

INTERVIEW SUMMARY

TAPE INDEX

NAME: Mr. Thomas Murillo
DATE OF INTERVIEW: May 13, 1991
LOCATION: Pocatello, Idaho 83204
INTERVIEWER: Angela Luckey

TAPE ONE - SIDE A:

Tape Min.

- 0:45 Family came in 1917 or 1918. They came by wagon to San Francisco del Rincon. They then took a train from Juarez to Idaho.
- 4:00 Field workers were needed because of WWI. So people in Mexico supplied filled the need.
- 5:30 An uncle and cousin came with the family to this country and lived with them. They lived in Mr. Cuio's house with them until they got married. They came to Blackfoot first. They traveled around this area during this time and finally settled in Pocatello. That's where Mr. Murillo was born.
- 7:30 His father worked on the railroad. He was a scrapsorter. He tells what a scrapsorter does.
- 10:30 Mother worked in the home. Sisters did some work in the fields and later she worked as a maid for private people then at the Bannock Hotel. Younger sister worked at the Kress's and later at the hospital. Brothers worked in the field and later on the railroad.
- 13:30 Family came because father was wanted. He was to be executed but he escaped. He went to the Chicago area but returned to check out the climate but found that it was not save to return. He then went to California and then returned again but it still was not save so he moved his family to this country.
- 17:30 They lived in a two room house which he now describes as a shack. They lived in the Chubbuck area. They didn't realize it if they lived in poverty because they had everything they needed. Conditions here were better here than those in California. He worked in the Driggs area picking peas. Workers came from California, Texas, Colorado, and Utah. They called the people from Colorado "Manitos".
- 21:30 There were as many Mexicans here then as there are now. They had a social club which held stage presentations, dances, celebrated 16th of September and 5th of May. Mexican musicians from Pocatello played at the dances.
- 24:00 They had Spanish classes as part of the club's activities. The teacher was not a permanent resident and was here only a short time. His father was an officer of the club. Books were sent to the club from Mexico. These were readers, technical books and books about the agriculture, etc. The name of the club was "Cruz Azul". Don Marciano Soto was also an officer.
- 28:00 Mexicans socialized among themselves so they didn't suffer much discrimination. They were refused entrance to the YMCA swimming pool even though they paid for the upkeep through the job. American girls would dance with the Filipinos but not with the Mexicans. This was about 1932.

32:00 They shopped at J.C. Penny's and Mr. Cuio's store.

SIDE B:

0:30 Cuio carried Mexican food. Mexicans lived inside the fence from Wyeth to Lander streets. There was a row of apartments. Cuio had the first pick-up he can remember.

3:00 Juarez pool hall was on the Lewis side. On the Bonneville side were apartments which were rented by Mexican bachelors. He talks about other businesses that were Mexican owned or catered to Mexicans.

5:30 He talks about the Asians who were living in Pocatello.

10:30 He talks about his school experiences. His father wanted the children to speak Spanish at home. He began in Bonneville school and later he was bused to Washington school where the children of many professionals attended. He went through culture shock. He did well in school. Ms. Cosgrove was the principal.

13:30 The school was multicultural. The principal put together a program in which children performed songs of their culture. He did not experience discrimination in school.

17:00 He attended Pocatello High School. There were only two Mexicans in his class. He did not participate in social activities. He broke his shoulder bone trying to play football.

21:00 There were not many Mexican students who held any offices because of the low numbers of them in high school. He doesn't think that there was any barrier it they had wanted to do so.

23:00 He attended college after the WWII. He worked at the gun plant and paid his way to school but the plant was closing so he had to drop out. He started to work on a degree in engineering.

25:30 He went to California looking for a job as a machinist. Went to IBM but they did not need any machinists but they did need model makers. He was hired.

29:00 He describes what a model maker does.

TAPE TWO - SIDE A:

Tape Min.

0:30 He went through training at IBM.

3:00 He talks about his feelings about education.

8:30 Mother was the boss in the family and did the discipline.

12:30 Girls eloped with the men to get married. His mother got upset when she did not approve of the choice for spouse.

15:00 He left home at 31 to get married. No one left home until they were married.

17:00 He talks about the family values. They have a strong tradition of valuing reading and learning.

- 18:30 Quinceaneras became popular when the Texans began coming. They celebrated traditional parties connected with sacraments of the Catholic church.
- 20:30 His father was well known for his skills in bakery. His mother cooked Lentils and shrimp during Lent. She cooked tamales during the Christmas season. They ground their own corn on a mill.
- 24:00 They were making tamales on Pearl Harbor day.
- 25:30 He met his wife when he was in a bar and she was the cocktail waitress. They had trouble getting married because he was Mexican. So his cousin told them he was Spanish.
- 27:30 His daughter had trouble being a Mexican but she has changed her mind.
- 29:00 He talks about Mexican music.

SIDE B:

- 2:00 He talks about his army experience. He was drafted.
- 3:30 He went in to the railroad battalion. He was sent to New Mexico. Later he was sent to Alaska. He was in Company A, the gandy dancers.
- 5:00 They were building a railroad in Alaska.
- 7:00 He served as translator to Mexicans who spoke no English.
- 10:00 He worked as a clerk-typist. He translated the Articles of War.
- 12:00 Some soldiers who were drafted were not citizens. They were Mexican nationals. They took them to Canada and then cross the border back to the United States and gave them their citizenship then.
- 14:00 He realized his limitations in the Spanish language when someone pointed out to him that he knew he wasn't Mexican because of the way he spoke Spanish.
- 16:30 Another time he felt he didn't know what being Mexican means. He made an effort to find out.
- 18:30 He has traveled all over Mexico.
- 22:00 He talks about discrimination in Pocatello.
- 25:30 There was discrimination in housing.
- 26:00 He talks about Tony Rojas.
- 28:30 He talks about an Hispanic organization.