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**Oral History Student Samples**  
Long Beach Origin Story Interview

**Student Sample #1:** For this assignment, I interviewed my mother. From her responses, I learned that she grew up in Mexico with a friendly and helpful community which changed as she arrived here, being much bigger but unknown to her with people who did their own thing. She moved from place to place before arriving in Long Beach, Arizona was the last place she lived before settling. She recalled that the metro rides here for the first time were very amusing for her. She stated that the community today has become much worse than when she first arrived with more people living in the streets and an increase in violence. The movement from Mexico to Long Beach was her biggest challenge as she had to adapt to the new setting and learn another language. She had a few instances where she encountered racism here, having a cup of noodles thrown at her and being hit on the top of the head while riding the bus. Still, she has also experienced how the community fought for similar problems, like the Black Lives Matter march. The story *Born on the Water* correlates to my mom's story, as her experience with the good and bad was important for me to be where I am today helping me learn from her past experiences and take her origin with me as I make my own origin story.

**Student Sample #2:** For this assignment, I interviewed my mom about how she became a part of the Long Beach community. I learned that my uncle Frank moved out here in 1983 and because of this my mom ended up moving out here in 1999, a year after my oldest brother was born. Since first coming to Long Beach, my mom feels that there are much more people here now. To her being a part of Long Beach is really nice because the area she lived in before had people that were rude and not as friendly. She believes she fits into Long Beach really well because she loves being sociable and is always talking and mingling with others. Historic events that my mom has experienced in Long Beach are lots of performances in theatres, musicals, plays, and concerts. Her favorite Long Beach memory was watching the fireworks in the Queen Mary for the Fourth of July. Furthermore, the connection between how I became a part of Long Beach is because of my mom. If it weren't for her moving us out here, I wouldn't be living here. She wanted to stay in her hometown, but it was too expensive to live in that area and all the homes she was looking at weren't what she was looking for. We've been living in the same house that she bought in 1999 and this is my childhood home that I've grown up in. I get to experience living in Long Beach because of her decision.

**Student Sample #3:** Based off what my grandma said, she said that long beach used to be nice and had a very beautiful beach. But ever since oil spilled the beach has changed and became very dirty, and used to be a touristy city where a lot of celebrities used to come and relax. Some historic events that she experienced was when she went to poly high school she experienced the time where many athlete's came out of school and experienced the big poly football games. In the 60's Poly was a predominately white school, so she faced racism but she said she was strong and overcame that. Other than that my Grandma also said she had so many favorite memories that she couldn't even choose a favorite memory. She said that her and her friends used have so much fun, from the nice beaches to even the pike which was like Disneyland back in the day and their was never a dull moment in Long Beach. I feel like this connects to me now because I can kind of relate to this story besides the racism part, but other than that I can relate because me friends like to hangout in Long beach and even find our selves hanging out at the pike even the its not how it used to be back in the day.

**Student Sample #4:** interviewee: my dad,

1. How long have you been living in Long Beach and where were you born? *was born in Orange County in Santa Barbara. I lived in Corona Del Mar during my childhood, and moved to LA to go to college. After 8 years in NYC, I moved to Glendale. I realized I hated living away from the ocean, until my friend set me straight. So I moved to Laguna Beach. I met your mother there, then moved to Long Beach a year after you were born in 2008 because it was more affordable in Long Beach, plus a love of the location and a good theater community.*

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*I used to ride my bike from Corona Del Mar to Downtown Long Beach to go to acres of books.*

2. How has Long Beach changed since you moved? *It's gotten more expensive and fancier. It was more rundown--in a nice way. I like the new Long Beach but I miss the old one as well. Fundamentally it hasn't changed that much. Friendly, historical. It's definitely more crowded. It was like a ghost town when I moved.*

3. What historical Long Beach have you been apart of/witnessed? *The flyover of the space shuttle! I was working on a play with my cousin, and the shuttle was being transported to the California science center, strapped to the back of a Boeing 747. I remember thinking, "do they know what they're doing?" It was in the paper! The flew quite low over famous transport historical sites, like the Queen Mary. Your mom made us run up to the roof, and in a few minutes was the 747, and she dipped her wing to the Queen! I also remember when the Navy was still here. We were a navy town. The city was devastated when they pulled out in the 90s. According to my friend, it annihilated the economy.*

4. What is your favorite Long Beach memory? *There are times when our family is basking at the beach and it's clean a beautiful and there are a gazillion things to look at and I think "I love this city." I sound like the chamber of commerce, but it's true. It had cool architecture, its bike friendly and its economically diverse, which is very important to me. Not to dunk on Orange County, but I did not grow up with that. It was a very privileged county. You don't learn as much. Oh! There was the time Robert Garcia saw me in a play! That was quite the performance.*

I feel like this interview helped me understand a lot. Like how people come to be in a community, and the travels the go through to get there. Life can be a long and winding road. But you always settle somewhere. Wether that's on the road or off it is tough to discern.

**Student Sample #5:** Both of my parents are from Mexico City, Mexico. They met in Mexico City one night they were out clubbing and just started talking after that night. My mom already had my brother Tonatiuh. So my dad treated him like his own son. My parents were seeing each other for a bit but then they stopped. During the departure of my parents my dad had left to the U.S he went to Texas first. He lived there for a few months but then went to California cause he had an uncle there. So he landed in Long Beach, California. He was living there a while and went out with his friends one night and it was the night of my moms birthday. So he called her as she was still in Mexico. Her best friend had answered, she gave her the phone and he had said he wished her a happy birthday, and that he had missed her. They started talking again and then they would always call. One day he asked her to come down to California with my brother. He paid for the coyote and she came down to long beach they lived there for a year just the three of them and a year later my mother was pregnant with me and had me in June of 2007. We have been living here ever since. *Born on the Water* helps me understand my origin story because i get to ask the most closest person to me where i come from and i say my real home is Mexico City as my parents love it there so much and wish to go back someday. My parents came here offering me and my brother a much better life here than what it couldve been in Mexico. Long Beach is where i grew up and have always lived I love it. Ive learned that its my community and what happens here affects me.

**Student Sample #6:** Through my grandparents interview, the close-knit beachside community turning into a vibrant, diverse city mirrors the transformative journey detailed in *Born on the Water*. The parallels in our family's migration narrative highlight a shared pursuit of better opportunities, anchoring my origin story in the broader historical context of Long Beach. The interview underscores the challenges faced by the community, resonating with the themes of unity and change explored in *Born on the Water*. This connection deepens my understanding of Long Beach's history, emphasizing how the city's growth and challenges are woven into the

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fabric of personal narratives. Overall, Aunt Margaret's fictional account serves as a poignant reflection on the dynamic interplay between individual stories and the broader historical tapestry of Long Beach.

**Student Sample #7:** My mom has been in Long Beach since 1988 and this is home to her. It was her first chance at independence and where she experienced a lot of growth in such a diverse city. She was here to witness the Rodney King riots in 1992 and the George Floyd/Black lives matter protests and riots in 2020 here, she witnessed many pride parades and many Cambodian festivals. She was there for the Jewish center's grand opening and went to the Schondlers list exhibit, and she even took me to swim lessons there. She's seen the downtown area become a safer place for me to go to school in, but has also seen the homelessness issue rise to a dangerous level. She graduated college with a masters in social work and started her family here, and this is not only her home but my home. Long Beach is an incredibly diverse place with amazing people seeing positive change everywhere, but also people suffering in our own community. My mom has been in social work as a therapist for 35 years impacting our community through her career at Childnet and I've grown up in that atmosphere. She's taught me ever since I can remember, "Everyone has a story." so never judge someone on the street, or by the color of their skin, or by the way they dress, or look, or talk or who they love. Long Beach is my home and although my mom only moved here in 1988 and my dad not too long after I consider this place historic to my family for the impact it's had on our values and way of thinking.