
66 Information Science School anymore. It's all Information Science. But it was such fun. People from all
67 over the country. And the professors were really great. Even Cataloging. So I had a really good time there. I
68 worked part time in the Berkeley Library while I was going to school. Then my career started out in public

69 libraries in Daly City Public Library. When I graduated in 1975? Yeah, there were still jobs around. I had a
70 choice. My husband, soon-to-be ex-husband, was still back in Texas and he sort of wanted me to come
71 back. So I applied for jobs there. I applied for jobs in California. I got two job offers and I chose the one in
72 California. And then, you know, the rest is history. No more Texas. No more marriage. But it was at Daly
73 City Public Library up in the Bay Area.

74 **La Follette:** *And did you have your daughters at that point?*

75 **Silveria:** No. This was my first husband and our marriage didn't survive being in the Air Force and
76 being separated and all that. So. And I didn't really want kids until I was like in my 30s and it was almost
77 too late and suddenly, "Oh! Kids! Gotta have those kids!" [Laughs] So my twins were actually born when I
78 was forty. It was amazing. But yeah. Almost the last minute.

79 **La Follette:** *I feel you on that. So yes, so you were working at the Daly City Library. And then*
80 *could you tell me how you ended up in Monterey County?*

81 **[11:22] Silveria:** Okay. It seems like I've traveled a lot for...for boyfriends or men but it isn't really the
82 case, it's also opportunities and things. My boyfriend at the time was working in Santa Cruz. He was
83 teaching at a private school. So I started looking for jobs around there and I found a job at MOBAC,
84 Monterey Bay Area Cooperative Library System. At that time it was in Salinas and what we did was offer
85 support services to local libraries. That was public libraries, for the most part, because they needed the
86 training, they needed second level reference which was pre-Internet. If you had a question you couldn't
87 answer with your collection you sent it to us and we tried to figure it out. And resource sharing and
88 building cooperation among the members. So it's usually public library connections but in my county all
89 the libraries are pretty tight with each other. So there were all the community colleges were members. The
90 Monterey Institute [for International Studies] was a member. The Aquarium was even a member for a
91 while. And we had school libraries. Anyway, it was what was called a multi type cooperative. We applied
92 for grants and ran workshops and did things for the libraries. That was a really good job except I never had

93 any contact with the people who were asking for the information. I had a good time working with the
94 librarians but I kind of wanted to get back to working more directly with people who needed the
95 information. So 1990 was a real big year of change for me. I got married. I got pregnant. After many,
96 many years of infertility treatments which. . .

97 **La Follette:** *That's stressful.*

98 **Silveria:** Oh, it was terrible, it was terrible. But finally when I stopped trying, as the cliché goes.
99 And I changed jobs. Before I knew I was pregnant I took a job at San Jose State. They opened a Monterey
100 County campus which was in Salinas. So it was just a few upper division programs. There was Education,
101 Psychology, Business, Social Work, maybe one other. But they either used local practitioners as faculty or
102 they brought down people from the main campus to teach the classes. So the classes were in person, not
103 distance. But our library was very small. We just had some reference sources. We had computers. We had
104 the ERIC microfiche and we did a lot of interaction with the main campus to actually get the materials. I
105 really enjoyed that job because I kind of liked making new things happen. There were other people working
106 at the campus but I was the only one in the library. I had some interns from San Jose State and I did hire
107 some staff later. Yeah. So that was fun. That was fun. The best part was that these were students who had
108 maybe been to junior college but they had no way to get their degrees. At that time they could choose to
109 drive up to San Jose State. So it was really very moving to go to the graduation ceremonies. Sometimes
110 they would speak in Spanish for their parents and then in English, [about] how wonderful it was to be able
111 to do this. So we had to bring education to them instead of them having to go away. So that was the best
112 part about that. It wasn't ever really designed to be its own full standing campus. So when Fort Ord was
113 closing and they were talking about, "Well, we need a campus there, how about that?" At first it was
114 **[16:23]** thought that there would be a satellite campus of San Jose State there. So San Jose State was
115 involved in some of the initial planning. But then when it came down to it, it was decided that, "No, we
116 need a full university of our own. This will be the 21st campus." So everything happened really quickly. At

117 that point it was late 1994, early 1995 when the first faculty came on. I was still working at the branch
118 campus. I can't remember exactly who I talked to, maybe it was Jim May, he was the Dean of Sciences and
119 it included the Library at that time. There was no Library but it included the Library. So I talked to him and
120 I talked to the librarians at San Jose State. I had somewhat of a connection with them. I would have to drive
121 up every Wednesday for a department heads type meeting. So I'd have to go up in the traffic and come
122 back in the traffic. It was a good experience. I hadn't been in an academic librarian before, and it's a
123 different focus. It's more of a teaching focus. Trying to help students not by finding them the information
124 but showing them how *they* could find it. So I enjoyed that. But other things about being in an academic
125 librarian that I had no idea about, all the stuff you have to do for tenure. "Oh, okay. Now how am I gonna
126 do this down here?" I did do a few things like some of the people on the main campus helped me with
127 writing articles and things like that. I did some presentations. There weren't as many opportunities for that.
128 So I was kind of struggling with the tenure and promotion thing there. But in early 1995 I got the choice,
129 "Well, next semester you can either have a job up at the main campus at San Jose State or you can move to
130 this new campus." That was the easiest decision I ever made. It was, in many ways, exciting and
131 wonderful. You just can't downplay the fever, the ambition, the energy, the excitement that... you know.
132 Everybody really wanted to make it different. "This is going to be a CSU but it's going to be, you know,
133 we're going to think with the students in mind. We're going to have these unconventional majors that
134 won't transfer anywhere else." [Laughs] But the spirit, the spirit was very exciting. Being a local rather
135 than -- most people came in from other places --, I had seen the great need that we have here in Monterey
136 County for higher education and for general education. So that was really, really exciting to me, that part,
137 and working with the community, because I was involved with the community to help make it happen. We
138 **[20:31]** didn't have a library, of course. [Laughs] We had a room, a building that had been converted to be
139 a Library. It had formerly been an armory. The bathrooms were reinforced concrete around because that's
140 where they kept the guns and stuff. You know, it wasn't intended to be a Library so it wasn't laid out very

141 well. We didn't have a whole lot of space. And then, the very beginning there wasn't a building at all. I
142 think we moved in there midway through the fall. But when I came on my official start date was in July.
143 But I was kind of released from San Jose State to come over and start with the planning in April. So I was
144 there from April 1995 on. It was just amazing. I mean we were all in cubicles. A few people had their own
145 offices. But mostly everybody was working in cubicles and bouncing ideas off each other and trying to hire
146 other people, like I got to help hire Steve [Watkins] and Eddy [Hogan] since I was the first one there.
147 You'd go to library conferences. They have an annual conference in June every year of the American
148 Library Association. Everybody knew we were starting a new library and, "Oh, wouldn't you like to work
149 with us to make that happen?" I mean one of the first things that happened when I was over there is they
150 said, "Well, what kind of collection would you build if you had four million dollars?" I knew, and others,
151 Steve and Eddy, when they joined me . . .

152 **La Follette:** Oh, just to clarify. So that's Eddy Hogan?

153 **Silveria:** Eddy Hogan and Steve Watkins were the other two founding librarians. And together we
154 had to do everything. We had to come up with a collection. We had to hire staff. We had to choose systems.
155 The first semester, when we didn't even have a building, we operated a small Course Reserves collection.
156 Bill Head was mostly participating in that. But it was a book truck next to our cubicle. [Laughs] We were
157 working with a vendor to try to come up with an opening day collection so we would have something. That
158 was an interesting process, trying to go through the still developing curriculum and try to imagine what we
159 would need and convey those impressions to our vendor who was an academic library provider of books,
160 was *the* main one. They did things like that all the time but we had to come up with the profile of what we
161 wanted. We had numerous meetings to try to figure that out. Then the books eventually started trickling in
162 in late fall. By then, the building was ready and we could actually have a place to put books. There had
163 been an article in *Newsweek*, somewhat before the campus opened, saying that you don't need books
164 anymore. [Chuckles] It was the Chancellor of the CSUs saying that this new library would not have much

165 in the way of books because everything was electronic. So that caused a big stir, as you can imagine. But
166 we weren't of that opinion. We thought that books are still important and other media, and at that time
167 things were on CD-ROMs, databases and all, and you have to have these big towers of CD-ROMs to
168 access. The internet was just starting. Steve Watkins was busy, he was our technology expert and he was
169 busy creating systems that would work for us. So we had many of them as well as some commercial
170 solutions. But he would be working at his computer and trying to figure out these things. Every once in a
171 while you'd hear, "Oh, shit! No! Uh!" [Laughs]

172 **[25:37] La Follette:** *Actually, I was so curious, these were some of my questions about how do you build a*
173 *library from nothing, right?*

174 **Silveria:** Yeah. Yeah.

175 **La Follette:** *If you wouldn't mind talking a bit. . . Did you have to profile the classes that you*
176 *thought . . . because the classes were still being developed, right?*

177 **Silveria:** Yes.

178 **La Follette:** *Did you have to profile what you who the students would be and what they might*
179 *need? How do you decide these things?*

180 **Silveria:** Well, we were all content experts in some areas. Like mine was in Literature and
181 Humanities. Eddy was Social Sciences and Steve was Sciences. So we knew a lot about what was out there
182 and what kinds of things would be needed. Steve was from UC Santa Cruz, so there was a little more of a
183 research focus, but Eddy was from Sac State and I was from San Jose State, so we had a good idea about
184 what kinds of things would be needed. You can set up your profile both for the opening day collection and
185 for ongoing materials that you will receive from your vendor. You can set it up to be at a certain academic
186 level, you could say you only want these publishers but not these publishers, things like that. So that took a
187 long time to try and sort out. We knew that the curriculum was going to be changing. We tried to allow for
188 that, but it seems like maybe what we wanted wasn't out there in a real form. So, when we got the

189 Literature collection we found that, oh! There were a lot of books of criticism about literature, mostly
190 about the canon, you know, dead white guys. And, wait! But the literature itself was not there! So we had
191 to spend a lot of time working with faculty to see, “Who are you teaching?” We knew there wasn’t a
192 Shakespeare class at first but we had to have Shakespeare. So anyway, we did have a lot of books that
193 never got checked out, I would say. [Laughs] There were some missteps but we tried to fill it in by talking
194 to faculty and see what kinds of things they were wanting to stress in their classes. You know, it’s a
195 growing thing. We didn’t have four million dollars. It got whittled down to almost two. The opening day
196 collection amounted for \$1.2 million of that. Then we had to contract with databases. We had to get a few
197 journals in, you know? That was maybe tougher than anything, trying to figure out who? Usually libraries
198 have huge journal collections going way back. We had nothing. We had some microfilm. And we had the
199 databases. And they were starting to have the full text in the databases but at that time it was kind of an
200 issue. An issue to get the issues that you wanted! But we did the best we could. We made some educated
201 [29:28] guesses and we were mostly right in the decisions we made. Like, we decided to bypass CD-ROMs
202 altogether. “Let’s go with this Internet that’s coming up. And let’s try to find databases that are online
203 instead of on disk.” We did that and it turned out to be the right thing to do. Luckily. But, you know, it was
204 easy to see where things were going. I mean the lack of a collection was both a hampering thing and a good
205 thing, because we could just get what was needed, and wanted, rather than oh, you should have this book
206 on Pope or somebody. So, we got the collection. We made the profile for the collection and we started
207 getting in the materials. Then we tweaked it and dealt directly with the vendor to order things that we
208 thought should be there. So, it was an ongoing process. Eventually we hired other librarians part time who
209 would help us. And it just grew. Finally, we got a new building. So the old building, the Armory... One
210 of the things I remember about the first year was that it was good for some poster sessions. We presented to
211 our colleagues out there in the world here’s what we did and how we did it. We hosted some CSU

212 librarians to come. We wore hard hats. [Chuckles] I think all in all, we did a good job. There were some
213 frustrations, but you know.

214 **La Follette:** *What were some of those frustrations?*

215 **Silveria:** Well, since it was a new campus people had different backgrounds and so one of the
216 things that I'm proud of is that the three of us really created the idea in everybody's mind about what an
217 academic librarian can be as far as a colleague, a teaching colleague. Even Rina Benmayor] who was a
218 friend of mine, I worked with her on a grant, two grants, and she would say things like, "Well, librarians
219 don't teach." That would get to us because that was the core of what we were doing. And it was more of a
220 one on one kind of interaction and a small class single session rather than an ongoing Information Literacy
221 kind of course. We did things in the community. We did research. We did publications. So one of the things
222 I and we did was to promote the Library as a resource and promote librarians as helpful educators who
223 would work with other classroom faculty and work with students to create the best learning experiences.
224 But from the very first we were involved in Academic Senate. Steve was eventually Chair of the Academic
225 Senate. And I was on the Faculty Affairs Committee for my sins. We had to write the Retention, Tenure
226 and Promotion policies. For librarians we had to tweak it because we don't have PhDs. We have a terminal
227 master's degree. And we don't have so much of an emphasis on publishing. We have a stronger emphasis
228 on creating community through conferences, attendance at poster sessions, and action on committees and
229 things like that. So we had to rewrite things a little bit to see that librarians could progress through the
230 system like other faculty in it. It was interesting.

231 **[34:25] La Follette:** *And was that something that was kind of unique from other universities or was it just*
232 *that you had to set the procedures up here?*

233 **Silveria:** Yeah. Once again, because there was nothing here it was time consuming and a little
234 difficult but it was also a chance to do "best practices." What were some innovative things that were going
235 on in other places and how can we use those as models. I worked with Bill Head a lot. He was really big

236 into alternate views of evaluating faculty. You know, you don't just have to have three articles in peer
237 reviewed publications. You can do this, this and this that also has an impact. So Bill Head and I went to a
238 number of conferences. We got a little grant, post tenure review. Anyway, there are other ways of looking
239 at things and so that's what we were interested in pursuing. You could always learn from your colleagues
240 who have done it before. You shouldn't try to just create it from scratch totally. I'll find out what other
241 folks are doing. But there was also this innovative spirit on the campus that let us go beyond maybe
242 sometimes what other people did.

243 **La Follette:** *It sounds like you really were energized by all the possibilities of coming in at the*
244 *ground floor, right? Starting something from the beginning.*

245 **Silveria:** Oh, yes.

246 **La Follette:** *Did you ever find that – oh, go ahead, where you –*

247 **Silveria:** No. Go ahead. Ask.

248 **La Follette:** . . . *did you ever find that overwhelming in any way? Or...?*

249 **Silveria:** Well, it has been called a pressure cooker, yes. I remember it was the first time that I had
250 worked like not 24/7 but constantly. You know, just constantly. And that takes it out of you after a while.
251 I'd come in on weekends, six in the morning or something, and be working on something. Marsha Moroh
252 came in on her bike and said "Hi! What are you doing here?" [Laughs] So. But everybody, you know,
253 everybody was just going full tilt. I mean we had a few months to make a University happen. It was just.
254 Yeah. Unprecedented. You probably heard this a lot from other people. Some people did burn out and they
255 went away.

256 **La Follette:** *Is there anybody you remember who burned out early? It's totally understandable.*

257 **Silveria:** Yeah. I can't remember names exactly. There were a few people, Eddy Hogan included,
258 who had taken leave of absence from their current positions because they didn't know how it would turn
259 out and they wanted to hedge their bets and still have a job to go to if the grand experiment wasn't so

260 wonderful. So there were a couple of people like that that didn't stay very long. I can't remember names
261 **[38:15]** too much. There were conflicts with the President. I didn't work with him very much. [Chuckles] I
262 liked the Peter's Party. He would have a party every week with food and drink. It was a community
263 building thing. It was also ... yeah.

264 **La Follette:** *Yeah, what were some of the conflicts. I was at CSUMB, not that early, but while he*
265 *was still President. What were some of the conflicts?*

266 **Silveria:** Steve Arvizu, the Provost, was actually there before Peter Smith. They had conflicts. I
267 don't know what the bases were but he was basically pushed out by Peter. And other Hispanic faculty were
268 up in arms. They felt they were discriminated against, that Peter was not treating his staff or faculty right.
269 And so there was a vote of No Confidence from the faculty for the President. I don't know. Yeah, he may
270 have been a good rah rah person to start the University but he was also, he was very much a politician.
271 That's what he was in his previous life. He was a politician. A Republican Congressperson or something
272 like that, on the East Coast. So there was that. It started to be Us vs. Them pretty early. I mean the
273 administration. They -- it seemed --, mainly paid lip service to what the rest of us were accepting as our
274 creed, our purpose, our Vision Statement. So there was that disconnect I think between administration and
275 faculty fairly early on, and certainly after Steve Arvizu was made to go away. Other people did resign or
276 were forced out around that time. That was maybe the second year, something like that. [Sigh] In the
277 Library we had our own issues with Dr. Smith. [Chuckles] We were, you know, planning to build a new
278 library. And it was one of the first buildings to be newly constructed on campus. It was really needed. We
279 had been operating out of this bunker for a while. And, the President wanted to have his office on the fourth
280 floor. He wanted to have the best view. He wanted to have a nice office up there. But it was going to add
281 thousands or millions of dollars to the price to put a top floor with his office. So when the bids came in they
282 were too high. Eventually, there were protests from us, from the faculty, from the students and he
283 eventually backed off that idea. Or maybe that was about when he was getting ready to leave. But yeah.

284 **[42:04] La Follette:** *Yeah, I remember that. It was right before he left.*

285 **Silveria:** Yeah. So then we had to start over with our plans and meanwhile construction prices had
286 gone up. So we ended up having a smaller library than we had wanted. We had to cut some things out like a
287 staff bathroom, which it wasn't important but it would be nice to not have to trek all the way from our
288 offices over to the student or the public restrooms. But. So. Yeah.

289 **La Follette:** *So it really changed the shape of the library literally.*

290 **Silveria:** Uh huh. Yeah. And then the Library Director was going to be up there, too. Or on the
291 third floor. Or maybe he was on the fourth floor with the President, I don't know. But then he changed it.
292 He just had a smaller office on the second floor. But we had great offices. Our offices, Library faculty
293 offices, were on the third floor. And at the time we had this wonderful view, it was great. So. We were all
294 together. So we could get a lot done that way, informal meetings, you know. Almost like being back in the
295 cubicles. Then they started taking over some of the Library space for other purposes. [Sigh] I think it's
296 much better now. I think the new Dean of the Library has ... I haven't been on campus much since I retired
297 in 2015 but from everything I hear now, the new Dean is much more supportive of projects like the ones I
298 was interested in but had a hard time getting done with the previous Library Director.

299 **[44:19] La Follette:** *What were some of those projects that you had wanted to?*

300 **Silveria:** Well, I had been interested in local history for quite a while. But of course, we had no
301 collection. We really had nothing old or not much that was local. So people would come in and ask about
302 the history of Fort Ord or the local area. We just didn't have anything and not much was available online.
303 So, I think it was 2005 or 6, I wanted to write grants, write grants to make something happen for us because
304 the budget didn't permit for collecting old things. Old things were not looked on well. Everyone was
305 thinking about the future. No one was thinking about the past. "What made us what we were?" "No, we
306 don't care about that." So the campus archives were literally in Eddy Hogan's office in boxes. They may
307 have preserved certain things online but all the paper just went away and if you wanted to do research on

308 even that period which was the 1990s – you couldn’t. There was nothing to be had. So anyway, I finally, I
309 went on a sabbatical in 2007 and I wrote some grants and was eventually successful in creating a project
310 that was going to be CHAMBR, the Collaborative Historic Archive of the Monterey Bay Region. We had
311 several partners in the community. We had Monterey Public, Monterey County, Pacific Grove. [cat yowls]
312 Oh, dear.

313 **La Follette:** *The cat’s very friendly.*

314 **Silveria:** Well, we have a cat in the area. Carmel and Seaside, at that time Carol McKibben was
315 doing her Seaside history project, so they were participants. We came up with a structure. We hired a
316 consultant to do the planning process for getting everything online and sharing it in a collaborative way.
317 I’m big on collaboration because that’s been my job at various places I’ve worked, is trying to get people to
318 come together to agree on things and do more than what you can do with just one person. So that was great.
319 We did hire a consultant who came up with this plan and we were about to get going on it, start this
320 historical archive which would... I mean students could go to Monterey Public and use their archives or go
321 to some of the other institutions that had big archives of what was going on in the area, but not very much
322 was available online. So I got a grant from the Community Foundation, a local foundation, to create this. It
323 was a one-year grant and we carried it out and it was going great guns, and then the recession happened. I
324 remember libraries had to cut their hours, had to cut staff, they had to put the archival project on the back
325 burner and that’s where it stayed. So that was, you know, both a good thing and a not so positive thing that
326 happened. It was because of the economy and because of the situation, but it was one thing that I hoped
327 could make a difference. Then I still continued to get little grants for smaller projects like digitizing some
328 **[48:55]** of the Fort Ord materials, and those are available now, state and nationwide, on the Online Archive
329 of California. But there’s so much more that could be done. So since I’ve retired I’ve tried in a little way to
330 work with your class on oral histories and it’s been wonderful to have – [to cat: “Please go away, Myra. Go
331 away.”] And also to get some of our own things digitized, which I hope we will be able to do.

332 **La Follette:** *That was really interesting to hear about the efforts you had and the economy*
333 *intervened.*

334 **Silveria:** Yeah.

335 [Pause]

336 **La Follette:** *I was kind of curious, since you had worked with San Jose State and the satellite*
337 *library there and then you came over to CSUMB did you find that the patrons or the population that you*
338 *were working with, was it similar? Or were the needs of the students similar or was it different?*

339 **Silveria:** Well, it was different in that at San Jose State it was just upper division students trying to
340 finish their degrees in a few select areas. At CSUMB we started out with freshmen who didn't even know
341 what their majors were going to be. So it was different in that way. We had to take in things like First Year
342 Experience, the whole thing of going to college for the first time, and it was a younger population, too. I
343 think at San Jose State, at least at this satellite campus, many of the students were a little older. They had
344 families. They were re-entry. So it was somewhat different. Also I think at San Jose State the folks were all
345 living locally. I mean they were residents of Monterey County. I think at CSUMB, I thought they did the
346 recruitment, they relied too much on getting people from like L.A. to come and things? I saw a recruitment
347 video once that had all the waves and the ocean, "Oh, this is so wonderful here, come!" And then they
348 would get up here and it would be cold and they couldn't go to the beach very much. They sure couldn't
349 swim in the water. And you know, "Hey, misleading!" You know, the students had to be persevering, too
350 because there weren't structures in place to help them. A lot of times they would get shunted from one
351 department to another to try and find information. We would do the best we could in the Library and as,
352 you know, faculty to help them. But in some cases it just wasn't established who was in charge of such and
353 such a thing. So that had to be tough for them. They probably had to have a similar sense of adventure and
354 "Oh, yes, we're going to make this happen! And oh, no radio station? We'll build a radio station. Oh, no
355 gym? We'll build a gym. [Chuckles] No campus newspaper? No student government? Oh, we'll do that."

356 But being freshmen they didn't have the background from other educational experiences except for high
357 school. I don't know how they recruited the first class. I do know that many of them weren't from the local
358 area and so that might have made it tougher for them to adjust to a new area and a campus which was
359 trying to ride the bicycle as they built it or whatever. [Laughs] Some of those students did hang on and they
360 became staff or faculty themselves at CSUMB.

361 **[53:52] La Follette:** Were there any particular students you worked with that were really memorable to
362 you?

363 **Silveria:** Troy. Troy Challenger was a student at the very first. Then he became kind of an integral
364 part of CSUMB. Yeah. And it's hard to remember names but there were a lot of pioneering people that
365 were so excited to have a university here. And wanted to, wanted to jump through whatever hoops there
366 were and there were lots. Lots of hoops. I think more for the students than for the faculty. The faculty were
367 just... Of course we didn't have guidelines either. We didn't have structures in place like for [Chuckles]
368 HR [Human Resources]. For I don't know what. But we were doing it because we wanted to. We knew
369 what we were getting into for the most part and we wanted to be part of it. I think some of the pioneering
370 students had that idea too, but it was more frustrating for them to, "Well, who is going to help me do this?
371 What about tutoring? What about health services?" You know. So for them I think it was a little tougher to
372 not have guidelines and structures in place. The other thing that happened -- which maybe it can't even
373 help but happen --, is that in creating a structure or a set of expectations and guidelines some of them
374 recreated bureaucracies. This was unbelievable. You could see it happening, that even though we didn't
375 want it to be like where it was before in our other institutions, it just sort of crept that way. We used to joke
376 about the Form form. You needed this form so you could get this other form to fill out. [Chuckles] So that
377 was a little frustrating. Yeah, it's harder to remember the bad things because there was an aura. It was an
378 **[56:53]** extraordinary experience. And when President Clinton came to campus that was just fantastic!
379 You know? I mean, it was just wonderful. It was like all things were possible. Even if you know really that

380 it may not be that easy, to have that feeling is important. It's special. It helps drive what you do and make
381 what you do exciting.

382 **La Follette:** *I would imagine it would create a sense of camaraderie, right, that you're all ...?*

383 **Silveria:** Yeah. [Chuckles] Oh, another thing I remember from those early days in the cubicles is,
384 when we were creating our unusual majors, Luis Valdez was around a lot. He is pretty dynamic. He was
385 helping lead a group in learning how to be vibrant. Vibrancy used to be the major or the curriculum, it was
386 called Vibrancy, or the ULR [University Learning Requirement]. [Laughs] So he had a session where all
387 faculty and staff could come and we would sit in a circle and chant and we would do exercise things, and
388 we would do trust-building things like "fall into my arms." I had a leotard and tights and I was leaving my
389 cubicle to go to the Vibrancy class and Steve and Eddy were sitting there and they had a sales person with
390 them and so they're going, "Oh. Oh. Yeah, well." [Chuckle]. And, I had two little kids at home. So that
391 was a stressor, too, trying to do that and "be all things to all people" kind of thing.

392 **La Follette:** *Were you able to balance that? Or did you feel like you were being pulled in more*
393 *than one direction?*

394 **Silveria:** Yeah, well, I had kind of a tough time. Went through a divorce in 1996. So that
395 was not a good time. The girls and I lived on campus for a little while, which was interesting. That was a
396 whole other community in that many, many of the faculty were living on campus in the housing. While you
397 maybe didn't want to see everybody 24/7 it helped to be neighbors as well as colleagues sometimes. There
398 were a few families that had kids among the faculty and staff. So, you know, it was an okay time. But yeah,
399 **[1:00:16]** that was.... Also, I don't know if I should share this or not, but I think I will because it's a reality
400 of my years at CSUMB, is that I had undiagnosed depression. I had postpartem depression. I was forty
401 years old, I had two little kids, I couldn't sleep. Everything was horrible. I mean I loved *them* but I just had
402 a hard time and it was not even really diagnosed or recognized as a situation at that time. So I just kind of
403 got through it, but my marriage didn't survive because I was so moody and all. So now I've been on

404 antidepressants for many, many years. But those first stressful years probably helped bring it on, as a bunch
405 [of people] would say, “It was situational.” It was not situational, it was chemical, but it was a hard, hard
406 thing.

407 **La Follette:** *Yeah, having all that additional pressure doesn't help at all.*

408 **Silveria:** [Sigh] So that was the unmistakable part of my early time at CSUMB. But...oh, well, let's
409 move on.

410 **La Follette:** *Yeah, I've been through it for that, too, so I know how challenging that is.*

411 **Silveria:** Yeah, so I had a real soap opera-y life for a while. I didn't want kids. Then I wanted kids
412 and couldn't get pregnant. Then I had twins and I had postpartum depression. Then I had a divorce. So.

413 **La Follette:** *It's a lot.*

414 **Silveria:** But you know, now everything is stable.

415 **La Follette:** *That's good. We talked about some of the challenges that you had like in early days –*
416 *[Chuckles] – the cat really wants to be in the interview! -- was there something that you felt was a really*
417 *good sense of accomplishment or a project that you worked on or something that you felt really good, that*
418 *you were focused and got what you wanted to get done?*

419 **[1:03:10] Silveria:** It was actually that grant program with Rina and Cecilia. Rina Benmayor and Cecilia
420 O'Leary. We wrote a grant for [chuckles] what was it called? “Transforming Humanities Pedagogy through
421 Technology.” Technology and Humanities were in separate worlds at that time. The internet was just
422 starting to come around. There were people doing very interesting things on the East Coast. Randy Bass at
423 Georgetown and Bret Eynon. There was a grant program through the CSU, I believe, where we got money
424 to create a series of workshops on using the Internet and other kinds of technology to enhance teaching.
425 And Randy and Bret came for two sessions at CSUMB. Humanities faculty from all over the CSU, mostly
426 Northern California, I think, came and it was just wonderful. It was just wonderful. My part was in writing
427 the grant which I'm good at -- I like to write the grants; I like to get the grants. [Laughs] -- but at that

428 workshop it was just introducing a lot of new and interesting and powerful ideas to people who maybe had
429 been using the same syllabus for all and were unaware of some changes that were happening or sources
430 online of primary materials from History or from wherever. And using them in interesting ways. So that
431 was something that I was excited about and proud of. Besides the grant writing, I put together websites that
432 linked to different resources. I was the resource person. Rina and Cecilia were the subject experts and it
433 was just great. It was just great! I'm glad Rina is still around and doing things in the community. I haven't
434 seen much of her but...

435 **La Follette:** *I know. It seems like after people retire they get busier sometimes. I notice that with*
436 *all you guys. You always have these great projects going on.*

437 **Silveria:** Yeah. Well, I mean you don't die! [Chuckles] If you don't die you keep doing things that
438 are interesting to do.

439 **La Follette:** *Yeah. I also wanted to make sure that we kind of hit on the Vision Statement, you*
440 *know, because that was a big part of the purpose of the [university]. You have a copy of it here.*

441 **Silveria:** Yes.

442 **[1:06:27] La Follette:** *So in terms of the Vision Statement, what was your impression of it and how did*
443 *you see that influencing your work at the Library?*

444 **Silveria:** Overall, the Vision Statement was what brought a lot of people to campus. The ideas
445 contained in it are so important. Who wouldn't want a "model pluralistic academic community where all
446 teach and learn from each other in an atmosphere of respect, mutual respect and pursuit of excellence?" I
447 mean it was just words but words that were important to us and it seems like, and I think the atmosphere of
448 mutual respect is really important, I think. It's brief but it's very powerful, I think. I don't know that
449 specifically in the Library ... but in all our work with the students it was just really important. So it defines
450 what we want the students to be learning and how. It's not just, "You'll have this course on this and this
451 course on this," but it's a broader idea of what a university can be. Since we didn't have a university to start

452 with we could aim high, be lofty, but figure out ways to make it happen. How to infuse this in your
453 curriculum or the way you work with other people. The mutual respect, for the most part, it happened. It
454 didn't happen in some cases and that was, yeah, that was not good.

455 **La Follette:** *Like in what cases?*

456 **[1:08:58] Silveria:** Well, I remember one early meeting of founding faculty and staff where we were
457 talking about the budget and the budget was not unlimited. So, in some cases they came down to like dogs
458 fighting over bones. Scarce resources. "I want this. My program needs this." So, you know, that was not
459 good. I remember another time when [sigh] it was an administrator, I can't even remember his name, he's
460 gone. He sent out an email chastising one of his staff, but he accidentally sent it to everybody in the
461 University! We were all on the same email at that time. [Laughs] Oh, and so he apologized profusely after
462 that. But it was like, you know, "Okay, we know how you treat people when you think nobody is looking!"
463 So yeah. That was pretty amazing. He didn't stay too long after that.

464 **La Follette:** *Those were also the days of Open Forum, right, where everybody gets to talk about –*
465 *the chat rooms.*

466 **Silveria:** Everybody could talk about things, yeah, yeah.

467 **La Follette:** *Yes, so with the email system that we had at that time there was kind of a running*
468 *thread, an Open Forum thread where people could post things and talk about any topic.*

469 **Silveria:** Anything. Yes, yes. Anybody.

470 **La Follette:** *Yeah.*

471 **Silveria:** So yeah, that was not necessarily mutual respect.

472 **La Follette:** *Was there any time that you saw that you felt the Vision was really working?*

473 **Silveria:** Individual times. Not overall. Really some of my fellow faculty, like Bill Head, Marsha
474 Moroh, those folks were really good examples of how we can do this and do this differently. I really
475 admired some of those people. So working with them and with all the faculty, really, I mean everybody had

476 good intentions. It's true, sometimes it was not what you might want, but at first there was a spirit. There
477 was a spirit that combined the place that made us feel like, "Yes, we're all in this together and we were
478 gonna make it happen." So, and early meetings with faculty would be *everybody*. It would be 25 people or
479 something. That is when people would really talk about ideas and ideals and how we can incorporate that
480 into everyday experiences. It was one thing to do it without the students there and it was another thing
481 entirely to have to try to put together classes on the run and work in real time with a structure that was still
482 growing, shall we say? [Laughs] But yeah, it was certainly unforgettable and a big part of everything we
483 did was the Vision Statement. I notice now, well now, 25 years later, I don't know if it's even mentioned to
484 students. The students who have helped with the archives, I did talk to them about it and it's like blank
485 stares. You know. I don't think it has been infused. I think it has been sidetracked or forgotten. I don't
486 know, maybe the Outcomes are still good, maybe the students are still learning in a positive way. I don't
487 know. But I do know there's been a lot of change to try to connect with the other world of education, to try
488 to make our courses integrate better with the community colleges, with other universities. [Sigh] But that
489 would be sad if the Vision Statement was totally absent from whatever orientation people get. Do you
490 know?

491 **[1:15:03] La Follette:** *In my experience it hasn't really been emphasized. When I was a student there,*
492 *yeah. But now as like in teaching, no, because you are focused on meeting the outcomes for each class and*
493 *for the certain requirements that need to be met. I feel like it's infused into those but it's not necessarily*
494 *specifically the Vision itself as something.*

495 **Silveria:** Right.

496 **La Follette:** *Because it used to be posted up all over on campus, you know. I remember seeing it in*
497 *offices and all that. And now you don't really see it anymore.*

498 **Silveria:** Yes, I've got a framed copy somewhere. [Laughter] Yeah.

