

Extract from Senderos Campesinos (Country Trails) – the history of San Gerardo de Rivas

“We came through the mountains...”

We came by different routes. Not the one you see today. We came between the mountains and came down to the Chimirol valley, then we went up the other slope / peak and came out here almost at the top of Pueblo Nuevo, then down again to Rivas. If you wanted to leave with an animal you had to carry an axe so you could hack your way through.

Don Lipe says, “The route was very long because now, I figure, that at the most what was there before was only about a third of what we have now. We spent two days to get to San Isidro, a day in each direction.

We got here on the twentieth of October 1940, so long ago and while there were hardly any bridges, in fact, the little “bridge” we went over was just a pole. All the bridges were trees that fallen down. I remember that one was a ‘Cristobal’ wood.

From Rivas to here, says Don Guido, there was just a little track. Nothing more. And we came here to live in the mountains. Just imagine! We lived under a rock while we were building a hut, a little wooden cottage.

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“...Veníamos caminando y seguro al rato nos montábamos en la carreta...”

DON LIPE: I came from la Guaria de la Palma. My Mom and Dad were from there, from Santa María. We came in the middle of winter. Really bad! I don’t even want to remember.

ULISES ROMERO: I remember that we got to the place they call la Cima in a cart and then to Pérez Zeledón. At that time there was something they called the ‘Casadora’, a bus, so we arrived in that at Pérez. And then we moved our few possessions here to Herradura in a cart.

We brought some clothes, a few little things, those jars that used to come with candy and we cooked frijoles in them, things like that.

We walked here and then, after a while, we got a ride on the cart.

DOÑA YETTI: I was about two and a half when we came from Canáan. My Dad said I

was born over there where the church is in Canáan. He had a cottage but that burned down. So Dad bought up here and they came but I don't exactly know the story. For sure they bought a bit of land to build a house on.

A man brought me perched on a trunk. It was really just a box with legs where my Dad kept his stuff. And this man had it tied on and because I wasn't walking he put me on top of it. I remember that I was carrying a hen but I couldn't manage it and I let it fall. There was no bridge so I let the hen fall and the old man perched me in the crate and carried me to the house. Well, not exactly the house. It was just a straw hut with a dirt floor not a concrete one. Then the old guy who had brought me said, "O.K. so, to pay me for the journey, you have to make me a tortilla." My Mom already had the dough prepared. I remember I sat on a stump to make the tortilla for the man and another for my Dad.

DOÑA MARÍA: My family is from San Ignacio de Acosta. When I arrived here I was just a very little girl. I remember when we were coming from San José. That whole route, and the road, while it wasn't even a road, parts were just dirt. When my Dad came from there it was summer and they passed in the little carts [it was summer so the carts could get through]... I remember that Dad had paid for a cart to get to San Isidro and from there to Chimirol and we came on foot. I was just about dead when I arrived.