

Premise 5: Critical Race Theory recognizes experiential knowledge and draws explicitly on storytelling, family histories, and narratives to challenge dominant discourse

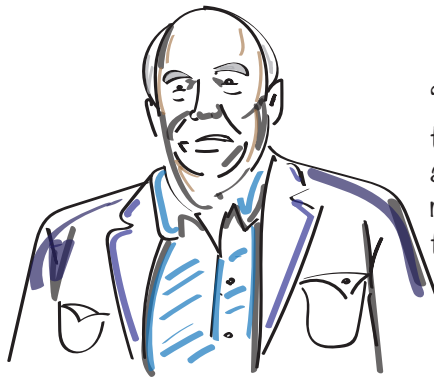


"Every time I came home, I looked at the Catholic church. They were tearing it down. The old church burned. The company helped the people build the new church. It broke my heart when they tore the new church down. I am a very sentimental person. I painted the church [in my artwork]. I still do...I still use pieces from those things [I collected from wreckage] in my assemblages and art. I'll put a piece in a chair or furniture. I still have a piece of stained glass from the church

- Ruben Gonzales
(Siegfried, 1996, p. 3).

"It was heartbreaking when they tore down Santa Rita. My mother would never go back there. She moved to an apartment in Silver [City], and she'd never go back there"

-Myrtle Humble (Siegfried, 1996, p. 2)



"The Mexican American workers were discriminated against. Anglo workers were paid for the same jobs than the Mexican workers. The only jobs they would have were laborers such as trackmen and dumpmen. At this time their pay was about \$2.00 a day. They could not rent company houses, they had their part of town and built houses of anything they could find...Many of my good friends were raised in these conditions. They were a hearty good people with the will to get by. The company owned everything there." - Robert Gardener (1991, ch. 2).

Once we recognize the inherent racial and class injustices in Santa Rita and acknowledge the voices of those who lived there, the narrative begins to take shape. This was not an evacuation, an optional migration in the event of a natural disaster; Santa Ritans were evicted by Kennecott Copper Mining Company who owned the land in and around the mine and ruled over it with a merciless grace. Critical Race Theory allows us to counter-act the dominant narrative of the history of the town and examine the resilience of a community that lost everything.