

INTERVIEW SUMMARY

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NAME: Mr. Epigmenio Rosales
DATE OF INTERVIEW: May 23, 1991
LOCATION: Pocatello, Idaho 83201
INTERVIEWER: Angela Luckey

TAPE ONE - SIDE A:

Tape Min.

- 0:45 Family came in April 1918. His father had been here before and returned to bring the family. They crossed over by horse. They took a train to El Paso.
- 4:00 Father worked on railroad extra gang. Four families lived in one boxcar. They shared the same stove to cook on.
- 5:30 His father moved the family to Santa Rita, New Mexico. His father worked in the fields, thinning beets. He remembers that at one time there was some kind of contagious disease and many families were quarantined. Then the family decided to move to Lamar, Colorado.
- 8:30 There was a colonia where the Mexican families lived.
- 10:00 He went to school there for a few months. He started school at age nine. The family then moved to Pueblo, Colorado.
- 12:00 At this time, he was registered in school by the name of Menio, not his real name. He was put in kindergarten because he couldn't speak English. He was about nine years old.
- 14:00 The Mexican people lived in La Garra, the Mexican neighborhood. He had trouble because he couldn't speak English. They passed everyone because they were crowded and they couldn't keep anyone back.
- 17:00 They had cock fights in this area at the time. He witnessed a shooting at one of these.
- 22:00 In 1927 some sugar companies needed help so they sent someone to advertise the jobs. All expenses were paid and people could take whatever they needed. They could go to either Nebraska or Wyoming. They and another family went together to Riverton, Wyoming. The company paid for a hotel for the family because there were no houses available. They paid for the food at the restaurant.
- 26:30 Since the beets were not ready where they were to work, Menio worked for a neighbor finish his beets. He earned enough money to buy a bicycle. Later the friend helped them with their work.
- 29:30 The family bought a 1923 or '24 Ford for about \$100. They were to move to Torrington, Wyoming. No one knew how to drive it but they had a car. Menio had had a friend in Pueblo who had a car. He used to watch him crank the car up, so he knew how to do that.

SIDE B:

- 1:00 He learned to drive by driving around. He drove to Torrington. There was no place to stay so they kept going until they got to Salt Lake. They traveled with friends.
- 4:00 The two families rented a house in Salt Lake. His father went to work for the railroad. They had a Christmas party at the railroad. He and his father joined the union. He was about 15 years old.
- 8:00 They worked at Ajax. Another section called St. John was nearby. The foreman was Japanese. The foreman thought that Menio was not old enough to work. He was partners with a big Mexican man so that he could learn the job. They made a competition of putting in ties.
- 13:30 When a job opened up, his dad sent for his uncle to work there.
- 19:00 The family moved to Idaho to work on the beets. His uncle stayed. They moved to Shelley. This was about 1929. They were looking for a place to live. The farmer offered for them to live in a chicken coop. Another farmer had a nice place for them so they stayed there.
- 24:00 The next summer they went to work with another farmer. He had full time workers. He lived about five miles from Firth.
- 27:00 The Zazwetans were working there. They became acquainted. People from Pocatello also came. Some played instruments. He names some of these people, Domingo, Murrieta, etc.
- 30:00 He bought a violin in Idaho Falls and began to learn to play. He and a sheepherder he knew played together. The sheepherder played the guitar. He learned by watching others play.

TAPE TWO - SIDE A:

Tape Min.

- 0:30 He went to work for a farmer named Larson. This was in the '30s. They had a friend who wanted him to meet a girl. This was his future wife. He didn't meet her until 1934 because her family moved to Ririe. Her brothers were well known boxers.
- 5:00 They had a Spud night celebration in Shelley with a carnival and boxing matches. He saw her there again watching her brothers box. Her family traveled to California. They moved next door to Menio's family upon their return one year.
- 9:30 He began to spar with her brother. They became good friends.
- 11:30 They went to Ririe to a boxing match. They asked Menio to box because one of the boxers could not make the match. Some drunk yelled an ethnic slur towards Menio. He did not have the right clothes for boxing. He got \$10 for the fight.
- 15:00 His wife's brother was a popular boxer. He went to the store and bought his future wife a box of chocolates. Later he invited her to the movies and her brother went along although he did not sit with them. He proposed to her that night.
- 18:00 They got married by the judge. They began going to California and he continued boxing.

- 21:00 His family also went to California. In about 1942, his wife's folks moved to Nyssa, Oregon. Since she was expecting a baby, he sent her to live with her folks while he went to California to work picking lemons. He worked one week but never got paid because they went on strike.
- 23:00 He worked for a Japanese farmer who had 20 or 30 hired helpers year round. His brother-in-law were going to work one time and they were stopped by the police. They asked where they were born. Menio told them that he was born in Mexico but had been raised in this country. He told them about all the places where he had lived. His brother-in-law had been born in this country but the officer didn't believe him and took him to the house to get proof about his birth place.
- 27:00 The war broke out and they took all the Japanese from the coast. The farmer lost everything and they sent him to a concentration camp. He was going to buy a car for \$100 from one of them but the car was confiscated.
- 29:00 He returned to Nyssa since he had no job and his wife was sick. He thinned beets there and then he returned to Larson's farm. In the meantime, his brother had moved to Pocatello and worked for the railroad.

SIDE B:

- 0:30 He went to work for the railroad. He hung heaters for the steam engines. He had to fire them up. When the diesels began to come in that job ended.
- 3:00 Japanese men were working in the beet fields at Larson's. They were from the camps. They topped the beets.
- 5:00 There were many Mexican people in Pocatello. Mr. Rojas worked in the railroad yard. This was Tony Rojas' father. (His wife came in to join the conversation.)
- 7:00 Mexicans were treated fairly but there were occasional bad incidents.
- 9:00 He bought a piano from Martinez, who owned a bar. They were going to start a boxing team but the war took all the young men.
- 10:30 Tony Rojas was the organizer for 16th of September celebrations. He and Tony Escobar collected money from the Mexican people for the celebration. They did not have a membership in any organization. They met and planned on how to spend the money so that there would be no money left.
- 14:00 He talks about the people who were in Pocatello. He mentions Vicki and Manuel Sierra.
- 15:00 His mother cooked tamales and pan dulce for anyone who came to the house during the Christmas holidays.
- 17:30 He went to a dance at a 30/30 Club and were denied entry because they were Mexican; however, they were with some friends and the bouncer recognized him and let them in. They were the only Mexicans there.
- 20:00 They had separate seating at the Rialto theater. Tony Rojas took over the Orpheum Theater where he showed Mexican movies. He performed with his daughter in one of the programs. He loved playing the piano. He'd be late to work because he'd play the piano first thing in the morning.

25:00 John Rosales and Eleanor Archuleta (Vicki Sierra's sister) danced. Josephine Gonzalez taught the dances. They had dances at the Deleta Skating Rink and at the Memorial Hall.

28:00 They like Pocatello.

30:00 He talks about the health hazards of working on the railroad. He has industrial bronchitis.