

Coca-Cola delivery man has special ties to A&M campus

By Lesa Y Smith
Reporter

Just off Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard in Bryan an old gravel twists and turns past an old army-green two-room shanty. Dust settles around an old couch facing the open front door. A sign with large fluorescent orange letters is nailed to the front wall: "Beware of dog." Lying in the dirt is a large red dog.

Among other houses on that twisting road, one's bright yellow sidings shine like the sun through the mass of hanging plants that adorn the front porch. Grass stretches to the sides of the house as if to reach for the warmth of the sun. An empty bird cage, an old red lantern, a sword and an old Coca-Cola barometer decorate the back porch.

Many years ago, no grass grew in that yard and the house's foundation was weak.

Today, due to hard work, family unity, love for each other and love for a country, the house no longer is decaying. It has renewed life and its life represents the life of Antonio Mosqueda.

You may not be familiar with the house, but you are familiar with the man. That is if you're an Aggie — a thirsty Aggie.

You've seen him many times on the Texas A&M campus. He's the guy who drives the big red truck you see every day. You know, the one with the big white swoosh on the side with "Coke" splashed across it in fancy white letters. The truck that reminds you that you're thirsty and have to have a drink or reminds you of that extra dose of caffeine you need to stay awake through that boring history class you have in five minutes.

Antonio Mosqueda is the "Coca-Cola Man."

He delivers Coca-Cola products to 72 Coke machines on campus.

"I refill the machines every day," he said. "They may not be empty but they always need refilling."

Classic Coke is the best seller, he said. Diet Coke second and Dr Pepper third. "My favorite is Coke," he said.

Antonio has been delivering Coca-Cola products to campus for 12 years but his previous job was vastly different.

He worked in Irapuato, Mexico, as a traffic officer for six years and was promoted to a state detective in the Mexican police force where he worked for five years.

The job was very dangerous, he said, and he wanted a change.

"I have many cousins who live in Bryan, and they told me to come here and they would get me a job," he said.

They told him his life could be better in the United States and he would have more opportunities.

Six of his 14 children died in Mexico because of illness and poor medical care. Four died before reaching the age of one, and two were miscarried.

"I have seen the University grow just as I have seen my children grow," he said.



Antonio Mosqueda

Photo by Fred D. Joe

Today the University is big, he said. The number of dormitories has increased and they have become more modern. The buildings are progressive and there're more of them. Now, there are more cars and students. There are people from countries.

In 1971, Antonio took his government I.D. card to the border officials and they gave him permission to enter the United States. He lived with his cousins and worked in the main Coca-Cola plant for a year before he went back to get his family.

"I suffered a lot during that year," he said. "I couldn't sleep many nights be-

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— Antonio Mosqueda

cause I missed my family very much. The temperature is hotter in Texas, and I had no air conditioning."

In Irapuato, the temperature may rise to 90 degrees during the day but at night, the temperature is very cold, he said.

In 1972, Antonio returned to Irapuato to bring his family to Bryan.

"I hoped Bryan would offer my family and me a better life," he said.

They moved into a run-down, three-room house in Bryan, and later moved into another tiny, badly constructed three-room house and decided to rebuild it.

"When we moved into the house nine years ago, it was very small and had no air conditioning," he said. "It took my sons and me three years to finish repairs and remodel the house. We worked after I returned from my job and late into the night."

"My sons installed central air conditioning and heating and repaired the plumbing."

Now, there are eight rooms.

Photographs of his family cover the walls like wallpaper. A long hallway leads to the large kitchen that contains a large variety of appliances. A lithograph of Christ hangs on one of the walls in the living room, and another wall is decorated with two brilliantly-colored sombreros.

His 17-year-old daughter, the baby of the family, has her own room with the typical decor of a teen-ager — posters of rock-and-roll stars on the walls, a day bed and clothes on the floor.

"It's fun to be the youngest," Linda said. "My dad treats me to all sorts of things. He has always brought me food after school and gives me money whenever I ask for it. He works very hard and is always there when I need him."

Antonio said that during the summer, when they first lived in Bryan, the whole family worked in the cotton fields picking cotton.

"We picked cotton for four summers, and the money we made from picking cotton was used to buy the children clothes and school supplies for the new school year," he said.

In 1975, the U.S. government approved his family's citizenship papers, and they received nine green cards. Linda was born in the United States, so she is a citizen and doesn't need one.

All of my children have good jobs, he said, and they go to good schools.

In addition to his eight children, Antonio has eight grandchildren.

Today, Antonio has many reasons to smile. His life and that of his family is healthy and happy. His home is a happy home, and his country is a beloved country.

When he sits on his front porch and gazes at the old, two-room, army-green shanty, he knows no longer is he forced to live that way. And as he turns and glances at the tombstones scattered in the cemetery next door, he looks back at the flowers hanging from his porch, touches them and smiles.

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