

Pedro Ibarra II

It's what we call the central industrial district, all industry. Trucking and they had packing houses. They had these feed mills, where they had all kinds of feed for poultry and dogs and stuff. They would manufacture that and I told you about Columbus, they had all this steel mill and they had, I said packing houses, truckers.

(L) People lived there in those houses?

#1 Right, on first street. They had what they called James St. that was the main street and the next street over was First street and oh, at one time he can tell you that people galore lived there. But people left when he talks about that first strike at Armour packing house. There was a lot of Croatians, Slavics, all Slavic people and they come up to what is known now as Strawberry Hill, St. Johns Church. They left and this is where the Mexicans came in after they left and they got into the packing plants.

(L) So why did the Croatians leave?

#1 Because of the Union, all that trouble and they weren't being paid what they wanted for their work. So they left and then...

(L) For better jobs?

#1 Naturally,

(L) Where did they go to?

#1 I don't know, some of them might have went to other packing houses, maybe or they might have gotten into some other business. But they left because they weren't making money. But they left because they weren't making money. You can talk to these Croatians and they tell you that we Mexicans came in, my dad's generation come in because of the Revolution back in Mexico that started about in 1910, 1909 and everybody flew every which way because they didn't want to be caught in the Revolution. Of course like my dad's older brothers had been working here already in the United States and have a younger brother in fact there were two younger brothers. My dad and another brother and they bring them over here, so they could come and work. A lot of them, had he stayed down there I think he would have been, well he says that, at least I have heard him say. He used to run around with the daughter of el atendiao. The man who owned the farmland. One of his daughters, and my uncle seen that he was very involved and maybe would stay and during the Revolution, have him string him up someplace, they brought him. He said this is why he's still here. Otherwise during that Revolution he might have lost his head, because of running around with that young witch, daughter. So in a way they brought him, I think he would have wanted to stay because of this girl but my uncles wouldn't let him. Because you fool why would you want to do something like that, and maybe lose your life, so lets go we're going to take you work with us.

(L) So do you remember about the strike with the

#1 The Croatians? Ho, just what he used to tell us. And we had a few Croatian people that used to talk about it, but they left because of conditions and the amount of money that they thought they should get and what the company paid and they didn't want that. And actually being white they could go off to a lot of other jobs and get maybe better pay. Wich alot of them didn't come back and some did stay. Some of these, there's been a lot of little Croatian women and Yugoslavian women that worked there just as long as my dad. Right after because of the strike that they tried to form and they were having a hard time with the company. Companies were pretty strong then. Not like, well now Union they can fight harder, get into any place they want,

but at that time the company fought them, and fought them hard. So I don't know if the Union did take hold, it might have taken hold for a little while until the CIO come in which was a big strong Union. That's the one that did take hold.

(L) So the first attempt was like an independant...

#L Right, right just among you know and naturally if you don't have nobody to, how should I say, because you have to have brains and know what you're doing, to really form something and stick to it and maybe you might get away with something. But if it's just presently put together and nobody, everybody is pulling every which way, you're not going to get no where you have to have unity. And like he said some of these fellows that come back from the war, the guys that went to the war. They'd come back maybe some of them had worked there before, he doesn't know. And they and nobody take orders, just a lot of trouble so maybe that's why I think that Union did. Allot of people just left they weren't going to fool with them.

(L) So, do you remember what people would way about the conditions there?

#1 Well; naturally it wasn't after the CIO got in, they modernized a whole lot. But until then, I think it was just an old, just a dirty place. Everything was being done just like when my dad went in there. Of course that packing house, I don't know what year it was formed. It's been a long time ago, I think little by little you know they made conditions better. But I think even when my dad got in, it was all bad conditions to work, in there. The way they slaughtered the animals, I think it used to take alot of brawn just to; then afterwards when they modernized it, they had chains and would let these animals off the floor wherever they butchered them from. It got better, naturally.

(L) Y porque salió usted en la 58, porque se retiró?

#1 Porque te retirates del impacadora en el 58?

#2 Porque me retire? Pension, I just worked to help the seven and I ...

#1 Retired, yea he was 65.

(L) So do they pay you retirement now?

#1 Te dan tu pencion el ?

#2 Little bit.

#1 But he does get a pension.

(L) During the flood, didn't Armour leave after the flood?

Cuando la undacion en el 51 tu travajastes, cuando la flood.

#2 Yea, ay estaba trabajando en el Armour, yea.

#1 Some of the floors of the packing house were flooded, but he worked on the higher. I don't know how he used to they got him out on little boats. Como te salites cuando la flood?

#2 Como?

#1 Yea.

#2 Pues,

#1 Because I knew that river come up high we had a heck of a time getting out ourselves.

#2 Estavamos trabajando como te digo en el llelo. El jueves que ya se vía reventado por ay en Topeka. Nosotros estavamos travajando. El viernes ya medio día, en el lado levantando trayas. Levantando bariles. Nosotros salimos por el techo en el barcadero, que ya yego la agua pariba. Y ya salimos y nos trajieron, salimos. Y ya estaba una escalera ay para vajar al puente. Ese de la Central que está en la James St. ayi. No ya cuando suvimos aca en el puente ya me canse nomás se le vi el techo. Pues ya, 14 pies salió la agua.

(L) Y que paso con su casa?

#1 La casa, que que paso con la casa?

#2 La casa se lleno de lodo, pero no se la llevo.

(L) Se quedo alli?

#1 Yea.

#2 Aya donde tenia el carbon, lenia y todo.

#1 You know what I think safe is? A junk yard full of iron and stuff on this side on the north side and on the south side a big two story house and nothing can bang against it.

See they were close by, no room or anything that can bang against it or hit against it. Otherwise this is how a lot of other houses were broken. And the water took them because ties, barrels and box cars and everything. They were lifted right off wherever they were, and they'd hit against anything. Well actually they would knock other things that aren't as strong or heavy, it would just knock them to pieces. But I think that's what saved ours.

(L) So after the flood did you move back into the house?

#1 Yes, with the help of the Red Cross. They gave us, they fixed our homes and they gave us money to buy what we had lost.

#2 Tube suerte que la agua no se llevo me casita. Porque estaban otras casas ayi enfrente. Y llego la agua ayi y dave el golpe ayi, y se avria my casita estava que. No se la llevo. Pero despues se puso tan alto de, oh it's alright. Se puso tan alto de lodo, mud. Nomás salía del trabajo, todo ese lodo que avia pafuera. Y my son, my daughter, entonces ya estava casado my boy. He was married. Y mientas alegramos aquí la casita. Aya stuvimos viviendo con el. Ya luego que reglamos todo y luego que la Crux roja los ayudo. Los dio pa reglar la casa. Los ayudo pues, y ya la preparamos. Casita chica no.

(L) Y que paso con la compañía?

#1 Con el Armour, volvieron abrir el Armour?

#2 El Armour no lo seraron, they keep it going.

(L) Pero muchos salieron verdad?

#1 Se salió mucha jente?

#2 Oh si. Pero,

#1 En muchos departamentos si trabajaron.

#2 Se repartamentos, la carne y todo lo que pudieron mover, lo movieron a los otros pisos. Esas casas tenían cinco seis pisos de alto.

(L) Pero muchas compañías, muchas enpacadoras salieron después de la undacion verdad?

#1 Que si otras compañías fue mucho destroso verdad? Fue mucho lo que perdieron los compañías.

#2 Se deron cuenta.

#1 No, que mucho destroso, esa flood iso mucho destroso. It was over a billion dollars in damages and everything of that flood. The little places, all of the; a lot of of those manufacturers and things, they didn't come back for quite a while. Including us people, I think it was better than a year before anybody got down there. Things started looking you know...

#2 Todos los pisos de abajo de la compañía que tenían todo su meregancia bariles de carne pues.

#1 All of that was destroyed. Even the animals at the stock yard, you could see them floating, the piggy's and the cows and everything. Just like they say, they had been warning us, but I

guess the warning maybe didn't give people enough time to do anything. Of course you know there were no lives lost here in Kansas City, Kansas.

(L) So when did Armour leave Kansas City?

#1 Cuando sero el Armour?

#2 Ase como unos dies anos. About ten years or something like that. I was living there yet. Toda vivía yo ayi en la James, cuando empesaron a sumbarla.

(L) Porque se sero?

#1 Porque la seraron?

#2 Pues, porque la Union suvio tanto que levanto todas estas negocios. Los aventó a infierno. Y ya se envolso todo el dinero.

#1 Well at least that's what the working men say. The Union interfered to much and I guess the company says, well we don't have to, you know how it is with the working class people. The rumors come around and about and they think the Union got to strong and interfered to much with the business itself. Who knows maybe they were going to recoop someplace else. Maybe it was time to close it down and get off to somewhere else where maybe they wouldn't have to pay as much wages and things like that.

(L) Y que paso con la jente que se quedavan trabajando?

#1 Que paso con la jente que se tuvo salir? A muchos le mandaron

#2 Salieron un tanto

#1 They gave him what they call a severance pay. Y a otros les mandaron a otros lugares.

#2 A toda la jente asegun la eda, I mean el tiempo que tenias tu trabajando ayi. Nueve mil pesos, nueve dies mil.

#1 Y a otros les mandaron a otras impacadoras.

#2 Se acabo todo, se acabo la impacadora pero se dieron alguna retiro. Ya se acabo el trabajo.

#1 Some of them got sent to Omaha, where is there packing houses in, yea. And they sent some down to St. Joe. You know some of the just severance pay? just laid off and that's it.

(L) Y entonces que clase de trabajo encontraron ellos, los que salieron?

#1 La jente que salió del impacadora, que que trabajo se encontraian. La jente que se tubo que salir.

#2 La jente que salió de ayi ya tenia que vuscar donde de sacara la suerte de garar. A volar.

#1. Like I tell you, alot of them were placed in their Armour packing plants elsewhere.

#2 La persona tiene que peliar por la vida.

#1 And I think the older ones naturally they retired and all that, the ones that, just had to go out and look.

#2 Mucha jente desocuparon ayi en la empacadora.

(L) Cuantas ?

#1 Corno cuanta. Cuanto jente? Mil, dos mil.

#2 Como dos mil almas.

#1 About two thousand persons.

(L) Y pero avia muchas mas companias que salieron en esos anos verdad?

#1 Cuales otras impacadoras seraron en ese tiempo?

#2 Cuantas?

#1 Yea, párese que se salió aqel Cutahey, se salió...

I think Swift was the last and Wilson.

#2 El Cutahey ya estaba serado.

#1 It was already, so you could say another two thousand people there two.

#2 Yo creo era el único que estaba serado. Porque ya después el Armour, porque Swift, toda via segieron trabajando.

#1 What about Wilsons, I bet you any where between fifteen hundred and two thousand in full capacity except during the war. During the second World War.

(L) Como era la vecinda, cuando vevian ayi como era. Que tenian ayi?

#1 Como era la vecinda en donde veviamos nosotros. Como era, dile? Platicale del barrio.

#2 En la James St.?

#1 La calle primera.

#2 La James, la calle primera.

(L) Como era. Como se vea.

#1 Platicale lo que avia ayi. Platicale tu vivites sesenta anos ayi.

#2 Pues si,

#1 Avia escuelas, avia churches que avia.

#2 Avia todo. Ayi en la James Street cuando calle yo ay. Sandia por abajo, sandias por arriba. Acá por la Central abia un puente que pasaba una asta en Missouri.

#1 I don't remember it myself, those street cars, elevated. Those street cars, they run up into that tunnel over town.

#2 Y aqui en James Street por abajo, mucho servicio.

#1 They moved it from our part of town which and they moved it to down town. But the Union Station used to be in that, where dad used to live down there, when he first got there. The Union Station had moved yet. Y avia doctores? Fire stations.

#2 Todo avia ayi en la James St. Avia tracto, avia todo lo que ay orita.

#1 Y quien avia ayi, you want to know about the races? De la racas, que rasa vevian ayi?

#2 O primero cuando calli yo ay vevia los Irish, all White people.

(L) Como se llamavan, los Mexicanos con los irlandeces?

#1 Como se llamavan, con los Irish?

#2 Muchos de nosotros los Mexicanos sempre amos precauao de vivir lo mas de que se puede, no ofender. Good morning, adelante. Viviamos muy agusto, muy povres total la jente. No ganavan nada.

(L) Y porque tan pobre?

#2 Todo estaba varato.

#1 Ella quiere saber que porque estaban tan pobres?

#2 Porque fuemos pobres.

#1 Aver dile porque, falto de educación. La oportunidad que no la sabian.

#2 Todo eso. Biene de los oportuñades que tu tienes. Tu tienes buen trabajo. Y el que no tiene, señora aga me favor de darme trabajo o consigame trabajo por ay. Y el falto de educación, que mucha jente anormente stranjera no tiene ducacion, why because you can't afford it. Veviamos en el rancho. Sin zapatos en sus plantas, aris en el lodo. Jente pobre, como aqui la jente en esos anos, la jente muy pobre. We don't know nothing about. Ya vinieron ora poco aca. Seventeen years ago people they don't know of nothing about that. Pierde la jente pobre menos. My neighbor, ella tuvo con que amas de que, vente o trente pesos.

#1 Pero ya te pasates de la cobresa. No ores tu, porque no tiene uno la educación y la oportunidad poneso es pobre uno, verdad?

#2 No se pueden

#1 They can't do no better.

(L) Porque no ay oportunidad?

#1 Porque no ay los oportunidades, por la descriminacion?

#2 How can you find it, when you got millions of people looking for the same thing.

#1 And I think descriminacion had alot to do with at that

time. You can't say it now because if you can prove yourself wether you're red white, or blue, your chances of getting a job are pretty good. But at that time, but like he says what opportunity...

#2 Lots of us, no todo el pobre. Teñe las oportunidades. Aqui mija tiene oportunidad de ganar poco sueldo para ser de vivir, para comprar una garita. Y otras jentes no.

#1 Well Lori, it could be the get up and go too. If you know what I mean by that. You set a goal for yourself, you as an anglo your goal was probably your can help

push you along. Where I as a youngster, didn't have a goal. My parents didn't have a goal, their heart at work with five or six kids. And if I didn't have a goal, naturally why would they push me forward, just because I didn't have any. Why I didn't have one I don't know. But maybe had I had one, or my parents besides a roof over our heads and clothes on our back without any goals. Son or mija I want you to become a school teacher or ijo quiero que seas un abugado or some kind of a goal that they can see that their child was maybe a writer or a painter who knows. If we didn't show any talent of any kind, I don't think they saw it in us either. And why we didn't think like this, this is something I don't understand. Of course now, not only this generation, but even up to my generation.