**Transcription of the interview with Corsino Fernandez garcia (by dr. Alicia pozo-gutierrez)**

**(20 minutes 48 seconds)**

Transcription by Claire Hield, University of Southampton

****

OpenLIVES LLAS Centre, University of Southampton

**NOTE: sections in red, or marked ‘XXXX,’ indicate areas where the recording is unclear, or identifying information has been removed.**

**[getting ready for the interview]**

**Alicia Pozo-Guitierrez:** Okay, this is Alicia Pozo-Gutierrez and I am here with Corsino Fernandez Garcia who is going to be interviewed. Also with me is Imaculada Colomina who is helping me on this project. Derechu who is a friend of Corsino and Jonás and Luís who are filming. This part of the interview we are in Carrio, in Asturias and is the 3rd July 2008. So, we’ll start now.

Corsino, could you tell me when are where you were born?

**Corsino Fernandez Garcia:** [background noise, truck] I was born in Castañedo, Asturias, and there are two different records of when I was born, official in the records in most of my life I was born April 5th 1930. And that’s what I thought most of my life, that that was my birthday. But then when, in 1996 when I came to Asturias I went to the, er, where I went to keep the records, and I found out that I was born in the 6th December 1929 [laughs].

**P:** Can you explain that difference? Did you find…the… [drowns out]

**F:** Because when we left Asturias, they put me on the boat, my father just put a note in my jacket and the information he put there was not entirely correct.

**P:** Okay

F: So, when I got to France, that’s all they had to go by, what they had written on the little piece of paper. So that’s why the [car goes by in background] paperwork shows XXX. Because of course when I came to Asturias in 1996, then I found out they was different birthdays and I got both/birth certificates there [in the file] and they was different.

**P:** Okay, and can you tell me about your first memories? Before you left the beach of Castañedo? Your first memories…of that time?

**F:** Well what I remember themost is, my father had [uh] a few sheep, ovejas, and and the main thing I remember, one of my brothers and I used to go up in the mountains to watch the sheep XXX day and our mother used to fix [uh-long pause] something to eat: potatoes and eggs and and that’s what we ate in the mountains long ago. That’s about the most I remember is, is, just my brother and I going up in the mountains to watch the sheep XXX, you know.

**P:** What was your father’s main occupation?

**F:** He’s what we call a jack-of-all-trades…he built some houses and he was a carpenter and also he had a few sheep, you know… And some time, at least right before I left, he worked in the mines [car in background] I don’t know exactly which mine but I knew he was at… he used to leave in the morning XXX flatbed truck. Some men would get on and they would go off and then in the afternoon they would come back and his clothes were all dirty, you know, back from work in the mines, you know, and that’s right before I left, you know. So he did a little bit of everything: farmer and a carpenter, and whatever he could do for a living.

**P:** And your mother worked in the house looking after you?

**F:** Yes, but I don’t remember very much about her because she died when I was early age, you know, and I don’t remember much about her because she must have been in the house all the time, but she didn’t go out and work, no.

**P:** Did she die before you left?

**F:** Yes, yes.

**P:** And your father was a communist also or any political ideas he had?

**F:** Well, probably but he wasn’t really active in politics, you know, he was just a farmer and maybe some of my brothers involved in more politics because most of the men in that town I think probably were communist at that time, you know. [Uh], but I’m not sure because I was too young to really know too much about it, you know.

**P:** How many brothers and sisters did you have?

**F:** Well, counting me we were 12.

**P:** 12?

**F:** 12. Counting me, yeah.

**P:** How many boys? How many girls?

**F:** About half and half, you know, I don’t know because I have XXXX. Offhand I’d say about half and half, you know, and I was the youngest one.

**P:** You were the youngest one…

**F:** I was the youngest one.

**P:** Do you remember going to school?

**F:** [Uh], a little bit. I didn’t go to school very long …I just remember going for a very short time, you know, right before I left. I mean I didn’t go for several years, it was a very short time, you know. Because I was about 7 years old, so I was, you know, I was probably the first peer had started school, and I left during the summer time and I didn’t go to very much schooling, you know, in Asturias.

**P:** Do you remember life in the village? Other people that lived there? What people used to do?

**F:** We did not go, we did not go, I did not go in the village very much because Castañedo was on one side of the river and very small hamlet and across the river was the main town, you know, and so, I did not go to the main town very much, you know. most of the time [car goes by] like I said I was with my brother and my cousin taking care of the sheep, you know [laughs]. I did not know too much about the main part of town.

**P:** Do you remember games? How you played, or…

**F:** [Uh]…

**P:** Things you used to do with other kids, your brothers, or…

**F:** Well there was nobody, nobody [uh]…because we played in the river, the shallow of the river nearby, [uh] river Aller.

**P:** River Gallero?.

**F:** Aller same name as the consejo, you know, and we played of course there and then there was there used to be a kind of little XXX part of the mountain, there was a little water fall and…where you went down below to a little pond where we swam, you know, we did not swim in the river because the river was very shallow, so it was not deep enough to swim. But the water from the waterfall come down into a pond deep enough to swim, you know. But I did not know how to swim.

**P:** You didn’t know how to swim?

**F:** No, but some of my brothers did and I’d get on their backs and they would dive into the water, you know, across to the other side of the pond, you know [laughs]. But [um]…

**P:** Did you have like grandparents, or uncles and aunties that lived nearby?

**F:** Oh yeah, I’m sure but I don’t remember them but I know, the whole valley is full of relatives, you know, [uh]…

**P:** All your family comes from this area…

**F:** But I was too young to know, to remember who they were, you know.

**P:** Do you recall when things maybe started to change because of the war? Do you have any recollections…

**F:** Yes, it was [uh] less food [laughs]

**P:** Less food…

**F:** Less food, that’s what I remember. I did not know there was a war on, you know. All I remember…there was less food to eat [laughs].

Someone says: Tell us something about this secret you had when you were a kid, some secret, a secret place…

**F:** Well there was a…an abandoned mine nearby and you just went a few feet down XXX to the mountain but they were not walking on it anymore, abandoned, you know, and [uh] I used to go to the mine, you know, a few feet in because there was cold air coming out and in summer time when the weather was hot, there was cold air coming out of the mine, you know, so I used to go there to you know, to stay cool, you know…And I don’t know if anybody else knew about the mine but I was, you know, maybe they did because it was near the house in Castañedo, a short distance, you know and [um]…

Someone says: That’s something that you have repeated along your life, that’s right?

**F:** Yeah…

Someone says: Why did you do that?

**F:** I don’t know why, it just I rem…[laughs] XXX I don’t know why [laughs]

Someone says: Just because you were a kid…

**F:** Yeah.

Someone says: But you need to …have your own space or…

**F:** Oh you mean my secret place?

Someone says: Yeah, yeah, all your secret places.

**F:** I think that’s part of being kind of insecure…special children are insecure they had to have a place where they can feel safe and secure, you know…

**P:** Can I go back to the war? Apart from feeling hungry or knowing that there was less food, do you remember people being scared or talking, or worrying…

**F:** Well, towards the end, you know, the, especially the young people, young people in the town, you know, across the highway, [uh], would get together and [uh], I did not see it myself but I heard that they burnt a church, it was a Catholic church nearby and I heard that they burnt it, you know, that…not the, they didn’t burn the church down, they just burnt inside, you know, like the altar and things like that. But I didn’t see any no bombing or anything like that, you know and…I remember one time it must have been one of my brothers was in uniform came to visit for a couple of days, you know, but that’s the only thing I remember about…I noticed about the war.

**P:** Some of your brothers actually did go and fight XXX.

**F:** Oh yes, yes. There’s [uh]… three brothers fought and two died, you know, and one’s still alive, you know…

**P:** They fought in the Republican army?

**F:** Yes… two…one died fighting and the other one died after the fighting was over they …of course after the fighting was over, they the fascists started looking for people and they arrested the brother and they were taking him in a truck and because he knew they were gonna XXX him, so he jumped off the truck [laughs] and ran up in the mountains, you know, and he stayed in the mountains for a few months and because he was going to…he was near his town where he had his family, he had three daughters and once in a while he’d come down and get some food, you know, and …One day I think…Because I didn’t know…One of his daughters was telling me the story , you know, and one day around Christmas time, he went down to eat with his family, with his wife and daughters and somehow he got arrested, you know, and then they shot him, you know…They took him out in a field and shot him and …his daughters don’t know where he’s buried, you know, so [um]…

**P:** And how did the, your evacuation come about? What do you remember about that?

**F:** [Um]…what I remember is one day as they were…because I’d go across the river and to the main part of town, along the highway, there was a big truck there, I noticed a truck, and a little while later my father asked me if I wanted to go away for a little while [background noisier] and I said okay [laughs], you know…because I thought it was for a little while, you know…and so the next morning he …very early he walked me to the highway and put me in the truck and away I went, you know, with a bunch of people, you know, the people in the truck, in the back of the truck.

**P:** Did other brothers…

**F:** no, no…

**P:** just you…just the little one

**F:** Because, the way I understand it, each family could only take one, one child, you know, XXX they couldn’t take 12 or something like that, you know…Although I read that in some other parts of Asturias they could take four, five, you know, but in that town, one child.

**P:** Did anybody in the family explain to you why they decided to send you away?

**F:** no, no, no…well because they…my father decided to send me because there wasn’t much food, and he figured I was probably better off, you know, [uh]…than staying there.

**P:** And did he tell you that?

**F:** Not at the time, not at the time, no…

**P:** When you got on the truck did you know anybody there?  
**F:** No. I did not know anybody. Later I find out there was a cousin, a girl cousin there…that was…I find that out many years later, after I came back to Asturias, you know…after I came back to Asturias she told me about it.

**P:** So, the people in the truck, where they children or, children, adults? [car in background]

**F:** Mostly both, but mostly children, but here were few adults, you know.

**P:** And what happened when this truck left? Where did you go?

**F:** Oh we went to Gijón.

**P:** Gijón…

**F:** We wound up in Gijón, part of Gijón is XXX a harbour…in the west side of Gijón and …we got off the truck...it was day time…we left early in the morning but by the time we got there it was middle of the day probably…but there as a lot of people at the port and [uh]…just waiting to be put on the boat and …so…By the time we left the port it was night time…XXX…

**P:** Did anybody look after you and the children? Or take you to the boat? Or…

**F:** No.

**P:** How was it all organised?

**F:** well [uh]…

**P:** Do you remember?

**F:** No, all I…I don’t know… XXX I just, you know…[laughs] went with the rest of them

**P:** Went along…

**F:** yeah, yeah…I’m sure it was organised by somebody because, you know, somebody had to organise it, but at that time I didn’t know what was going on...

**P:** So what was it like on the boat? Once you left…

**F:** [laughs]

**P:** What was [laughs] what was the journey like?

**[Unknown person says**]**:** Can we stop for a while, I think that I would like to, to…ask him before getting to the boat…Tell us please [eh], Corsino, about the paper that your father wrote…

**F:** Oh, well…apparently it had my name and …XXX…the house had a name, I don’t know what it was…La Huelga…the house was called La Huelga for some reason you know but …so that’s why we wrote down, he wrote my name and, and he put down I was from La Huelga, so…that was in my records…that’s what…to say that I was from La Huelga, Asturias …that wasn’t…that wasn’t the name of the town, just the name of the house, you know, and that’s the reason…that’s why he wrote in the little paper he put in my pocket, so that when I got to France that’s the information, they had, you know, and because later on when, after the war in Spain was over, they tried to send children back to Spain , they couldn’t find where I was from, you know, they could never find my family, I don’t know how hard they found…they looked at, but since they had the wrong name of the town, I’m sure you know [laughs]

**[Unknown person says]:** There are many different Huelgas in Asturias…There’s one in Gijón, Huelga actually is marked, it’s the river side, so there are many different and I’m sure that they just didn’t know where to look.

**F:** Yeah…they didn’t know where to look, if he’d written Castañedo or something like that, you know, they probably would have sent me back

*[Someone says something over him]*

**P:** Since we’re talking about the house, can you…do you remember what the house looked like?  
**F:** Oh yeah, I always remember how the house looked.

**P:** Could you describe the house?