

John & Pascual Madrigal

(L) It's April 29th, I'm doing an interview for the Project Trabajo Cultura. Sir what is your name?

(J) Juan Madrigal, at your service.

(L) And you?

(P) Pascual Madrigal, born 1902.

(L) And where do you all live?

(P) On 1428 South 25th Street

(L) What neighborhood is that?

(P) Argentine.

(L) Ok, hold on.

(L) Mr. Madrigal, where you born here in the United States?

(J) No ma'am, I was born in Mexico.

(L) In what part?

(J) In Don Guanajuato.

(L) And when did you come to the United States?

(J) In April 1925.

(L) And at that time how old were you?

(J) 23.

(L) 23? And why did you come?

(J) To work.

(L) What did you start working in when you arrived?

(J) On the railroad tracks.

(L) Through which company?

(J) The Santa Fe.

(L) And what kind of work?

(J) Tracks.

(L) Let see, can you describe how it was?

(J) Life?

(L) Yes.

(J) Lift the tracks, put in the nails and nail heads. I did repairs here with The Santa Fe. Then I worked with a company called the American Car Tank Company or Pennsylvania.

(L) In Pennsylvania?

(J) At that time it was called Pennsylvania, the Pennsylvania Company. Now it's called the American Car Tank Company.

(L) And what did you do there?

(J) Box car repairs. And then there was no more work there and I returned to The Santa Fe and then the depression arrived and I didn't work for some time. Then there was a job at Rock Island where I worked for two years. The Rock Island company was a railroad track company and then there was no more work there either and I went to work on a ranch when the depression came during Mr. Hoover's time.

(L) Here in the ranch?

(J) Yes the ranch here Miss. In Muncie with Mr. Al Grecan.

(L) And

(J) He would give me about \$50 for ten or twelve hours of work.

(L) When did you start working on the tracks? How much did they pay you there?

(J) 37 cents per hour.

(L) And what was work like on the tracks?

(J) Pick and shovel, it was work.

(L) And how many hours did you work?

(J) Eight.

(L) Eight? Only eight?

(J) Eight. \$2.96 I would make at Santa Fe.

(L) And was there a union in those days?

(J) No. There were no unions at that time.

(L) Not even for the engineers?

(J) They had an association. The rest, the labor workers, didn't have a union. Until Mr. Ceval [.....] unions.

(L) And when was that?

(J) In nineteen-hundred—1942. He came in as a president around '38 or '36. When the war ended he prepared the unions then and things got more settled.

(L) And, good. When you came from Mexico, what was Mexico like? What were conditions there like?

(J) Well it was, the conditions were the same all the time. But today there is more industry and all of that is very distinct now than the Mexico of fifty years ago. I came here more than 13 years ago.

(L) And what were conditions like when you came, the conditions in Mexico?

(J) Well they were a bit precarious.

(L) Well.

(J) Well yeah.

(L) Why?

(J) Well, the government, all the time did not look after the worker. The workers had to look out for themselves. The government in power up until now called the PRI, was called the Revolutionary National Party. And then it was called the Party of the Mexican Revolution. Now it's called National Revolutionary Party and then it's called the PRI, which is the same.

(L) Do you remember the days during the Revolution?

(J) Yes.

(L) Let's see if you can tell me.

(J) Of course, why not. I was living there when the General came, when the Carrancistas entered. It was July, June of 1916. The combat started around midnight [?] they entered.

(L) And what happened?

(J) Well they won. The government [...] many left. The railroad machines were whistling, whistling in the station. They took [...] and all of my people. [...] And lost. The generals were there. The General Francisco Villa was at the nunnery and Alberto Torres was in Guanajuato. There was Contreras and well Hernandez. They were all together because the bell was there. Santana, Chicago de Santana that's where the gathering was.

(L) You?

(J) No, at that time I was like 14 years old.

(L) And what did you see?

(J) Lots of dead people. They had come in through the street.

(L) And what were they fighting for?

(J) They would come in through over there, they entered with [...] and [...], they would kill anyone with the sombrero on.

(L) Why?

(J) Because they thought they were of the opposition. They didn't know what side they belonged to. Whoever was wearing a sombrero wasn't on their side. And they [...] And General Moja, there were many generals there.

(L) And after the combat, what happened?

(J) Well that combat started to [?] everything. And they closed the [...] there [?] [...] Up to date they won. [...] Aguascalientes won and made [...] strong the border [...] and of the [...] Then, [?] [...] one [...] they

killed her in [...]. Francisco Villa.

(L) So now when people say, "Forever Live the Mexican Revolution!" What do you think of that?

(J) Well of all the people yelling that now, none of them saw it. None of them know what the Revolution was. All the ones who are revolutionaries are all politicians and they only want [...] of theirs. All of them are multi-millionaires.

(L) So then what did the poor do?

(J) Well work, but we barely had any. Yes [...] the government was better. She looked out for the poor.

(L) Pancho? Pancho Villa?

(J) Francisco Villa was his name. It was him.

(L) And, many who came to Kansas City, came here because of the Revolution, right?

(J) Yes, many.

(L) Can you tell me about your trip when you came.

(J) Well I came in '23, I was already married, I lived with my wife here and there was no more Revolution. She made shawls that wouldn't sell. They had a cent and then I came here with her.

(L) And how did you arrive?

(J) We came through Laredo on April 23rd...

(L) On the train?

(J) 1925 on the train, yes I came on the train.

(L) Sneaked in?

(J) No. I paid up to here, Kansas City. I had an aunt here on 39th. I had an aunt and she sent for me so that I would come.

(L) So you wouldn't have come here to Kansas City had it not been for her.

(J) Yes. I had come before but I was in Nebraska. And she sent me here. Before I got married I had been to Nebraska.

(L) And when you worked there in the tracks, how did you like it?

(J) I was young. I didn't like it.

(L) And then you went there in the [...]?? Right, you worked there?

(J) I worked after the, after the [...] ended, where I earned 20 cents an hour. Ten hours for two dollars. In '34. There the revolution started on time. Then the unions started and then things started to progress. The first law put there [...] a small blue eagle. That's when the workers started to be protected.

(L) They put what?

(J) A law, a union. It was because of him. It was because of this that the worker started to have their own agency after the unions came. And then during the war they paid us 20 cents, and then 25 and a half, and then we joined the union, CIO, they paid us and we all had money through the unions. The union was the one fixing things. We started to earn 50 cents, 60, 70 each time that [...] contract. We started to earn more money. And then the war came and things started to get more composed for people. Since '42 to now things started to compose themselves and life started to level out.

(L) And why was it that things were good during the war, or better?

(J) Lots of work. Women, young women, all of them worked here at American Royal making things for airplanes that they would make for the war. Materials for the war. And many young men left to the war and those who stayed worked here.

(L) And what was life like during the depression?

(J) They gave us help.

(L) Who?

(J) The government. The young lady with [...] They would give me \$2.50 a week. Money, not food stamps. We would make firewood and go there to [...] House. There we would go and they'd take us to Muncie to cut down wood. The firewood was for us to keep ourselves warm in the winter. They'd give us \$2.50, then I got a job at the ranch \$1.50 daily. They'd pay me \$9 per week for 12 hours.

(L) Did people experience hunger?

(J) There wasn't a lot to eat. Everything was very cheap. Only cheap.

(L) There wasn't any money? But was there food?

(J) Yes ma'am. 10 cans of milk for about 25 cents. Carnation. A pound of pork ribs went for seven cents.

(L) ??

(J) Lard, firewood for five cents a pound. [...] five cents of beef. (someone speaking in background)

(L) And John when did you start working there?

(J) I started in 1942, I was 16 years old.

(L) Sixteen years old? How many brothers and sisters do you have?

(J) I have two brothers and four sisters. Known as Mike, Jessee Madrigal.

(L) And you're the oldest?

(J) I'm the oldest.

(L) What do your brothers and sisters do?

(J) Mike used to be with the renewal then he went to Kansas City, Missouri, I don't know what he's going to do later. Jessee he works for over in Illinois and at the same time I think [...] or something like that. My sisters, one lives in Prairie Village, another one lives here on 34th St., another one lives here in 16th & Sheer, another one lives in Ottawa, Kansas.

(L) Are they all housewives, do they have jobs?

(J) Two of them have jobs.

(L) What kind of work do they do now?

(J) I don't know exactly what they're working on, one just started working, I think works over here at [...]. They're mother, she works over at Venture & Kramers.

(L) So, you were sixteen years old when you started working at the ice plant. That's pretty young isn't it?

(J) I guess I had to. The law is you're really suppose to be 18, but I had to sign some papers, kind of ... to let me in they didn't want to be too responsible for me getting hurt or anything.

(P) I had sign the release for him to into work, just in case he hurt himself.

(J) The company didn't want to be responsible for that

(L) So then when you turned 18 were they responsible?

(J) I guess they did, it was the law.

(L) So, why did you start working at such a young age?

(J) Well I tried to help the folks, and I didn't go to school very much, I didn't take very much education whatever I know, is something I picked up myself. My reading.

(J) Where did you go to school at?

(J) I went to Clara Barton School, it used to be across the tracks from here.

(L) What was that like, going to Clairborn?

(J) Well at that time you know it was Spanish, Mexicans mostly. It was not too bad a shape of a school, it was not the best.

(L) What did the school look like?

(J) It was, when I first started ,that was something new to me of course I had to start from scratch, I spoke no English to

start with. Like most of the children right now, when they go to school, they're prepared for all this, I wasn't, I was completely lost. Just like coming into another world.

(L) Did the teachers speak Spanish to you?

(J) No.

(L) How are the teachers?

(J) Well, some were I guess some of the good, some of them mean, but nowadays, I can see they're point too, what they had to go through you know. At first we don't see that but later in life, we realize it.

(L) You mean what the teachers had to go through?

(J) Yes.

(L) What do you mean, what did they have to go through?

(J) They had real bad students.

(L) In what way?

(J) [...] just about every recess time, there used to be a fight.

(L) Did they do a good job in teaching you?

(J) Yes.

(L) How long did you stay in school?

(J) I just went up to the fourth grade.

(L) Then afterwards, let's see when you were in the fourth grade you were probably about ten years old or something like that?

(J) Well, I didn't, I failed for about two or three years, so it kind of put me back too. Then at the age of fifteen I didn't

go to school anymore, I just, the following year is when I started working.

(L) What was it like working at the ice plant, what kind of work did you do there?

(P) Before the union came, people didn't work there by shifts, they'd be working there 24 hours. If you wanted to step out, you'd have to ask the supervisor for permission. And you'd have to leave to go do your hair or run an errand. You'd only be there and they'd pay people and they'd only be able to rest about one, two or three hours a day of the 24 hours. But you had to be there. There weren't any jobs elsewhere, that's why we're all there.

(J) On call 24 hours

(P) Sometimes you'd work day and night, there was no [...] until we would finish the war trains, there was a lot of work. Sometimes one whole day or three days. You'd only eat and go back to work, up until one worker from the Santa Fe, a big man took us out of work and told us to go sleep. We could not stay awake. Then, we started working from seven in the morning until midnight. But then we'd actually sleep. It was the company, they wouldn't report, and we would just eat and return to work. Up until that man wanted the trains done immediately. And there was a young man there named Stephan, a classmate who asked that since what time had we been here. They knew each other and spoke in English with Stephan saying that it had been three days that we had been there early. And you all haven't slept? No. I wish all three of us did. It was the big man.

(L) Did that happen a lot?

(P) Yes. Nobody would say nothing.

(L) And how many years did you work like that?

(P) I worked there 31 years, but after the union came, only 8 hours.

(L) But still,

(P) Then when that wasn't happening anymore because we couldn't, then they would only pay us \$20 for [...] to work or not to work. It was barely enough, give or take. Because you would only get paid for the amount you worked. You'd be taxed \$7 from your check within a 15-day period, a half hour more. Then they started to see,

from the union, they said you'd have to give \$20 whether you worked or not. And for the other [...] I'm going to fix it another way and then things got fixed. They marked eight hours of working or no working. It was good, then the company didn't charge us. We'd be there from eight to four, and well, they'd have to pay us for the eight hours. If there wasn't any work, they'd have to pay us. Then we took shifts, there weren't any shifts during that time. Since people were just there. Then they'd talk to people who wanted shifts and they'd have to do shifts. Eight hours each shift.

(L) So then you weren't on call 24 hours?

(P) Then there were shifts, you'd go into the week, you'd take your lunch and all of that like anyone else and then they took us out of there. We used to live there, we had houses there, like barracks. And then after they took us out of there they fired us. And that's when we came around here. But we had already been working eight hours, they didn't need us there anymore.

(L) John were you old enough to remember when they got the union into the company?

(J) Yes. I barely remember. It started about one or two years before I started working. It was, I'll say about 1940 because I started in '42, and I remember a little about the movement, I heard that they were starting a union around the place. They got organized, of course there was not very much of a union, not very strong but at least we got a union.

(P) Another company sold this one, this company. And this company ended, they still pay me, they send me \$60 a month.

(L) To you all?

(P) To me.

(L) What was that like to organize the union there?

(P) We went to talk to the CIO, a CIO representative came to organize us, they didn't want to. Mexicans and Americans worked there. The Americans made more money than we did. And to us, they'd only pay 26 and a half cents. Then later 32.

And they didn't want to because they were scared that from Chicago they'd fire all of us. He said don't be scared. Then the man who came from Chicago, the owner, asked what we were doing, if we were looking for trouble and that why don't leave where we came from. He said that Mexicans had nothing to do here, he said to the union. He said for us to leave far away. But the union man said he couldn't say that and he asked, why not? You don't know that these are Americans just like us. He said it didn't matter because we were not citizens. He asked, why? Because from here to there is America. That was his direction. The man from the union told him, I'm going to tell you one more thing: You have to give them vacation time. What? Yes, he said. You have to give them two weeks. They can take whatever time. No, but you have to pay them. You like to go out with your family right? They also want to, so many years here. [...] that you must pay them for two weeks of vacation every year. And when they are here more time they will get three weeks and that's how it will go. Then, I will [...]. And then the union guy left. And then the Americans didn't want to and then the union guy said i'm going to [...] only you all. And he said, if there are even just two more Mexicans than Americans, you all win. And there was only one group more of Mexicans than there were Americans. There were more of us Mexican groups. And then the army was leaving, and when they were about to send him off they asked for him in the office to give him his papers to send him off. For everything to be...Then the union guy said don't sign it, sign for your card, it's here. And he signed it, represented it and said one more of you all, i'm going to organize you. I was very mad, the men organized [...] and that is new what they did wrong.

(L) What, the Americans or the owners?

(P) The Americans were mad, the workers themselves there

(J) This man who worked on the production...

(L) Let's see, what'd he say?

(J) They were working [...] they were doing the production work, making the ice, I think they were getting; they had shifts. They didn't, these fellows had shifts. They were not in favor of people organizing, but the union representative said, if you're

the majority, I'll organize the place. It happened, this fellow was one more to the favor of the Union, one fellow.

(L) One American fellow?

(J) No, well American, he's American but he was of the labor gang, Mexican, Mexican American, but he was already called for the service at that time. The foreman was trying to give him his time in order to eliminate him from making this majority, this group a majority. So he called him up you know, but already this union representative had already had him written down. He already had him written down, he had him down on his card signed. So he was still; they still counted him, he still counted for that majority to organize the place.

(L) So did you have to fight as much with the other American workers, as you did with the company?

(P) I think it just started for a little while, but later on they all got together, it all became one group later on. At first it started like that because some people were in favor, some people were not. Some people were better off that were not in favor. But later on everybody got organized.

(L) So then did your salaries and benefits and stuff equalized?

(J) Yes, it came better you know. Of course the skillful worker was getting more you know. But it was better for the people, for everybody.

(L) Was that a hard thing to do, to organize the union?

(J) Yes, like you say you know...

(P) What happened was that they gave us a month, to us the workers. They gave the packers who worked there, they earned 300 cents per hour. And when we were there for about a month we were still earning 85 and they were still earning 70 cents and we were doing more labor than them.

(J) That's why they got organized, it was convenient to get in...

(P) And they wrote a letter to the company and the company gave them a two-cents raise and to us too because it was

a union rule.

John & Pascual Madrigal #2

(L) Well, How was this reganche, what is a reganche?

(P) It's an occupation here. That was the reganche, regache. One would get there, you say that you want to go to a certain place, I have so many requests from so many men from certain towns, do you want to go? Work in the mountains, in Chicago I have to work for the conditions, whoever wants to go. Twenty men to that area. And the mountains of Santa Fe wanted a lot for the railway, for the track. The way they placed the train, one cart of railway, the passenger. They would tie them together and we would be hundreds, and the carts full. And where we went, it went carrying travelling where groups would separate to each mountain, to each station, to each town, they would drop them off. From there we would travel and show the papers to the manager, he was already waiting for the workers. He would put people to work then he would charge the first payment, \$7.50. They would charge the ticket and the food they gave us. Once we got there, we would work there, they would carry us to eat lunch, for dinner, that's where we slept.

(L) On the train?

(P) No, there on the floor, in the office, in a big room. That's where we would lay down to sleep. From there they had cans of beans with cakes, coffee and lunch. And at 12PM, soup, in cooked pots with broth and plates full of broth with meat and food. Everything they gave us was free. We would eat when we were there. We would stay there until the managers needed something. The people that wanted the jack would take the food to the depot. There, they would put the food on a cart. Then, they were in charge of spreading the food amongst the workers.

(L) Were there any complications?

(P) Yes, because people would want more food because the company paid \$ 150 [dollars?] per head. Every individual they would take meant it was one fifty for them. The more people they grabbed, it was one fifty.

(L) Where there North American dining tables there in Mexico?

(P) No. El Paso.

(L) In El Paso?

(P) In El Paso, they were Mexicans, they would bring the people, to here, to Santa Fe.

(L) Were they Mexican?

(P) Yes, they were Mexican, Ramon and [incomplete] were Mexicans. They were brothers from here. They were natives from here. During the time they would call them manitos.

(L) What does manito mean?

(P) Well, Americans, of those that stayed here.

(J) Mexican Americans from, people of New Mexico.

(P) Of those that stayed when the United States took the land.

(L) What do you think of the ranchers?

(P) Well nothing, other than they were good men, they gave you paper and pencil in order to write to your house. Stamps, for their homes after they have work. Going in there, they have the work ready. All they do is go to work and now there's no work. The desire to work has faded. Right now there are no ranches or anything. The conditions from here to Chicago. Aurelio Vaca was here, here by Main, it looks like he still has his office, he would help people too.

(L) Companies in Chicago?

(P) Because of the conditions and the railways as well. It was the only office that existed, two or three offices here in Missouri in order to help people ranch.

(L) And a lot of Mexicans here in Kansas City went to Chicago?

(P) Yes, a lot of people would leave. They would get there, the camps of Santa Fe would end, poor and all that. They would arrive here in Kansas City. And from here they would ranch deeper inland. A lot went back to Mexico and others didn't. After that we would go to Kansas. And they would ranch over there. And then people started staying here in Kansas.

(L) And you were here during the Kansas City Structural Steel strikes?

(P) When was that?

(J) Three years ago.

(L) I'll say like eight, during the 1970's. Do you remember that?

(J) Yes.

(P) Plant Distillery?

(J) Yes; There was--

(P) There were like two, three strikes here.

(L) What happened?

(J) A lot of folks lost their jobs, those who were working.

(L) Why?

(P) Well, the union wasn't really that strong yet because it was independent. It wasn't organized as a national union, the big national railways.

(L) And that incident, was it a really big deal in Argentine?

(P) No, well somewhere here and others were in Gates.

(J) Well, a lot of workers had no clue they were on strike but a lot of changes never took place.

(P) No money, nothing.

(J) No scandal or anything, they were just guarding the gates and that's it.

(L) And the people here didn't work there? those that were [missing words]? What did the community think about all this?

(P) Nothing. If that was in 70' I think, in seventy it

was because...

(J) Three years ago.

(L) and now for you, buying the ways of living here, the conditions and everything before it happened? The conditions were more--

(P) Well, now everything is really different. Although things were scarce and everything was cheap people could still afford it and although everything is expensive now. We can't afford a lot of things now. Since it started, from the war to now the salaries started to increase. That was when I decided to buy this house here. Now, it's not mine, it belongs to the government.

(J) To the city--

(P) The city.

(J) We sold it to the city because we are in a renewal area. And now we have to buy another house. Another property.

(L) Why won't they let you keep living here?

(J) Were living here for a while until--

(P) That's why we don't add anything to it. They're going to tear it down.

(J) We don't repair it because it's not ours.

(P) They're going to tear it down.

(J) They have to tear it down, as long as there's a place to change to go, a new house with a new paint job, well we have to buy a used house.

(L) So what are the differences that you see John, since you were a little boy growing up here?

(J) I see some difference in the people, I think people nowadays, it's more different, it's more different than the times I was raised on you know. People are more, more together in many ways.

(L) What do you mean?

(J) Well, like we were discussing the times that used to be racial, and national differences you know. People are more together in situations--

(L) Like the black workers and the white workers?

(J) Yes, it's more different now, nowadays. That's one thing I see.

(L) So do you think that, that's important. that there's more--

(J) I think that's the only way. We understood each other better too before people were more separated.

(P) The groups.

(J) Not only that, we were very different.

(L) Let's see, we're talking about the racial differences now and you were saying that they were--

(J) [noises] a lot of things. And the new generations are different from previous years.

(L) Do you work with, in Santa Fe, do you work with blacks and whites?

(J) Yes.

(L) How do you all get along?

(J) Allright. We all work, we got some women working there too you know. We all get along, other people get along.

(L) And before you wouldn't see that so much?

(J) Well, we didn't see it, not in my times when I was a child, I didn't see that much around.

(L) Why? Why was there so much discrimination then?

(J) Well, I really don't know you know. Like I said before, I guess all the groups, all the people, we had our times

you know, not only Latin Americans, but also the Europeans. You probably read the history that stated the Irish man had his times, the German had his times, everybody had, when they first came in, you know had, they were taken like, different you know. Till everybody started mixing in. Made it a melting pot, and that's what happened.

(L) You hear some people, especially some people who have been here for a while, feel like the black people have been able to get a bigger piece of the pie. And they feel kind of angry about it. What do you think about that?

(P) Well, some are good people, some are you know, it's usually that some are, they try to take advantage of all of this, we have today. Try to take use of it. And there are some that are real good people, they're alright. You probably find it everywhere you know. People who try to take, abuse all of this liberty or privilege or whatever. And there are some that don't and some are good to people. Like that's what I see.

(L) So another thing that I've heard people say is like, they feel some animosity or some real differences between the Mexicans [dog barking], the Americans from before. Why is that? Why are there differences? Why is there?--

(J) I don't know about that, a lot of them don't welcome new groups coming in. I guess, [noises] they probably heard that you know. Mexican Americans and other groups that come, newcomers you know, they don't see, what is entirely different now. We're raised different I guess. Were already Americanized, these other people they still got their customs, that must be the difference, I really don't know.

(L) What do you think about that [noises] that pressure between recently arrived Mexicans and Mexican Americans?

(P) Well they, a lot of Mexicans and a lot don't like us here because they don't know, they haven't arrived. And those that come then realize that it's not like they told them. A lot of them say that

they are not treated well here and who knows, they don't come here to ask for money. Don't talk about that if you don't know. When you go there and you realize how they treat you then you can talk. That's the thing. A lot of the newcomers believe in how things happened back then. The discrimination that existed before between the Mexicans and the Americans that they didn't even sell us any food in the restaurants. We don't go into American stores because they wouldn't sell to us. In hair salons, they wouldn't do Mexican hair. The boys in school, the Mexicans were not with the Americans. That's the way the Americans had told me. From people who came from other countries and don't know. But with time, you realize that the stories are true. When The first Mexicans had to go to high school, the whites did not want Mexicans. They didn't allow Mexicans in their schools. The Mexican kids had to go to Luis Alvarado. I'm talking about Washington, because I'm not dumb. And from Washington giving the orders to put them there and that's where they put them.

(J) Let's see, there were about three people that came out of grade school, not grade school, high school or grade school; and they wanted a high school education too. Well there were a loy admitted. For reasons you know...

(P) That's it, everything got happy.

(J) Politically you know they had to fix all this matter you know, they wrote to Washington, they said they had to be accepted, they wanted more education. Those three things were granted, then there was a little friction when they first came in, well not anymore, all that has disappeared.

(P) Black people and everyone together.

(J) That's why there are women in those spaces, Mexicans and other groups go to that school, but in those years, especially the twenties and thirties, they were difficult times.

(L) And now the Mexicans that come now don't suffer the discrimination that you all suffered?

(P) Oh no--

(J) Well yeah, I think if they live their lives because when someone recently arrives somewhere, they're not welcome at first and one doesn't feel welcome. After a while, they start to understand what is going on around them. After people begin to accept them like those who came before. Then, subsequent generations start adopting the traditions and customs in the United States. They become part of the melting pot as they say, we came into the melting pot. Like that, we can go by back to Europe, all this agriculture, all the time they were in war. when they came here from Europe, they were differentiated from other groups. After that, the melting pot took place and now the American is part of everything, part German, part Irish, English and it's good that it happened, that's what today's Americana is composed of.

(P) In Europe, they made war all the time between themselves, and war with Germany and and England and war with Spain and war with France and war with--That was the story of Europe. And all those people came to the United States until they all mixed with each other. They started marrying each other and a melting pot formed. The Americana of today is what it is.

(L) You said that you're younger brothers Landro and Pat, tortillaria and salesman, and the other one works for Urban Renewal, right?

(J) Yes, he's still with Kansas City, Missouri but I guess he's just going to be with them for about another month, then I don't know what he is going to do.

(P) You talk Spanish. Maderista? The Maderista Revolution.

(L) Oh, yeah I like it.

(J) You see, the Madarista they're the one's who...

(P) It's when the revolution started.

(J) They were through the government for about

thirty something years. Almost after the French-Mexican War...

(P) You can take it when you have time, he knows how to read in Spanish.

(L) Yes.

(P) In pieces.

(L) How was it that your brothers, they must have quite a bit of education.

(J) Well Mike has, I think he has one year of college, he went to Kansas City, Missouri. Mike, Jesse I think he has high school. My sisters, Martha had more education than I did. All of them went to high school, I'm the only one who stayed at home, with no high school.

(L) So was that pretty difficult for them, like they have wide college ops now, right?

(J) Well, maybe Mike might of gone to something, but I think Jesse came at a pretty good time, when things were a lot better, this time they were more liberal you know. They were not in the times of all this, what we were talking about a while ago.

(L) So what do you see happening in the future, what are you going to do in the future?

(J) ??? We hope.

(L) How is the Mexican community going to proceed here?

(J) Well, I hope it gets better.

(P) Well, it depends on the mandatories, you see the present pressure that came out especially when Nixon was president. The mandatories were bad over there just as Nixon was over here. He came out crooked. They stole a lot of money. That's when the currency went down. The dollar was \$2.50 in pesos

and now it's \$23 pesos. The currency is really low. Everything is really expensive. Before, we could buy nine oranges for a Mexican dollar which was like eight cents in American dollars. Now, it's like three dollars for one orange. Watermelon was eighty cents per kilogram. Now it costs five dollars per kilogram of watermelon which is two pounds. Everything is so expensive. you get 96 dollars of meat for two pounds. Everything is so expensive. In order to survive over there with a family, with two or three kids, you have to make a lot of money.

(L) And what's going to happen with the Mexican community here in Kansas City? What do you all want to see?

(P) Well, I think they are doing well, nothing is really happening.

(J) (Speaking very softly, can't hear him) I don't see that Kansas City, Kansas is, I think it is very [...] another neighborhood that isn't very good, who knows. But here, you can see that this community is [...] And many are doing well too.

(L) And what do you all think has been some of the major contributions? What is the most important thing that Mexicans have done here?

(P) Well have they have at least--today Mexicans have major roles. Many Mexicans are in the government. There has been even more positions for them. Before there weren't any Mexicans in those roles; not even as policemen, not even policemen that were Mexican we had. Today we have many in Washington and many other places. There's Mexican people that take regular positions and before they didn't. We have seen it, things have gotten better for the Mexican who works hard--there's a good position for them. Before it didn't matter how hard you'd work there weren't given any positions. There weren't any positions for them. Right now it seems like the situation will improve in the future.

(L) And you all who have worked so much your entire lives, what is the best thing about the job?

(P) Well, I think that yeah, that all of that experience was good because it also made us into good husbands. And also, sometimes it's good to learn the tough things first and then the rest. Learning the easier things first and then the harder things--I don't like it that way. First the most

difficult instead of the least difficult. The job was good, less hard. If I would have gone from the least difficult to the most difficult, I wouldn't have liked it. It was better this way.

(L) Do you all think that the American company here appreciates what you all have done, or is it something they haven't noticed?

(J) Well no, either way things are freer than before. Before things weren't so free or liberal. But now you can see that things are more organized and the timing as well.

(L) And what do you think?

(P) Well there's already more communication with the white people and you can see that we now intermingle with them. Mostly little [...] with a Mexican. Very little communication in one another before. Now Mexicans and whites grow up together since they are children. Since they are little they become friends. As time passes by they get together as children and they are friends as they get older, yeah. When you get here being older or being older ones, there really is more communication between the little ones. They now all go to school together and everything. It is all better.

(L) Well, would you like to say something more? What else would you like to say? Whatever you want to say.

(P) No, not right now.

(J) (speaking softly again) Everything that you are going through, it's all for progress. It goes (NOISES). All those years I've saved? No, and that's the way I had to do things. There's a motive for things changing and there's more communication.

(P) Yeah now there's wherever. They don't say...

(J) There's a motive for [...] There was a lot that happened because that was the way it was meant to be. Like I said before, many other nationalities go through hardship; the Irish, all the Italians, all the people that came first, all of them went through some hardship. And after some time life was different for them. And some of them were big men [...] job. Good doctors, good artists, many of them came out of those people.

(P) Yeah, well right now tourism, there's many tourists, many Americans out in Mexico. In San Miguel, many American colonies arrive. In Cuernavaca: lots of Americans, Guadalajara, lots of Americans, lots of them. Many colonies of Americans who love it there. In Cuernavaca they say to them, "do you like it here in Cuernavaca?" They say, "Oh, Cuernavaca is very beautiful, I like it a lot". They say "Here it is always spring". They say... "I used to live in Cuernavaca, but there the sun comes out at six in the morning year round" They say they come every six months over here. Since over here they tell me that they have family in Ohio and they only come out here to see their family every six months in Ohio. But because of my illness, I come here. Here it is quite good. The temperature [...]