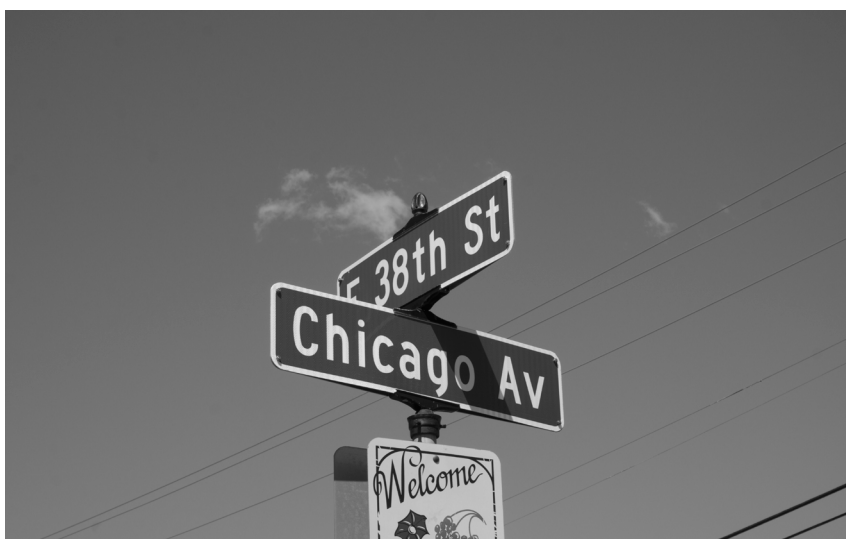


38th & Chicago

Intersecting Stories / Intersección de Historias



Zenaida (Marta) Morales | Erika Hernandez

Jerry & Nancy Alholm | Nicky Leingang & Katharine Seggerman

Sylvia Harper | Josey Sandoval

Zenaida (Marta) Morales

Interviewed by Erika Hernandez

Translated and edited by Gabby Coll

Yo vine [de México] a los Estados Unidos en 1995 con mi esposo y mi hija de dos años y medio. Fue muy difícil, pero con el tiempo nos fuimos adaptando a este país. Hemos luchado mucho para tener lo que ahora tenemos. Ahora mi hija mayor está estudiando en la universidad de Minnesota y ella también ha luchado mucho para tener buenas notas, y tiene que trabajar para poder pagar la escuela. Muchos jóvenes tienen la oportunidad y no aprovechan, pero estoy muy orgullosa de ella porque ella sí aprovecha.

Mis hijas fueron a las escuelas Burroughs, Anthony, y Washburn, todas muy buenas escuelas. Antes podías mandar a tus hijos a la escuela que quisieras pero después pusieron limitación basada en la área en dónde vives. Esto me puso un poco triste porque ya no se podía escoger la escuela. Nosotros vivimos aquí, hemos vivido por mucho tiempo y pagamos impuestos; mis hijas merecen los mismos derechos que tienen todos los niños. Pero por suerte logramos que terminaran en buenas escuelas, y a mis hijas les fue bien. Estaban contentas, y nunca sintieron discriminación. Ahora mis hijas trabajan y se involucran en cosas de la comunidad [una ya está en la Universidad de Minnesota, y la otra va empezar su último año de bachillerato].

Imoved [from Mexico] to the United States in 1995 with my husband and daughter, who was two and a half years old at the time. It was very difficult, but in time we adapted to this country. We've worked very hard for the things that we have now. Now my oldest daughter goes to the University of Minnesota, and she's also worked very hard to have good grades. She also has to work to pay for school. Many young people have many opportunities and don't take advantage of them, but I am proud of my daughter because she does take advantage of all of her opportunities.

My daughters both went to school at Burroughs, Anthony and Washburn - all very good schools. Before the neighborhood limitations, one could choose to which schools to send their children. The neighborhood limitations made me sad because I could no longer choose the schools to send my daughters to. We live here, we've lived here for a long time, and we pay taxes; my daughters deserve the same rights as all other children. But luckily they ended up in good schools. And they did well. They were happy, and they never experienced discrimination. Now my daughters work hard and get involved in many community activities.

Nos mudamos a esta área porque nos gustó la casa. Es buena área, y hay un parque muy cerca. Hace unos años por la Chicago había muchos problemas; había mucha delincuencia, y siempre estaban tirando balazos. Cuando llegaron más negocios fue cuando empezó a mejorar. Los negocios ayudan a que no haya delincuencia, y eso es mejor para toda la comunidad. Ahora es bonito por el vecindario. El vecindario ha cambiado en muchos sentidos en los últimos años. La mayoría de las personas en este vecindario eran blancos, Americanos. Poco a poco ha ido cambiando con más hispanos, pero no son muchos. Además, ahora está mucho mejor la area, más organizada. Aparte los vecinos aquí saludan y conviven. Si tu necesitas algo, puedes llamar [a los vecinos]. Es muy bonito

[La comunidad a mejorado mucho debido a los negocios] - la galería, y ahora el Coop que van a abrir aquí en la 38 y la tercera avenida; pienso que eso va a ayudar más a la comunidad a que todo esté mucho mejor. Yo visito a varios de los negocios por aquí, como Cup Foods. Hace unos años había una tienda y restaurante mexicano, donde ahora está City Foods - era bueno y malo. Vendían cervezas y a veces habían peleas pero era bueno porque estaba cerca y podíamos encontrar productos hispanos y los



We moved to this area because we liked the house. The area is nice, and there's a park nearby. Chicago Avenue had a lot of crime until recently. But the area improved significantly when the various businesses were established. The businesses reduce criminal activity, and that makes things better for the community. Now the neighborhood is much nicer. The neighborhood has changed in many ways in the past few years. In the past, the majority of people living in this neighborhood were white, but slowly, more Hispanic families have moved here. There still aren't many, but more than before. Also, the area is more organized now. And the neighbors are friendly and everyone is kind to each other. If you need something, all you need to do is call [a neighbor].

[The community has also greatly improved due to the businesses that have opened up around here] - The gallery, and now the coop that's opening soon on 38th and Third Avenue, I think these businesses will help the community and for things to improve. I patronize many of the businesses around here, including Cup Foods. A few years ago there was a Mexican restaurant and store where City Foods is now. It was good and bad; they sold beer and sometimes fights broke out, but it was convenient because it was

precios más bajos que los de Cup Foods. Era bueno que la gente podía estar por allí en la tienda.

Yo fui a un programa para padres en CANDO y allí conocí a Henry y a otras personas que trabajan en esa oficina. Esto fue una experiencia bonita. Allí se reúnen gente no solamente de este vecindario, sino de varios vecindarios, y gracias a ese programa pude conocer a esas personas. Además, me dieron un pedazo de terreno en Sabathani para sembrar vegetales - yo antes no sabía de ese lugar. CANDO es bueno para que la gente de esta comunidad se informe de muchas cosas que tienen aquí. Es bueno tener toda esta información para la comunidad. Hay muchos padres y vecinos hispanos que no saben de este programa y de todos los recursos en el vecindario. Se necesita ir y tocar a la puerta y advertir de los programas, para ellos poder aprovechar. Yo aprendí allí a expresarme un poco porque yo era muy tímida. Hay tantas clases y recursos, pero si no te metes, no vas a saber. Es bueno aprender de lo que tenemos en la comunidad para sacarle provecho. Por ejemplo, fuimos a ver a Henry de CANDO y nos dijo que hay fondos para arreglar la casa para que el vecindario se vea mas bonito. Nosotros ya lo hicimos y lo que tenemos ya esta bien, pero tal vez sea bueno para los vecinos que lo usen para que sea mas lindo el vecindario. Muchos no saben, pero hay que aprovechar los recursos.

Estoy muy contenta aqui en el vecindario. Es un vecindario tranquilo. Ha cambiado mucho para bien.

close by and we could purchase Hispanic products. The prices were lower than the ones at Cup Foods, and it was nice to have a place where everyone could go and meet with each other.

I went to a CANDO program for parents and there I met Henry and other people who work in that office. I really liked this experience. Not only do people who live in this neighborhood meet here, but also from other neighborhoods, and thanks to this program I was able to meet many new people. Plus, they gave me a piece of land at the Sabathani center where I am able to plant vegetables. I wasn't aware of this organization before this. CANDO is a good organization for this reason - it provides information for people in the community in terms of available resources and activities in the area. It's good to have this information readily available for the community. There are many Hispanic parents and neighbors who don't know about these programs and all the resources in the neighborhood. I think it would be good for people to door-knock and share more information about the programs, so that everyone in the community can take advantage of them. At these meetings I learned to express myself, because I used to be very shy. There are so many classes and resources, but if you don't go into the CANDO office, you won't necessarily know about them. Maybe it would be helpful to have larger signs with information for the public. It's good to learn about everything available to us so that we can take advantage of it. For example, we went to see Henry at CANDO and he told us that there are funds available to fix up our houses in order to make the neighborhood look nicer. Our family already did it and we are happy with the way it turned out, but it might be good for the rest of the neighbors to become aware of these resources so that we can make the neighborhood even nicer. Many don't know about these resources, but it's important to take advantage of them.

I am very happy here in this neighborhood. It's a calm area. It's changed quite a bit for the better in the last few years.

Jerry and Nancy Alholm

Interviewed by Nicky Leingang and Katharine Seggerman

[Editor's note: this interview and the storytelling in it were a collaborative effort. I have done my best to correctly attribute quotes to either Jerry (regular text) or Nancy (italics), but their memories unfolded together, with each elaborating and filling in details for the other.]

We bought this house 40 years ago. The first year we got married we rented part of a duplex off of 26th and Bloomington and started looking for a house.

For the first 10 years there was an awful lot of gunfire and drug dealing around here. It's a lot more stable now, particularly since the Sears Building got converted to Allina Healthcare. Their corporate influence with the powers-to-be downtown meant that this [area] is a little more important to the City of Minneapolis now and so they spend a little more time and effort around here.

We had a break-in once and called the police and they said, "well, if you want to live in a safe neighborhood, why don't you move to the suburbs." You don't want the police officer saying that you are dumb to live here and you deserve to get robbed. That was prob-



ably about 30 years ago. Now when we hear shots fired we call the police and if you're watching you see them [respond].

We've always been kind of committed to staying in the city. We've had friends who live in Bloomington and further out but the things we wanted to do were here in the city. The cultural things, the Guthrie, the art museums, the library system.

Both of our daughters went through the International Baccalaureate Program. I think the Minneapolis Schools are somewhat in decline right now, but at the time [our daughters] were there they had some really outstanding programs.

When we moved it in was the same year that Jack Keeno opened Ja-keeno's. It used to be a Pizza Papá and he took that "P" and turned it sideways and turned it into a "J." (laughter) He said he couldn't afford to do the sign any other way. When we were remodeling [our house] we got so we would call and would say "this is Nancy. Can we get our regular?" And they would know exactly what we were ordering. It was the Chicago Super, light on the olives.

When we moved a lot of young people were moving in. There were a few older people *but almost every house had kids*. When the kids are playing with each other, that brings you together. Now we're the older people and younger people are moving in. In general we talk to the older ones and the younger ones we say hi to but don't get to know. I think that's pretty typical.

It's been a couple of years since we did anything for National Night Out – we used to do quite a bit, again, when the kids were younger. We used to block off [the street] and the fire truck would come, and we'd take our grill out and so would Kurt and Julie and Lee. So people would come and just grill. We had block organizers. We were block captains for a couple of years. The City doesn't seem to have as much of an emphasis on it now.

Where Smoke in the Pit is now, there was a very tiny pancake shop. They had signs that said "if your children cry, you must leave." They'd prefer you just didn't bring your kids. Everything was just written on paper plates that were on the wall. It was two sisters who ran it. They had a loyal clientele until they all died off, and then they went out of business.

The garage [on the southeastern corner of 37th and Chicago] used to be Raymond Auto Electric. The yard work was absolutely gorgeous. He spent as much time making sure that was a beautiful corner as he did actually working on cars. As cars moved more and more towards electronics, he couldn't make the transition. Eventually he sold it. We had 4 or 5 awful people who moved in, they had junkers all over, and oil pouring out. Now it's not as beautiful as when Raymond had it, but they keep it clean and tidy.

The neighborhood goes through ups and down; right now it's mostly up.

Sylvia Harper

Interviewed by Josey Sandoval

I'm African American, by way of slavery. I've been up here [in Minnesota] for over 40 years. I followed my sister. She was recruited to be a teacher because they didn't have a lot of black teachers back then.

I've been in this neighborhood for about 12 years now. I bought this house because I was going to be working at Anderson School and I wanted to walk to work and I think teachers should live in the neighborhood where they teach their kids.

A lot of people said, "Why are you living over here?" Apparently this little strip from here to 38th & Chicago used to be really bad. Prostitutes, drug addicts, blah blah blah. It didn't look bad to me, but then I talked to the barber. He left a couple of years ago because he got tired of the violence. He was telling me, yeah, they've cleaned everything up and put all the people in jail, but now they're getting ready for them to come out [laughs].

Then the next spring things started to erupt. Two girls were shot at 38th & Chicago in a drive-by. My daughter and I just got home, her from school, me from work, and we heard this pop, pop, pop. The anchor to that corner is Cup Foods. Over the years they've really improved and they're doing a good job now. That corner was just so weird. With the drug dealing you had so many big

men on the corner and you couldn't just get off the bus and come home. They wouldn't move out of the way.

Behaviors just escalated. The idea in the neighborhood was that Cup Foods was participating in that behavior. It took a while for Cup Foods to establish rules and regulations. In the summertime I'd open up my window. They would start shooting about 10:30 and end about 2:30 in the morning. It was like clockwork.

Things didn't start to change until a white person was shot on that corner. I talked to the barber. Barbers in all communities know everything. Men claim that they don't gossip but they talk all day. He told me that the guy had been trying to buy drugs. In the newspaper they made him look like an innocent bystander biking up to the corner.

A week later I hear this loudspeaker on the corner. I go out and there are all these white people from I don't know where, not from this neighborhood. They're riding their bikes on the lawns, all over the place. Finally Mayor Rybak decided he was going to show up and say some words with Mad Dads.

I opened up my door. I was like pissed off. I said, "If white people didn't come here to buy drugs he probably wouldn't have got shot." Well, come to find out, "There's a biking community?" [Laughs.]

These people come into the neighborhood, buy drugs, and then when they get shot or hurt, then it's like...It takes one of them to die before anything to happen. As soon as this guy gets killed, bless his heart, I mean if that is what it takes to change things, that white people have to die...

They cleared out that apt building. They put [speed bumps] in my alley. They put one of those roundabout doohickeys, because people were driving up and down looking for drugs. And it's been quiet ever since.



Minneapolis is not such a bad place. There are trees, relatively quiet. I remember when you never really saw any Native Americans, you never saw any body black. Asians lived out in Roseville.

When I moved up here [from South Bend, Indiana], I came from an entirely different worldview. I think part of it is just being black. People were nice [but] there's this passive aggressive anger. It took me a very, very, very long time to understand the back stabbing mentality. I didn't really pay any attention to it until I became a teacher and until I opened my mouth and they found out I was educated. Then it was downhill all the way.

But your education keeps you from being dragged in. The difference between Josey and I is that I would've never considered being an engineer. In that time period women were literally not allowed into those fields. And you're not only a mechanical engineer but you're of color. Just to have her out here showing other young women of color that it's possible validates my reason for being a teacher.

My goal is just to live to be 100 and look like this.

The interview excerpts in this book are just a small part of the story of the area around 38th & Chicago - neighborhoods with a rich history.

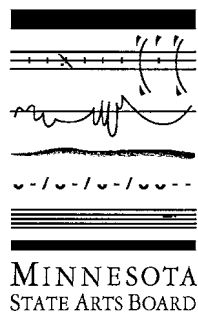
Want to learn more? Many organizations and people have played a role in shaping this area.

The Minnesota Spokesman-Recorder is the Twin Cities' oldest African-American owned business, and their location at 3744 Fourth Avenue South is currently being reviewed for historic designation. You can learn more about the MSR's history and the legacy of the Newman family [online](#).

Council Member **Elizabeth Glidden's 8th Ward Office** led a series of conversations in 2014-2015 about the history of East 38th Street and the future of the corridor. Materials from those conversations are archived [online](#).

The book ***The Growing Seasons: An American Boyhood Before the War*** by Samuel Hynes chronicles a childhood that largely took place in South Minneapolis during the 1930's, including time spent living on Columbus Avenue and memories of the streetcar line and businesses at the intersection of 38th & Chicago during that time. The Hennepin County Library has 13 copies available.

Third Place Projects



This booklet is a Third Place Project produced by Wing Young Huie and Stephanie Lynn Rogers as part of Pillsbury House + Theatre's Art Blocks Program, which is supported by the Minnesota State Arts Board.

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