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Group 1 - #1

Lo de lots, he's German, and he used to tell me, our people, he says, you belong to Mount Carmen. Why don't you go to Mount Carmen? Well, in my heart, a catholic don't discriminate regardless if it's anybody. And they used to tell me that they belonged to Mt. Carmen.

(Q) Did they let you come to mass, did they have a special mass?

(a) NO, No.

(Q) Then did they have a mass for Chicanos, in Latin?

(a) No doubt, they had one in Mt. Carmen they had one for Mexicans.

(Q) They had everything in Spanish?

(a) Oh yea. As far as I know the one who was the speaker was Father Masimillion. He's down here now at St. John's, but he was the speaker, from back in 1940 he was there in Mt. Carmen and very few people went to St. Thomas. To the school or to the church.

(Q) Where did you go to school around here?

(a) Huh? Well they had a public school. John J. Ingles, on 6th St. I only know of one Mexicano in 1940 that went to St. Thomas who went to perocial school. Our fathers, they were all full of kids, they didn't have no room. It was lucky for a person to have a steady job, for their parents to have a steady job. My father worked at Wilsons and maybe a worked a few days a week, maybe he worked one day. But he struggled along.

(Q) What did he do?

(a) Worked in a packing house.

(Q) What kind of work did he do there?

(a) What did he do? Well, pulled trucks, that's what he did. I did too myself, pulled trucks. Well there's all kind jobs, different jobs in a packing house. It's cold where I worked. They had big drums, they had big drums that used to hold maybe one hundred, seventy five or one hundred hams, they threw them in there and they would pickle them and they would stay in there and there would be a whole lot of in there you see. Whenever they would ask for so many hams or so many pounds, you would have to go over there and pick them out by hand and load them on a truck. Now the truck alone used to weigh about 500 lbs. with big iron wheels at that time, it was brick just like the street when it had brick. It was always washed down and it was always wet. They used to throw in 1000 lbs, in that truck and that truck weighed 500 for that 1,500 lbs and you would have to pull that truck maybe a block or 3/4 of a block - and you did that maybe two or three hours a day. Then maybe a trailer would come in or a box car with salt, they would put four men in there with sacks. They would load them in these trucks

(Q) To salt the beef?

(a) Yea, to salt the meat, they would take it upstairs. They used to come in trailers, they used to come in box cars. Sometimes it would take four guys. For different purposes. For the meat and for the hides. To salt the hides with. They would stretch the hides and then they would throw salt on them. Then after that you have to shake the hides, put them up and send them in to the canner, so they can be canned. There's alot of departments, it was pulling a truck mostly at that time. He was lucky to get it, when I was working there, I was making 61c an hour.

(Q) When did you start working?

(a) In 1940, at the packing house. Then I started up here, I started 1948 or 1947. I started \$1.05 an hour, but they were going to put me lugging beef and I didn't want lugging beef. I went in the coolers at 85c an hour, later on I went to lugging and I lugged for about 15 years out of 25 years. Lugging beef, is carrying beef, put it on your shoulder then you put it in the car, or take it out of the car and put it inside the cooler.

(L) So that was before they had the rails on top?

(a) They always had the rails. You took it off the rail and hung it in a tall box car or in a trailer and he had that meat on the side of his shoulder while somebody would take it off, somebody would stand underneath it and hold the trolley and he would run in with the meat, but somebody would hold the trolley, because that iron trolley that holds 400 or 500lb. of meat, you would have to have an iron hat, but he ran in with that half of a cow or 1/4 of a cow and somebody would be in there ready to hook it sometimes or tie it. Because that meat, it depends how many pounds are going to go in that trailer that we were talking about. The railroad used to hold 33 to 35,000 lbs. of meat. That would be about 35 to 50 cows, depending on what they wanted. I carried a bull that weighed 475 a piece, so you can imagine what the others weighed.

(Q) Could you carry that?

(a) Could I carry it? Yes, see it's hanging on the rope around here and then they take a knife and rib it till about that far from the neck, then you back up put the shank or the leg or hand whatever, and you run under, then when you're standing still this guy cuts it off and you run in the car which is about 35 or 40 feet.

(Q) And you did this all day long?

(a) Fifteen or sixteen years. All day long? Never under three cars a day or we loaded as many as 15 cars in one day.

(Q) That was just constant lugging for eight hours?

(A) I think I got a picture at home.

(Q) Could you train, how long did you work during that lugging?

(a) I had three days.

(Q) Three days, that's all that you worked late?

(a) Oh, the lugging? No the lugging was 15 years out of 25 years of experience, and after that I went to fibbing cattle, cutting cattle into smaller pieces, packaging and we had gone all around but we still had to lug beef, we loaded trucks or loaded trailers, for commercial use. Most of the people who did that were Mexicans. (Two men talking at one time, could not make out what they were saying) in 1941 or 42 when the war broke out, it was hard to get a job.

(Q) What happened after the war?

(a) Everybody just stayed there, they got settled, they got seniority, it was a meal, a paycheck every week; Anybody would come here and the first one who would go, a Mexican colony, they came off of the trains. I worked at Union Pacific and I used to see them get off the trains, they come hungry, the first thing that they wanted to know, Donde esta el barrio Mexicano? We said, just keep going on down Kansas Avenue, you'll find it, they'll give you something to eat down there. It was many times I would see them, Some would come from Chicago or Texas, same thing. But when they came here, they had one thing in mind and that was work, that's all. They're still coming in here now, but there is no jobs. Back in those days there was a program

like this that would get us a job. Now, back in 1939 or 1938, right here in Argentine there was an NYU, here and in Armodale, there was a program all we would get was \$18.00 a month. We had to clean streets and parks for the city. We used to go down here and eat in a restaurant (several people speaking at once) they would only give us \$18.00 a month, that's all, we had to work a whole week for that. We used to go to a restaurant to eat and they would sell us the food and would tell us to get the hell out. They told me to get out. Back in those days, hell they had an old raggedy show, a movie house, and they used to separate us in a barrio Mexicano. In 1951 before the flood, right there on 7th St. and Osage. Mary and Johnny; the bar? I went in there, they would let me in, but they had a sign out there, "White Only", a big sign, "Whites Only" I went to a lot of places that a lot of my people didn't go. That was because I had been a soldier, when I came back I said, "You ain't gonna deny me, I have a (?? John blocked??) well one guy over there on Kansas Avenue across from the old bank where we used to have the Woodman of the World meeting. I think that was, do you remember what the name was before? Anyhow, I went in there dressed as a soldier, oh yea all the beer you wanted, well I came back without the uniform and he got a bar, a pipe like that lead, full of lead and he was going to hit me. I just thought, oh boy, this guys gonna hit me. You know, I had Judo in the army and everything that's not gonna help him any. But his lucky star was that there was a white lady there, and she called the cops. Then here comes Joe Moreno and a German guy, a policeman. I knew German because I had spoken German to him. I thought he was either Netherland or German, and I had spoken German to him and he says, "Where did you learn to talk German?" "I said you are German aren't you?" The German told me, don't you know they don't sell to the Mexican people here? I said, "I may be Mexican, but I am a citizen of the United States." Y luego la senora la white lady told the policeman, she said, "This guy had a lead bar and was gonna hit him in the head with it, and wouldn't sell him a beer." So the cop told him, "You know he can put a padlock on your door." I picked up my identification and showed it to the cop. Y luego le dije yo a el moreno, le dije tu seras Mexicano mugroso o lo que cierras, pero yo soy Mexicano-Americano, le dije, y a mi me van a vender aqui, quieres tu o no lo quieres. Y yo tomo onde yo quierro. I guess she was used to those problems, and I wasn't in my own town, heck I went in the best places there was. But before that, I used to have a twelve piece orchestra myself, that I organized. Nobody wanted to teach me to play the guitar, so I picked up one and then I started to playing myself. So every time I had a chance I played clerks, I played for schools, colleges, you name it. American music, Mexican music, square dance, anything they wanted. All my learning was self taught, so I I don't know if I played it right. Anyhow, they liked it. So then, I would tell Father Munoz, who was there at that time to make me a speech where I could you know, go against the American people, in favor of the Mexican people, so they would help me. Well the big shots contacted me then. I said don't pat me on the back. I said, "help me fight my problems," I said, " which is really not my problems, but my peoples problems, because after all, they are the ones: who are being discriminated on. I went to catholic school in Newton, and they had all the Mexican people in one room. Catholic school mind you, and they're not suppose to discriminate. So I told the teacher, X said, " Is the god that belongs to this group, is he a different color than your God that you have over there in the other groups?" I told her that. I said, "Look sister, with me you're not sitting me wherever you want to, I'm going to sit where I want to. I said, "If I am badly educated, I'll sit behind, if I'm medium, in the middle. Then they sat me where I wanted to sit, but not because they liked it, I

don't think. I went to the Monsenior and I spoke to him about it. He said, Catholics are not suppose to discriminate, I don't know why they are doing that. So after a while you know, they started dispursing some of that room. But I used to fight so badly about that, and what made it so sickening is that I couldn't get the big shots, from like merchants or that to help me out. If I had somebody with me, I'd go in their homes or anything, they'd offer me a silver plate just like anybody else and them too. But that was it, they'd stop right there see. And what I wanted was them too forecast or you know, to make the other rest of the people see that our side was good as anybody else. But they always thought that the Mexican people was killer, dirty, and ill talking. Well, the ill talking was true because I am ill talking myself I used to talk to them, but they think that they're dirty and that they're killers and you know all those things. Because they taught their I had friends that used to tell me, that the people are this and that, I said, yes there is people, but you find one nationality that don't have people like that. I said, but here one thing you don't see the Mexican people, I don't even care where it is. Here, a son will kill his whole family, in Mexico if one kills his own family, he's crazy. That's another thing, here a young kid is taught, now I don't know anymore but it used to be that, we used to go like that and take a glass of water to another person and kneel down until he was through and take that glass away. I said, you don't see that in American people, here. Any kid can tall his dad, well you go to the devil. Over there if a kid tells his dad something like that he'll have a broken tooth. See in all of that respect for the church, for the elderly and everything is altogether different from here. Another thing is, in Mexico, a child that has six or seventh grade education can compete with a lawyer from here, just like it is in Germany. I said, but here it's altogether different. And another thing, when we went to school, they wouldn't let us speak Spanish, they wouldn't. Oh, if you'd speak Spanish you'd be thrown out of the school. I had one I had one sister, she caught me speaking Spanish, and she took the ruler and hit my right hand, and then I told her you see what you done there? Y le hable, you know en Espanol y al los demas le estaba hablando en Espanol, theres the other hand. She wouldn't do it, she wouldn't do it, she wouldn't hit the other hand. I said, look sister, God gave us this to speak, and you're gonna take the right away, to take that right from people to speak something like that, they're born with it, I said, why don't you speak Spanish? You was born the same language. And you know that sister she was kind of different after that. But I noticed that...

(Q) Did they hire people that couldn't speak English?

(a) Yes they do, uh huh.

(Q) For what, to work (several people speaking together)

(Q) When did you start working in packing houses?

(a) 1940.

(Q) Did (noises in the speaker)

(a) The depression started in 1929 you see, so after that, there was hardly any work. The people started going into different places to find jobs, some of them were cutting grass, that couldn't even speak English.. Somebody would say, well have somebody come talk about what you can do, you know and stuff like that. Some of them went to fix the windows, they didn't even know how to fix a window.

(Q) Did you know anybody that got sent back to Mexico?

(a) Oh yea.

(Q) Did they go back to Mexico during the depression?

(a) Some of them went voluntarily, but very few of them send them back. No, in those years they didn't send hardly any of them back, because they wanted cheap labor. Most of the Mexican people would work, results of what they'd pay them. Because I know that during the depression, everybody complained, oh there's no jobs. Well I made my job. You see I used to go out and after one person said, well fix ray sidewalk, cement, I didn't know about cement. But I learned. How much do I owe you? I don't know what the job is worth. Some of them would pay me a dollar, some of them would pay me \$10.00 or \$15.00, three times more than the job was worth, but never the less, I got the job, you know to satisfy them, so I learned how to fix electrical lights and practically everything. I had no problem with jobs, I had to go off to work when I was fourteen.

(Q) But you didn't know from day to day, that you were going to get any work?

(a) No. I didn't, I didn't, (someone else speaking) You work in front of the packing house, there would be two three hundred of us, they would just pick out 50 or 60 for a couple of days, if he saw you big enough, and he liked you, maybe he'd call you in. You'd work maybe two or three days. That was before the Unions come in. I'll talk about it later. Even after the Union came you'd go over there, and when they got in, everybody would want to stay 3 or 4 days (noise in speaker) people would lay you off, in those days they would have maybe two or three days a week, come right back again. That's all he could do, so he did it. He would find out and thought he was hiring, a company like Wilsons, Swifts, we had four of them down there. That's where all the Mexicans would come down, to the packing houses. They had Swift, Cutahays, Wilsons, (that's where all the Mexicans came down, and when they found one nobody hired Mexicans, many of them would come in here and the first thing they would do, was to find a job and they wanted to work. They didn't have any qualifications.) (Two people speaking at once) You left out three of them, Swift, Wilsons, Armour, Cutahays, Kisers, Rodeo.

(Q) Did they ask the Mexicans to do the same thing that Whites were doing for less money?

(a) The majority whites (speaking very fast) nice jobs, they would pay more, and they got easy jobs.

(Q) Were there White folks doing the same kind of work that you were, but you got paid less?

(a) Yes, (two people speaking at once) before the Union, yea. It was different before, because the Union didn't get it's strength until 1948, and I never I happened to be myself.

(Q) When did the Union form, when did you start the Union?

(a) In 1948 when it got strong, it was started 1937, the unions.

(Q) Before the war?

(a) Yes, but, they couldn't get into the packing house because if they come to me, they would say, heck the company will fire me if I go to the Union, see. Alot of the people didn't want to go in it. But they didn't know that the Union was for their protection as well as for the protection of the company itself. Because they give them the right to fire and hire.

(Q) Did they tell you that if you get fired you can join the Union?

(a) (two people speaking) Before the Union was organized, they would tell them.

(Q) After 1937, you know that was illegal?

(a) Yea, it was illegal until 1948, (several people speaking)

(Q) It was illegal after firing you, to join the Union after 1937, see, so that even though it was illegal they'd still tell you. (several people speaking).

(a) They fired my wife ???? three years they fired her, why, cause she layed off to much. They

fired me three different times after I was in the Union but I got every penny I lost. (several people speaking)

(Q) How come they started to get strong in 1948?

(a) The reason was that in 1947 or 1948, Cutahey set a new problem with the employees. The policemen, the city policemen came and they knocked some of them cold. Just because they were trying to fight for their rights. They were already partly unionized then, but this is like, the union wasn't strong until 1948. When Armour and Cutahey, Wilson's, all of them got more or less strong, see. Then the little plants went in too. Because I remember we were out three months without working and we didn't even get a red cent from them. All they was getting was the Union money. But anyhow they, (interruption) we had a lawyer complain about it.

(Q) So what did you do then?

(a) The lawyer complained about hitting these people and hurting and all of that, making them go to the hospital. Then they obided to the Union a little more, so then from then on, I think it was in February or Hay it got strong, from then on you know it was a little different. Even then they fired me three different times, from the same place that I was working.

(Q) Why?

(a) Well, I talked back to a foreman, but, not a foreman he was just a salesman. He called me a dog names, my mother dog name I told him nobody calls her, if you want to be one yourself I said, o.k. but don't think that just because you are a salesman that you can abuse me that way. So then the owner of the plant Mr. Mart, he comes, "What did you say to him?" I said, ask him first what he said to me, and then I'll tell you what I said. He said, well you're fired go get your time. I said sure that's alright so I went and punched my card. Well I was off four days, then we had a colored boy as a representative of the Union, and he got every red cent I lost from those three days back. X never lost any time. Then the second time, I had a guy that was written, and he was in the supervision, he wasn't supposed to be written. So I pushed him back from here, and he went and told the company that I hit him. Our superintendant was Ed White. So I told him, look Ed, I didn't hit that guy. He said, well he says you did. I said, well you dumb bell, I said put me a two by four across the door and I'll show you what I can do when I hit somebody. He wouldn't have stood up if he would have been hit. He didn't say nothing, I said well, let me him you once, I'll show you what I mean by hitting. Then I was off another three days. Then again I got my pay again. Then the third time, the first time I was fired was because I had spoke to the brass man, he came in there and called me a bitch also, and I was smoking I wasn't suppose to be smoking. I didn't know who he was anyway. But I started laughing at him after he left, boy I just laughed and laughed. I said, I don't give a care if he's the president, he can't call me something like that. I said, he can speak nice to me, it's alright, but when it comes to that kind of word I said, that ain't for me. So anyhow, this superintendant went and told my foreman and my foreman just laughed and said, why didn't you knock him down, he said I didn't like him anyway. So he told the superintendant, from here on when you're going to mix up with any of my boys, you first come to me. He wouldn't go in the cooler after that. He would have knocked him out because he was tough. He was the kind of guy that would say alright boys we've got some cars to load, lets go. So maybe by nine o'clock we would have them unloaded, he'd take our cards and then he'd punch them eight hours for those three cars.

(Q) Were any of you there at the time when there was a fight with those people from Cutahey

and the police? Do you remember that, do you remember what happened?

(a) Well, what happened was that this lawyer went to court in favor of the Union. I don't know how he got in there or what anyhow, this lawyer was a lawyer that ?? Sevela?? for the mafia head. I don't know what they are. So, he was pretty strong, so that's why the Union got it's strength, after that. All of the union representatives, most of them were Italian.

(Q) Was the union always mixed?

(a) Oh yea, everybody.

(Q) Did Mexicans ever have a problem getting into the Union?

(a) No they had no problem getting into it, everybody got into for their own protection, you know start giving raises, they start giving benefits it was you see. All they were worried about was a job and a paycheck every week. Union in a packing house was through the ear, the mouth through the grapevine. You'd get over there they paid me 60c an hour, they'd pay my insurance, they gave us a bonus, we put out more work, hospitalization. That's what they wanted, oh they were great once they started, once you got in. But the idea it really didn't break till after the war, the war started, but before it was terrible. I mean you had to scuffle around here. I was taken out of school to go to ????. They took me out the first part of May and they take me in a truck for about maybe three or four families with four or five kids, they would all end up north, that would make contracts with the ???? factory and they'd take us and we didn't have no transportation and they dropped our families who maybe consist of four or five of us kids, mother and dad and we would have a fixed contract with a farmer with one who raised 50 or 60 acres of wheat and we had to stay there, when we stayed there, their crop was all ??? we would seed the seed of the wheat when it went in the ground. We were there already and we waited for it to come up that high, then we would ?? and from May, June July and it was already getting big, with wheat, lot of land I said I'm a man, when I was drafted I didn't want to go to war, but I was drafted. I felt this way, my parents were over there I wanted to be with them I didn't want to stay back here when my ?? were over there fighting.

(Q) Were they Mexican?

(a) Yea, oh yea. I never had to see a single one of them, but thats the way you feel, you want to be with your buddies so thats whay I told my ?? He wanted to be with his buddies. They said in his wish, but my wish he wanted to be with his buddies, so I signed for him. I couldn't convince my wife about it. I said besides, it's destiny. The Lord La Virgin de Guadalupe when I went to Mexico, that I didn't want religion regardless or wether they didn't. Cripled or what have you. So I guess that's the only way religion (echo, hard to understand) In one God, the American God, I didn't even know who he was, he come down to my house, Are you Mr. Porter, he says, I seen when Johnny died. I said you did? What did he have to say? He said, he couldn't say nothing, he said, "Oh God pray ??? The Lord came to me, but as far as the war, I seen many American people killed, Germans, which was wrong. Wrong, very wrong. And lot of the Germans killed American people as well, but then the way I saw it was the American people were asking for it. Sometimes they would go in a place and they'd kill children, ladies and all of that, which I didn't see anything right about that. Then here in Vietnam my son used to write to me and say, you know they are abusing everything over here, the American people as well as the Vietnamese. They come in and they see a whole group of people, they're children or what, whether they're animals or not, they kill them. ??? That's what you call brainwash. They were over there killing, for what? They didn't care who it was.

(Q) Why?

(a) Why? Why didn't they go over there, the only reason is, everybody wanted to go, they wanted to ?? who were brainwashed.

(Q) Who brainwashes who?

(a) Well, anybody who went.

(Q) Why, who brainwashes who?

(a) Nobody brainwashed me because they couldn't.

(O) But why do people go to war?

(a) Defend our country, patriotism, rather than have them come over here, I'd rather go over there and kill them, than have them come over here and kill people. Wouldn't you? Self defense. People will stand up and fight for your family. I don't care if anybody comes up to your house now, you're going to stand up to be free. Even so, our church says, when they hit your cheek turn the other one, but I can't see that. Not with our country any way. Rather than have them come over here and kill the people over here, I'll go over there instead so they don't kill the people here. Regardless whether they hate me or whether they love me or what. Common sense, self- defense, don't you think so? (someone else) I'll respect you for your patriotism and I'll more or less a friend of mine where as, I see these young kids they go out there and they steal something, first off is ?? send them to jail, what not. But now that I understand that they're unemployed and there's not really much they can do about it, stay in the streets and get, in trouble they do these things, ??? for them anymore, now I can only say, they did it, I won't do something like they did, but I'm not going to condemn them for what ????? (someone else)

That's why I pray day in day out, that they don't have war, what's one prayer. When all of the United States should be praying for peace instead of war. #2- Brainwashing comes in, might be where a young fellow is more apt to be brainwashed to ?? to serve a certain time for his country and he over there, goes through basic training and all subject to will and teaching of the camp (hard to understand; an echo or something) he's being a big bad marine, he's a hired killer for the country and with this attitude, he goes out there and he kills people. After he comes back ten, fifteen years later he centers down a little bit, he's more mature in his mind.

#1 Well, if you're a soldier, and you want to be a good soldier, you have to be disciplined. But on the other hand, if you have your own beliefs, they can do nothing to you. Because like I said, I couldn't believe that the dead soldier, or German soldier was a good soldier. To my knowledge, they were just as much human as we were, so why not try to protect them.

#2 Because it is related to the fact that the whites come over and killed so many Indians, at the same time, the Indians were undermanned, and their idea of fighting was to wrestle and win. Not to kill and be killed and just turned out that a good Indian was a dead Indian, so that they tell you, in relation that the good German was a dead soldier. They just about tell you, a good Mexican is a dead Mexican.

#1 Yea, that's true. But they don't tell you this to your face, On the other hand, see, I had a fellow that learned three years of college, he had German. They gave him a group of Germans they to work. Me, I picked up when I was farming with ?? them so, it was more or less picked up. So I used to get 30 soldiers, German soldiers, and some of them had the notion to ask me, "Would you really shoot me if you went away?" I said, well don't try it please. You know I treat you nice and they all liked me and everything in every way, so even if they were bad. But I never had one I'd run away from.

But I told them, don't try because I don't know if I would shoot you or not, the best thing is not to try it. I said, you got, here with me you got all the freedom you want and everything according to the law. Heck I'd go to their house unarmed and I never had it happened.

(L) In Germany?

(#1) In Germany yes. I had good friends in Germany.

(L) This was during the war, while the war was still going on?

(#1) Yes. And uh, one of them gave me a ?? street racer, heck I could buy that for \$25.00 here in the United States, he gave it to me. Another one gave me a smoke deal and everything. But, like I said, I couldn't believe the way they taught me, I learned heavy artillery, infantry and what have you, but I had ray own mind made. Another thing I couldn't believe is that the soldier didn't want to fight, that I was suppose to shoot him. I couldn't believe that because he was on our side, why should I shoot him.

(L) Yea.

(#L) Again just recently, maybe he was afraid or maybe he, excited or something, he was in the right to kill me.

(L) Who do you think wins the wars?

(#1) Nobody wins the wars because it's levistation. In the first place the United States spends alot of money and they waist alot of tax money. Well I'll show you one case. When I was coming back, they had a boat mind you. Nothing but potatoes in that boat. They dumped them to sea, he was still bringing them to the poor people over here, selling them for half price or get the regular price for them. That's a sin, they're paying for that, now. They had another boat that was ?? nothing but bargaining on ?? and those pine blocks, nothing but bargaining. Also, another thing to sea, now that don't do to sea any good or the fish and it don't do them any good. But they here half price or regular price.

(L) Why did they do that?

(#1) Surplus (several people speaking)

(L) After the war they did this?

(#1) After the war.

(L) But I thought there was a big shortage, after the war, all sorts of food?

(#1) A shortage, yes. Anyhow, there is another case. That's what they said, there was no shortage.

(Q) There was a shortage during the war, wasn't there?

(#1) The shortage (2 people speaking) no the reason the socalled shortage is this. In order for them to have everything, they'd say that to the people so they could have everything they wanted.

(L) So who could have everything they wanted?

(#1) The United States would tell the people that there was a shortage, in order for them to grab everything they have, and not give to the people, but use it for whatever army purposes they had. It's logic. Stockings, for instance. You would have to stand a mile long for maybe 50 or 60 pairs of stockings and two or three hundred people would go over there for stockings and they couldn't find them. And I went to Denmark for my vacation from Remenhaugin in Germany and I sent some pairs home from where I was shipped to, some pairs to my wife and you know people that couldn't get no stockings. I bought them over there for 25c a piece. Well over here they were \$1.50. There was no shortage, except that they tell you that in order for

them. Just like this gasoline. ?? Don't think there's a shortage, that's baloney. The big companies want to cut the neck off of the smaller companies, so they can get that mighty one dollar that they get it for. They tell you it's going up 15c and ?? after while. It's already \$1.15, \$1.12, \$1.10.

(#2) \$1.50, \$1.49

(L) So who wins the war?

(#1) Nobody wins the war. For this reason like I told you. You pay the taxes to keep the war going. You lose. United States can't get that money back. Where's he going to get it back. Alright, the people over there, they're devastated, who won? They didn't...

(L) So why the ears?

(#1) To keep peace.

(L) Somebody's got to get something out of the war or else there wouldn't be a war.

(#1) Well it's like I tell you. The Mexican people say, No ay bien, no ay mal, que por bien no vengán. Which means this, somebody's good, has to be somebody's bad. For instance, ?? is for my ???, Right? But I done the bad. The Mexican people used to be that they'd take a gun and you can't take my daughter. Well it was for his good, but it was bad for the family, losing they're daughter. And that's the way it runs everywhere. The people that got the daughter, they don't give a kick about you. They want the daughter and that's final. Put ?? around your neck and that's it. That's the way it is with gasoline. There's no shortage. I told them when it first started. Because I asked publicly somewhere I don't know where. I told them just exactly what I thought.

(L) What was that?

(#1) It's been about four years ago or something like that. Everybody thought I was wrong. They said, when they say it's a shortage, it must be a shortage. I said, you can't tell me. So here about two years ago Carter ?? one of the companies and had three billion barrels overhead. Then they'd profit of 3, 4, 5 billion dollars a year. That's too much profit for one company. It's just like General Motors, GMC yea. They're grabbing everything. They make refrigerators, they make automobiles, you name it they got it. Bulbs, and to them. For business, and don't let nobody else get in.

(L) So what happens to the poor folks then?

(#1) The poor people? They suffer, they have to suffer. We have to pay for it.

(2) All the food is commodities, that's all we hear now, shortage. There never is no shortage. You can think of all the shortage the Government has put out, coffee. There's going to be a shortage, it went up to \$3.00 a lb. ??potatoes a shortage there is a shortage of sugar, candy, a couple of years ago you couldn't but no candy. I said, don't tell me that. They just say that, there ain't never no shortage, but they want you to believe that.

(#1) I'll give you one example, here you know everything is going up and up and up. Let me tell you one thing. When the stores see that more than one item is sold, that's the one she's gonna raise the price on. Coffee for instance, they pay South America, Brazil. The people that work over there, they get 3c a lb. They can afford to sell it over here for 50c a pound. High price for the United States. Why is it worth \$7.00? It don't cost that much to transport one ?? from over here to there.

(L) I don't know, why is it?

(#1) Because the people want the money. And they see that the people are buying the coffee

and they're going to raise the price on it.

(L) So who's making the profits?

(#1) The company that buys the coffee. But you have to pay for it. I don't drink coffee no more.

(#3) Why are there well, even these are basically evil at heart to begin with. But, not all of them. Mexicanos, French or German are of all equal.

(#2) Here's another example.

(3) Wait let me finish. The Mexicanos are, well everybody knows by how that they're basically home loving people and Christian people and these are the kind of people that will always be the peons, will always be there to use people. The ones who suffered.

(L) So what does it take to get out of ?

(#1) Well in the first place, our people have to get educated to the fact that they can be progressed. Educate themselves to learn, everything of the world. No more of how to get by how to jip you or me or somebody else.

(Q) Do you think we have progressed to a certain degree, do you think we have come.

(#1) Well we have progressed, as far as our Mexican people, but we're still far behind. Like we have, well like during the war, we had clock watchers over here, clock makers, furniture men, refrigerator men and I think they were getting \$3.00 or \$5.00 an hour. And the clock maker used to be hard to ?? So they were making money with the Mexican people. There was no imigration laws then, they would bring them up by the bunches and put them to work.

(Q) Could you say that we need to be educated, do you feel that the young generation, they are getting the education.

(#1) Yea, the younger generation are getting more educated because...

(Q) Do you think we have to ??? ...

(#1) Because we tell them, look here, if you don't go to school you won't have a job, .. (several people speaking)

(#2) There was only two places to go. Railroad or the packinghouse.

(#1) Or the farm.

(#2) But now, you go any place and you find Mexicans hired now. Maybe it's because discrimination law. Maybe they open the door to the blacks too, I don't know, nobody knows. But I know in the times that everybody came over for jobs and that's all there was, Railroad. They need no qualifications.

(#1) I can say that the Blacks have helped the Mexican? people alot, because they fought for their rights.

(L) One at a time. What were you saying Jose?

(#1) I said Blacks have helped, quite a bit to the Mexican people. Because the Mexican people say, well the Blacks can do it, why can't we? So they are educated a little more than they were before, because when I went to Mexico for the first time my brother-in-law which is married to my wife's sister, didn't want the kids to go to school. I cussed him out and told him look, let them kids go to school, they'll help you later on. Now he's finding out that they're helping, so now he's even helping to go to school. One of my nephews, is an engineer, see, and he helps him alot more. He even came down here to Missouri to these mining places from Mexico to study, and take big ideas to Mexico for the mining over there. See he can go to the mountains and say this one has got copper, it's got uranium or it's got whatever, see, and then go back. But he's got to make sure one thing, that that Mountain has at least 3/4 of the material that he

wants before they go into that mountain. They go back and report to the company and then the company starts buying part of the land or renting out and making a profit.

(L) what were you saying Anita?

(A) I was saying, to ask what you felt, and you too Mr. ?Coda about the education, you all had children in high school. Did they ever have a Mexican teacher that you could maybe relate more to?

(I)No, no.

(#4) There was nobody who taught the kids, ...

(A) Why?

(#1) They didn't believe, the Mexicans did not believe in school. Our parents didn't believe in school, they go, whats the use in going to school, you're going to land up pulling trucks in a packing house or in a railroad. But we, my they found out different. They didn't want us to go through that either, that's for school. We the young generation now, we see that it's over, that it's paying off. Instead back when I went, my father didn't have enough to send me to school. He didn't have enough to feed us. But now, heck they got everything. Now they can just go over to Welfare, they'll give you something to eat. But many days you didn't have no supper, una torta that's all. Una torta con sal, and that was supper. In the morning one big that was it. We rented in Armoudale, this was in 19; before the war broke out. to heat in the winter time, we didn't have no heating, we had coal stoves. We didn't have no carbon, didn't have no money for the coal, we to heat in the winter time. We used to run and get them tires, you know what is, and split them. When my dad was living, coal was about \$3.00 or \$4.00 a ton, you're in heaven. So we had to go get tires and that's what we burnt. We heated and cooked with that. We didn't have no medicine, very little medicine.

(#2) Few Mexicans had a house or an automobile. That owned a a house, owned an automobile. Heating the house, then came the telephone. Because when somebody when they broke in, hey, so and so has a telephone in the house they must have a job to (noises) but then when the war came, after the war broke out and they came back, everybody had money, everybody was buying a home, buying cars, so and so is an owner now. They got a telephone in the house. The rumor was getting around, people were getting telephones. They were spending money. They were getting a check every week. A big check too. They liked when the war was on, they didn't know what 40 dollars was they wanted \$100, \$150.00 that was a lot of money. The first thing they would do, they would invest it, in a home. They had good jobs, that's why you get quite a few Mexicans now, they stay there on these jobs. They're lifetime, 40, 50 years they pention ... But do you think this young generation is going to do that. Do you think, you can stay on one job and stay 30 or 40 years on one job? Take this job for instance. Do you think you can stand on your feet like the old folks did? I myself stayed 20 years on one job and I quit. I was confused, I had the breaks.

(A) Do you think this is good thing in the young people that they know...

(#2) Now, they can

(#2) That they stay at one job. I mean do you think that's good, or...

(#2) I think that's good, but theres alot of fields open, there's alot of opportunity for them now, but we were brought up, that we need an education. We couldn't get an education. I had to get out when I was fourteen and start hustling.

(L) What do you remember about what it was like before the war?

(#1) He was talking about coal, I remember one year it was really cold. We used to get coal from the railroad, because we lived right there close to the railroad. At that time we were running short, and there was snow on the ground and everything. I put on my galoshes, do you know what my galoshes were? Gunny sacks. I rapped them around my toes and went, out, then I'd go out and cuss the firemen. The Firemen got in the back of the engine, and started throwing coal at me, that's what I wanted. When they sent me to get coal, I got my coal, but in a different way. I was going to say about this education. In those days, people didn't give you no opportunity. They refused you, they didn't want you in school, no Mexican people. Now, here about two or three years ago, I myself got what they call a back pack. You know for students, for Jesse Aguilar's son, Franky. I got him a \$2,000 ?? then I went to the catholic church and got him a paper, and I got him \$4,000. So he got \$6,000 to go to college. He wants to be a doctor. I'm proud of that, because I did try to help him a little bit. He got it, but he's bright. Not just working in a store. I don't know what chances he'll get, but they do have a lot of chances. If you know a little bit, somebody will give you a break to go to school. Scholarship, is what it is.

(L) You worked on the railroad didn't you Jose?

(J) Yes, I worked on the railroad from 1929 to 1937.

(L) What did you do on the railroad?

(J) I put in spikes, put in rails and I lined track. Later on they used to give me 5 or 6 men, and I got to where I could cut a rail, line a track, put a sewage, put it to cross over. Three or four tracks around, cross one way or the other.

(L) Did you work on the railroad too?

(2) I worked on the railroad, but I didn't do that. ??? That's what they called candy ?? He was a candy ??

(3) They used to have crews that came down here in the spring, (echo??) come down there, take in all the employees. They would take them out of the gang, take them off for two or three weeks, they'd go out and do railroads. They'd go for a week or two weeks and they would bring them in to town, but they used to charge them, they would have the cooks there, they would feed them there on a camp. But they're pay, they took so much out of their pay, whether they work or not. But every week, they would come down there ? & Main and pick up the crews. They used to have an office down there, in the 5th & Main. You know where the City Market is? They used to have a gang who ??? It used to come out in the paper all the time, it said ?? I mean hundreds, 75 or 100. They'd go lay the track. They would go pick them up. Heck I went out to Desoto Kansas one time that they were hiring, we went out there at nine o'clock at night, I was about 17 years old, had two big I thought they were going to hire me. They had a whole string of box cars, the guys were sleeping, the guy said, you should have been here this morning, we hired 100 men. There I was at night time. He said, I'm sorry that was it. The only way they used to call them cats in those days. But as far as gandy, I never did gandy. What did you make on a gandy, when you first started? A couple of dollars?

(J) No, I was getting 35c an hour, no wait a minute, when I started I was getting 32c an hour.

(L) When was that?

(J) About 1929 and then, before that I remember, there in my town. We had 1,000 - 2,000 men working on the railroad. You could see, they looked like ants, putting in rail, ties, putting in the rock on there with the pick. I did everything myself. But like I said, I learned it well enough where they would give me five men, then I was more or less supervising.

(L) So what kind of work is that, doing that, laying those tracks and stuff?

(#1) Alright, the railroad has two tracks, one on each side, that's what they call, raise. Then the ties are crossed over like this, just tie one here and one here, one here and one here, with the guage so it would be a certain width. They either tell you, loose guage or tight guage. Loose; guage is for, I mean; Tight guage is for straight track, loose guage is for curves. Then you have switches, you have to learn how to set a switch, so it would be straight at an angle, so it would open up and close. Because they got a point that's pointed up, where it will cross over to another area. Well I learned enough of that to put four different rolls across, what they call a cross over road. And I learned the size of the ties to put in there, what size, what length, what kind of ties, and everything like that

(L) Was it hard work?

(#1) Well, when you first start to learn, it is hard work because all day long you are nervous put in the right kind of the tie so it will hold the track up to level. And you stand back up here, and say, lay a 1/4 back of the joint or 1/4 half of the joint, somebody goes with the bottome line roller. If it goes to far, push it back until it's straight.