

Community Archives Center Tacoma Community House Oral History Interviews Transcript

Serna, Laura Areiza. Interview date 04/27/2022.

dindria: [00:02](#) Okay.

Laura Areiza Serna: [00:04](#) Okay. I

dindria: [00:05](#) Put my, oh, it looked beautiful. Thank you so much. All right. We're going to start with hello and then your name. Okay.

Laura Areiza Serna: [00:13](#) Okay.

dindria: [00:14](#) All right. Did you hit record on your? Not yet, okay, right now.

Laura Areiza Serna: [00:20](#) Hello, my name is Laura, L A U R A. Uh, today is April 7, uh, 27, 2022. Uh, we are local in Tacoma Community House. Goodbye. Alright. Goodbye now, <laugh>,

dindria: [00:44](#) Um, Laura, it's good to meet you. Uh, where are you from?

Laura Areiza Serna: [00:49](#) I'm from Colombia.

dindria: [00:51](#) Oh, yes. Yes. Um, do you wanna tell us about Colombia?

Laura Areiza Serna: [00:56](#) Colombia is, um, a tropical country. Eh? There is located in the, eh, equatorial, eh, place. It's a warm place. It's a summer, every time,

dindria: [01:11](#) Every time. <laugh>, I love that. Summer every time.

Laura Areiza Serna: [01:15](#) Yes. And we have, um, eh, different cultures and the pain of the weather and the mountains is, uh, pretty. The mark of people is the geographic, because we have a three big mountains, and the Andes is a big mountain, like karaoke mountain here. Yes. And in Colombia, these big eh, mountains, eh, divide in three. Oh. And it's like a hand in the land. Yes. And the people have these marks. You know, you recognize the Colombian people when you know, where is your, uh, location in this mark? And we have, uh, the other, uh, middle of the country is, um, um, Amazon jungle and is the other people, you know. And it's very

important because there we have a lot big rivers. Yes. And this is the most important things about the geography in Colombia and the people you know about Colombia. The music is the special thing. When, when I came here, I recognize all people, eh, know about Colombian music. And it is good to know it.

- dindria: [02:56](#) We mix a lot of Colombian music into our music, right?
- Laura Areiza Serna: [03:00](#) Yes. The people listen, you know, Shakira, reggaeton. Yes. And all of this is Colombian people. Right.
- dindria: [03:13](#) I love that you know that, because later I'm gonna ask you about your favorite music, but we'll wait till then. Okay? Okay. Um, who is your family, um, and describe them.
- Laura Areiza Serna: [03:26](#) My family, my, I have a, uh, small family because my parents died, eh, 20 years ago. And I have a sister, one sister and one brother. And my siblings live so far to me because, you know, when, uh, our parents die, uh, all of us take a different ways. Yes. Um,
- dindria: [03:57](#) Can I ask where they live?
- Laura Areiza Serna: [04:00](#) Eh, my sister live in Montana. And my brother lives in Colombia.
- dindria: [04:06](#) Okay. That is far distances. And reminds me of the Andes Mountains now. <laugh>. Yes. Go different ways.
- Laura Areiza Serna: [04:13](#) Volcanoes,
- dindria: [04:15](#) <laugh>, volcanoes. The three volcanoes. Yes. Um, how did you get to Tacoma, Washington? Like, why did you come here?
- Laura Areiza Serna: [04:29](#) Um, okay. It's a long, long explanation, but. Um, I come here because, um, I visit my sister the last Christmas, uh, and I meet, uh, some guy
- dindria: [04:48](#) Oh!
- Laura Areiza Serna: [04:49](#) And, uh, we share, uh, special moments in the mountain because we love practice hiking. And kayaking. And we have, uh, a lot of things, uh, to share each other. But the most important thing is because I want to improve my

English and my career, I have a lot of expectation because I'm Spanish teacher in Colombia, I'm professional, I have a career there. I am a linguistic, and I have a master degree about native, eh, language. I'm interesting to document this kind of language, but here I have a goal about the native immigrants. Latins, we have a lot. Yes, we have Mayas. It is, you can't imagine the diversity of people that came here and they speak, uh, their, their language, native language. But, you know, I need to improve my English. I want to relax of academic things for, uh, you know, take a break. Yes.

- dindria: [06:14](#) But it sounds like you have plans to learn the, like indigenous languages?
- Laura Areiza Serna: [06:20](#) I know that one amazon language is the name is [inaudible].
- Laura Areiza Serna: [06:29](#) Yes.
- dindria: [06:29](#) Okay. I wanna say it right, <laugh>.
- Laura Areiza Serna: [06:32](#) Yes. I know.
- dindria: [06:33](#) So how many languages do you speak?
- Laura Areiza Serna: [06:37](#) Three. But you know, a really good speaker of Spanish. You know, most of the native speaker, because I'm teacher. Yeah. Uh, but I speak so-so English and with,
- dindria: [06:53](#) I think you speak pretty good English. Yes. <laugh>. I don't know the other language, so I can't judge <laugh>. Um, what did you think the United States would be like? Um, that is number five. And how is it different than what you think?
- Laura Areiza Serna: [07:10](#) Uh, I was, uh, the different that, uh, was think before, come here and when I come here, right? Yes. Yes. Um, before I come here, I have, um, a stereotype thinkings because, you know, eh, in South America, hate United States. Because we have a lot problems with the capitalism and intervention, political intervention, you know, the dictatorial, uh, is, uh, is the result of intervention, economic intervention, you know, the control of dollar and a lot of things. Uh, and, you know, we have a bad experience with the United States history and Yeah. The colonialisms and,

you know, but when I came United States, I, I recognize that this country have a lot, eh, ways to share each other. Mm-hmm. <affirmative>, eh, we have a lot problems like, uh, over the world, but eh, we, eh, can't find, uh, good place like Tacoma community house. Eh, we find a pretty good experience to learn different things, eh, we can share with different, with people of different countries.

Laura Areiza Serna: [08:55](#)

You know, I, I don't ha I didn't have experience with Asian people because the Asian people is not usually to, eh, go to the Colombia, you know? And here I now people of China or Vietnam, and even a travels country like Rus Russia or North Korea, Cuba, Ghana, in Africa. And this so impressive about it. <laugh> and, and another hand, eh, I think so, eh, I love United States people. American people have a good fight and defend the human rights. And it is very important because the result here impact the people over war. And it's a good things to share with my friends. Uh, you know.

dindria: [09:56](#)

Right on. So like, the things that you had known about the United States before were about the colonialism and about the government and the wars. And then when you came here, you realized this is a place where many people come. Yes. And, and there are places where people can speak about who they are and where they come from without being in danger. So like the freedoms that we have.

Laura Areiza Serna: [10:24](#)

Yes.

dindria: [10:25](#)

Yeah. Yeah. Yes. Thank you. Um, okay. Now I say, what was your first American experience?

Laura Areiza Serna: [10:36](#)

My first American experience was in Montana. I went to Montana in 2015. And, uh, it's pretty different, uh, between Washington because Montana is, uh, uh, conservate, conservator state conservative. Yeah. Conservative state. And there have, um, you know, uh, different kind of people than here, but the nature was impressive. Yes. Yellowstone, the glacier lakes, the animals, you know, I, uh, visit Missoula and Missoula have deers and crew girls in the streets. Yeah.

dindria: [11:33](#)

<laugh>.

Laura Areiza Serna: [11:34](#) And they, water is pretty different. The winter is, uh, a strong yes, yes. But it was pretty good. And this is my first experience here.

dindria: [11:49](#) All right. Montana representing, um, I think it's interesting. I went through a Montana on a bus. Yes. And it was took forever. <laugh>. That was like the longest bus trip because Montana is so big.

Laura Areiza Serna: [12:04](#) It's so big. And it's so, uh, the people, eh, conserve the land, the nat wild land. And it's, it's so good thing, you know, because it's a small towns a small city, and between these towns it's a lot nature.

dindria: [12:24](#) Lot nature. Yeah. It's interesting. In Washington, we do all of the towns kind of on the on the border of the ocean, right? Mm-hmm. <affirmative>. And, um, what food do you enjoy Lara?

Laura Areiza Serna: [12:36](#) Here?

dindria: [12:37](#) Yes.

Laura Areiza Serna: [12:38](#) I love pho.

dindria: [12:40](#) Oh,

Laura Areiza Serna: [12:41](#) Hi. I meet pho here, you know, because it is in my country, the Asian food is a stereotypical, you know, it's a Chinese rice, but it is not chinese. Right, right. And sushi a little bit, but when I meet pho is, oh my God. I love soups. I love you

dindria: [13:01](#) Put everything in

Laura Areiza Serna: [13:02](#) It. Yes. And it's so healthy, you know? And I, when I feel sad, I eat pho.

dindria: [13:14](#) We should have a pho party

Laura Areiza Serna: [13:17](#) Pho party. And I love the place. Vietnamese place.

dindria: [13:21](#) Yes. Right on. Uh, what is your favorite music or song?

Laura Areiza Serna: [13:27](#) My favorite music? I, I have a lot favorite music, but I have a writing, you know. Yeah. Uh, my first favorite music is a

ending. Ending is my traditional ending, uh, music with, uh, wind instrument. Like a flu? Yeah. Um, triangle. It's a little guitar. Mm-hmm. <affirmative>. And it's, for me, it is the best. I'm, you know, I, when I listen and the music, I connect with the skies, with the eagles, with the winds, and, uh, all of the, you know, like a heaven, spiritual heaven. And my second favorite music is the, uh, symphony music. Oh. Because in my family, we have a lot, uh, uh, music, musician about, uh, camera music. We have a violinist. Um, violinist is cousin. Well,

dindria: [14:37](#)

You have your own symphony.

Laura Areiza Serna: [14:39](#)

Yes. <laugh>. I love, I love, I love, I'm here. I can found different. For example, I impress that Washington have a lot organs. Yes. I love Puget Sound, Patrick. Sure. And I try to follow the clue about the, this kind of performer, because it is inside in the shore, is because the organ can move Yes. In the other place. And I'm impressive because I never had a performance of organ in my life. And I, I experiment here and I love the, this kind of music and my, you know, popular favorite music. I love the [inaudible] mb, you know, because the dance, it gets you going. It's a good flow <laugh>.

dindria: [15:37](#)

Um, so do you play any instrument? You play the organ?

Laura Areiza Serna: [15:40](#)

No, I play, no.

dindria: [15:41](#)

So just dabble with the organ

Laura Areiza Serna: [15:42](#)

Flo and then Flo float. It's a pine with the different tubes. Yes. Yes.

dindria: [15:49](#)

Oh, that's fabulous. Okay. I love people who can play music. I grew up with a dad who played all of these instruments, you know?

Laura Areiza Serna: [15:58](#)

Oh yes.

dindria: [15:58](#)

Um, but I never learned myself. Like why did I do that?

Laura Areiza Serna: [16:02](#)

Good grief.

dindria: [16:03](#)

<laugh>, but I sing.

Laura Areiza Serna: [16:05](#) Oh, wonderful.

dindria: [16:06](#) So if you want to sing some kuia with me.

Laura Areiza Serna: [16:07](#) Oh yeah. <laugh>, I sing all in the shower. <laugh> that I can't try to company.

dindria: [16:16](#) Okay. <laugh>, we'll bring in some music next time. Um, why do you wanna share your story, Laura?

Laura Areiza Serna: [16:25](#) Mm. Because my experience of life is I, I looks different that I have inside me. Mm-hmm. <affirmative>, it is my experience. You know, you, you looks the person, this normal person. But when I talk and it, I'm a deep person. Yeah. And I want to share my talent, my experience, because I have a lot of experience with different people and community. And I want to learn more English and, you know, uh, create different programs to immigrants like me. And it is the, I think so is the best thing. And I have a radio show, <laugh> in Latin radio. I have a radio show every Thursday, 8:15. The name is Laura El Mecal is with my partner down. Yes. It's in beachy radio universal com is a local radio of Latin person. Of course. But you can join us. And for the reason, I want to share my, my story because when we came here, the first time, uh, we will feel like a ant <laugh>. And Okay. I, I have a lot knowledge, but I can't speak, I can't share, I don't found place to share. But with the time the ant become in butterfly and after the more and more.

dindria: [18:19](#) Right. What's after the butterfly Lara?

Laura Areiza Serna: [18:23](#) I want to like an

dindria: [18:25](#) Eagle.

Laura Areiza Serna: [18:26](#) Yes. <laugh>. No, but I want to more deep. I want to become orca.

dindria: [18:33](#) Oh, I like that. Yes. So you go from an ant to a butterfly, to an eagle, to an orca.

Laura Areiza Serna: [18:40](#) Yes. This is my, my metamorphosis.

dindria: [18:42](#) <laugh>. You're metamorphosis. Yes. Fabulous. Um, alright, last question. What do you hope for your future?

Laura Areiza Serna: [18:52](#) For my future? My experience with the future is, is diff is is a transformation. I know the future is now because the future may will be dead, will be other thing. And you will feel frustrated because the future is not exactly that you want. Mm-hmm. But I think some my future is now right here. Mm-hmm. And that the things that I do now is the things that I become after. And this is my, my thinking about the future. Because, you know, when you think a lot of the future, you don't, uh, do the right things in the present. Oh. And the present is, is we have only the present. Right. We don't have nothing.

dindria: [19:51](#) So if you're talking about, I love that you're getting metaphysical on me, so I like when you're getting deep, um, philosophical, right?

Laura Areiza Serna: [20:00](#) Yes. <laugh>.

dindria: [20:02](#) Um, so what do you want to do now for your present that will be your future?

Laura Areiza Serna: [20:07](#) I think soon I want to improve my English and I want to improve my career. I want to experiment different things that I have in my country and about my future. I want to create and develop my community because I, I, I have a big community around me. Um, this is the best effort, you know? Um, but I have a lot plans. I, in the future, I want to walk the Pacific Trade Creek.

dindria: [20:46](#) Oh, I've heard of this.

Laura Areiza Serna: [20:47](#) Oh my gosh. This a, a it's a big's. Yes. Yes. But you know, it's, this is a dream <laugh> <laugh> because it's a five months to work. Yes.

dindria: [20:58](#) All right. Thank you so much.

Laura Areiza Serna: [21:01](#) I really appreciate it. Yes.

dindria: [21:03](#) We love hearing your story.

Laura Areiza Serna: [21:04](#) Thank you.