

Domingo Ortiz (Nate Smith House)

Interviewed by Yessenia Molina and Giovanni Tejeda (2005)

I was born in Dorado, Puerto Rico in 1939. The people were very loving with a wonderful disposition. My house was very strict. I lived with my family and some pets. In the house there were animals that I cared for. My parents were very good to me and I was badly misbehaved for them. I am the oldest of six. My brothers and sisters are: Carmen, Ana, Jose, Francisco and Carlos. I went to and graduated from secondary school so I could succeed.

I liked to stay at my grandparent's house and I was always with them. There were many rules in the house and we had to follow a very strict schedule. My grandparent warned me that 'he who burns the house down, burns down his own house.' We had very few things to entertain us because there were only about three houses in the neighborhood and the people always met in front of my house. Since then I've always surrounded myself with people older than I.

At seventeen years old, I was already thinking about becoming a father because my bride became pregnant. I was married at seventeen years old and my bride was eighteen years old. Since I was very young, I carried many responsibilities. I only hope that my children enjoy what I could not.

I like salsa, bolero, and bachata music. My favorite song is called Provoca me, by a singer from Puerto Rico. Now, I enjoy myself with the most sincere and important things in life: my family, daily life, and the sunrise. I continue to be a kid with the heart of a young person. That is most divine!

Domingo Ortiz (en Español)

Nací y me crié en Dorado, en Puerto Rico en el año 1939. La gente es bien amorosa y tiene una disposición lindísima. Mi casa era muy estricta. Vivía en con mi familia y algunas mascotas. Mis padres eran bien buenos conmigo y yo era peor con ellos. Yo soy el mayor de los seis. Mis hermanos se llamaron Carmen Ana, José, Francisco y Carlos. Asistí y gradué del colegio en mi pueblo para salir adelante.

Me gustaba quedar en la casa de mis abuelos, estuve siempre con ellos. Había reglas en la casa y un horario estricto. Mis abuelos me avisaron el que se quema la casa lo quema pa todos. Teníamos muy poca diversión porque solamente había como tres casas en ese vecindario y la gente siempre se reunía a frente de mi casa y desde ahí siempre he estado con gente mayor.

A los diecisiete años ya yo estaba pensando en ser padre porque mi esposa se embarazó. Me case a los diecisiete años y mi novia tenía dieciocho años. Desde muy joven, cargué muchas responsabilidades. Solamente espero que mis hijos disfrutaran lo que yo no puedo disfrutar.

Me gusta la salsa, bolero, bachata. Mi canción favorita es Provoca me de un cantante de Puerto Rico. Ahora me divierto con las cosas más sencillas y más importante de la vida: mi familia, la vida diaria, el amanecer. Yo sigo siendo niño con el espíritu de un joven. Eso es lo más divino.