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Interview no. 212

Charles V. Porras

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UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO

INSTITUTE OF ORAL HISTORY

INTERVIEWEE: Charles V. Porras (1901-)
INTERVIEWER: Oscar J. Martínez
PROJECT: Bicentennial
DATE OF INTERVIEW: November 18, 1975
TERMS OF USE: Unrestricted

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BIOGRAPHICAL SYNOPSIS OF INTERVIEWEE:

Longtime El Paso resident.

SUMMARY OF INTERVIEW:

Biography; shooting at Zeiger's Saloon in early El Paso; experiences at Beall Elementary and El Paso High schools; Anglo/Mexican relations; experiences in the Navy; Young Men's Democratic Club; LULAC; Marcos B. Armijo Post; civil rights work; work with the Federal Emergency Relief Administration; Ciudad Juárez during Prohibition; the Mexican Revolution; the word "Chicano"; zoot-suit riots in Los Angeles; political campaign of Rep. Edward Roybal of California; attitudes toward the Chicano Movement.

2 hours.
38 pages.

CHARLES V. PORRAS

M: This interview is being conducted at the home of Mr. Charles V. Porras, 9048 Geranium Street, El Paso, Texas. November 18, 1975. Interviewing is Oscar Martínez from U. T. El Paso.

First, Mr. Porras, can you tell me when and where you were born?

P: El Paso, Texas, July 13, 1901.

M: Could you tell me a little bit about your parents' background?

P: My father was Jacinto Porras. He came here when he was three years old from San Antonio, Texas. His father used to drive a pack train from San Antonio to Santa Fe, New Mexico. On the last trip that he made, he was killed at Anton Chico, New Mexico. His mother and his sister were staying at San Elizario with Mrs. Ellis at the old Ellis Store and Mill there. My father came to El Paso on the first train that came through San Elizario.

M: That was in 1881?

P: I don't recall the date, but he was just a young boy. He came to El Paso and he settled here around what is Durango Street today. That was the name of the district--Durango; right by the old Santa Fe depot which is about 2 blocks from the Union depot today. I was born at the corner of West Overland and Leon Street. My father had a grocery store there.

M: Did your father ever talk about his experiences when he first came to El Paso?

P: Oh yes, yes. He was quite free with his talk about his experiences here. He was in the drayage business and also in the grocery business, so he came in contact with everybody that was in business and a lot of the

old-time politicians and the public-spirited men around town.

M: What are some of the things that you remember your father talking about of those early days?

P: [He used to talk about] the old shooting scrapes that they used to have on the streets. In fact, he recalled very vividly a shooting scrape that they had on the corner of Oregon and Texas Street, it is now. There used to be an old bar there. I think it was the Zieger Bar. The owner of the bar was a member of the old Doc Holliday and Wyatt Earp [group]. Doc Holliday and somebody else shot it out or had a scrape with the bartender at that particular bar. They shot it out in the street. My father at that time was coming from the Sheldon Hotel; he was picking up some baggage on one of his transfer wagons, and he witnessed that. He witnessed several, but that is the one that stood out more vividly in his mind.

M: Did your father talk about the relations between Mexicans and Anglos during those days?

P: Very definitely.

M: What did he say?

P: My father was one man that believed that regardless of nationality, you were a man. If you were an honest and good man, it made no difference to him [what your nationality was]. He didn't cower to the so-called "white superiority" here. But in those days, there were very few of our people, unfortunately, that had the gumption to stand up for what they thought was right. In other words, they gave way to the old tejano style of treating the paisanos here. The paisano was looked upon as just a couple of degrees above the Negro. My father had lots of arguments about that; my father was very outspoken. He also became a joiner in the existing fraternal orders and clubs that existed

at that time, trying to get our people to be represented as they should be. He was a great friend of the Escajeda family and Montoyas, and the old political leaders of our people. He definitely was very much ashamed of the way our people cowered behind...you might say, they acted dumb. It isn't that they didn't know that they were entitled these things, but they feared for physical hurt from the majority of the so-called Anglos. Because in those days, shooting down a Mexican was not looked upon as any serious crime. My father was very, very much opposed, naturally, to that; but he also went out and tried to do something about it.

M: Did your father ever tell you of any specific incidents that gave an indication of the relations between Mexicans and Anglos that he was involved in?

P: Yes. One of the best caf  s in El Paso at that time [was] Zieger's on the corner of Oregon and Overland Street. He and a couple of his cronies from one of these mutual aid societies--La Protectora, I think, was the name--had a meeting on South Stanton and Fifth Street. On the way back to town they stopped in at Zieger's to get a bite to eat. They were told--not politely, but very forceably--to get out. They were properly dressed and they had plenty of money. But the fact was that they were told plainly that Mexicans weren't being served there at that time. That was Zieger's. And, incidentally, Zieger was of German extraction. The English that he spoke--huh! He couldn't even speak, you might say, the English language. But he considered himself a better American than our people.

M: What did your father do?

P: Well, he was all for taking a poke at...in fact, he did take a poke at the waiter who, unfortunately, was also one of our people; but [he was]

doing his job. By that time the other two hauled him away. That was a very common incident.

M: What do you remember about your childhood here in El Paso?

P: I can remember from the time that I was about 6 years old. My uncle used to bring me downtown from Durango Street to El Paso Street to get my hair cut. I'll never forget [this]. My cousin was a young fellow, maybe about 5 years older than I at the time. In order to save time walking, he used to cut across the railroad track, the railroad yards, where the Santa Fe freight depot is. That's about 7th and Santa Fe. We used to cut off from there over to what is now Charles Street. He used to bring me under the cars there. A lot of times they were shunting cars. But that was my first recollection--coming down to El Paso Street to get my hair cut. And I also remember selling papers at the corner of El Paso and San Francisco Street. There used to be a Snyder's Market on the corner. There's where I met all of the important people in those days, like Mr. S. J. Fellman who was our leading photographer, and Mr. Pitman who was an Alderman. "Uncle Henry" Kelly was Mayor. All of the other people used to come by and used to buy a paper off of me, simply because they liked the way that I used to speak English. That was it.

M: Could you speak English well?

P: Oh, I spoke English I guess since I started talking.

M: Did you speak Spanish in the home at all?

P: Both. My father used to speak both.

M: Was that unusual, living where you lived?

P: Yes, yes; very unusual. That is one of the reasons why our old-timers here did not speak English well. Their folks persisted in using Spanish and not using any English at all unless they had to. You're not old

enough to remember, but the English that they used to speak down there was terrible--half English and half Spanish--because they were ashamed to talk it. One of the common expressions, when you spoke to one of those old die-hards [was], "Yo no hablo perro, yo hablo español." That's how bad it was in certain sections.

M: "Perro" stood for English?

P: Yes, Yes. In fact, when we were in grammar school, we used to have to fight. In 1912, when the Revolution started over there and all of those refugees came over here, we who were born here and were fluent in the language we had to fight those kids from over there--I mean physically; because they used to call us "agringados." And we had to force the language on them.

M: The refugee kids called you "agringados"?

P: Oh yes.

M: How did that make you feel?

P: It made me feel good because it was just an excuse to punch someone in the nose; and naturally I got punched, too. But I got a special kick out of [it for] this reason: there were a few teachers that we had in those days who did not even know anything about Spanish. So, I was at Beall School, and Miss Prater picked myself and another friend of mine, Alexander Bull, as teachers for these kids. Some of them were 17 and 18 years old. They were wonderfully educated, but they didn't know any English at all. So we used to be the English teachers. And we took great delight in running the roughshod over a lot of them. So I got a bang out of it.

M: You sound like you had some kind of a fighting spirit in you.

P: Yes; oh yes. I guess it's the Indian blood in me. I was quarrelsome. I admit that--I was quarrelsome.

M: Where do you think that came from?

P: My father.

M: How did your father influence you?

P: My father was a very, very strict man; but his principal idea was that as long as I went to school, I had everything that I wanted. In other words, I had fine clothes, a good bicycle. When I was 10 years old he set me up in the grocery business. I mean completely. He built me a building, stocked it, and turned it over to me. I [would] come back from school and tend to the store; I was the buyer, the bookkeeper, and everything else. That's the kind of man he was, because he didn't get a chance to go even to the 3rd grade; but he wanted each one of us to have a full education. So as long as I went to school I had everything. When I was in high school I had a charge account with the Popular Dry Goods Company. My old friend Leonard Goodman was the Beau Brummel here then. He wore beautiful clothing. When I used to see Leonard with a new suit, I'd go and get me one to match. That was the kind of father I had. World War I came up when I was in high school. I threw my books in the locker and walked out of there--I didn't finish school. That was it. When I came back, he said, "All right, when are you going back to school?" I said, "Oh, I'll start pretty soon." I never did! That cut it off. My father wouldn't help me in anything--he was that strict. But he was fair because he told me plainly that he wanted me to go to school. I didn't go, so he cut off all the help.

M: How many brothers and sisters did you have?

P: I had three brothers and two sisters. I was the oldest one. I only have two brothers and one sister living today. The rest of them are gone.

M: What do you remember about life in the neighborhood in which you grew up?

P: Well, on Durango Street, West Overland Street, I don't recall that much.

My recollections start on Bassett. That was a new addition. Fort Bliss used to be on the corner of it. It used to start on Willow Street, from Bassett over to Magoffin; and it used to go as far as Walnut. Now, that was an entirely new neighborhood. My father and two or three more came in and built up the homes. Incidentally, in those days, instead of having single homes to rent, they built tenements. So my father had a bunch of tenements adjoining our house. Our house was independent, and the other was income property. My father, Mr. Placencia, Mr. Valenzuela, and Mr. Alvarado--all of these [followed] the same pattern. So we all grew up together there, went to the same school, enjoyed the same kind of living. Our fathers were all middle-class businessmen, workers; so we had about the same life--the social affairs and everything. If you had a party at this house, everybody in the neighborhood went. If there was a death in the family anywhere, well, the same thing. It was a very close-knit community. It wasn't a large group, but we had very nice relations there.

M: What elementary school did you go to?

P: Beall School, The first school that I went to--it was one term--it was Bassett School, right on the corner of Bassett and Willow. They finished Beall School just about that time, so we were the first ones to go there.

M: What incidents stick out in your mind of your elementary school years?

P: Well, the one that stands uppermost in my mind [is when] I was the "teacher" there, and I used to punish the heck out of the older ones. That was meanness on my part, I guess. [Also], we had an outstanding soccer team. They used to have no 8th grade; high 7th was the [last grade]. When we graduated, they had to run us away from there, because

we didn't want to go. We had to go to San Jacinto School for the 8th grade. So we went there for one term (my partner Alexander Bull and I); and instead of going back there we went to summer school so we wouldn't have to go back there to San Jacinto. We went to summer school and made up the high 8th from there to the old El Paso High. Like you said a while ago, there were just about that many of our people there.

M: At El Paso High?

P: The old high school, not the present El Paso High. The old high school used to be on Arizona Street right in back of Hotel Dieu. In fact, it's a nursing school now, I think, for Hotel Dieu. That was where we went.

M: What do you recall about your high school years?

P: The principal thing that I recall is that we had a very nice relation there with some of our old schoolmates like Chris P. Fox, [the present] General Sam Marshall, Harry Welsh; all of the old-timers. We got along fine. In school, I can't say that we were ever shunted aside. "We"-- I'm talking about Alexander Bull and myself. But the rest of our people were afraid to go. There were lots of them that didn't go to high school just on that account; they went to business college in order to get a higher education. But that old spirit prevailed, that the gringos didn't want them around. It was true. I don't know whether we were just forceful, but we got by fine. Like I say, Chris Fox and I are the best of friends today. General Marshall, the same way. And all of those old-timers. We went to school with all of the Schwartz boys of the Popular Dry Goods Store; Bernard Krupp; and all of the best people in town. I have nothing to say about the high school kids. In our day they accepted both Alex and myself. One thing I will say is that as far as invitations to the social life in their homes, there were

very few of them. I don't think that we were ever invited to any social affairs by more than a couple of families.

M: So there was exclusion on the basis that you were a Mexican?

P: Yes, sir. That's it! Just because we were Mexican. But there were a couple of families [who invited us]. One of them was Jewish and the other one was the family of a very prominent mining man, Mr. A.J. McQuarters. His children were all in school. But outside of that we didn't get any invites.

M: How did you feel about that?

P: To tell you the truth about it, I thought nothing of it then. My consciousness of exclusion came after World War I--after I went away and joined the Navy and traveled around the world and saw different things. When I came back, they weren't going to push me around. They weren't going to tell me, "Well, you can't sit here; you can't come here." Then is when I woke up. But prior to that I didn't have the time to think about it.

M: How do you explain the change in attitude or in awareness?

P: I became aware of this exclusiveness because out of here, wherever we went away from Texas, away from the South, we noticed that there was no difference. When I first went to California--Los Angeles, San Diego--we used to go everywhere and nobody said a thing. Down South, in the southern states, that was different. They beat up a Negro messcook that we used to have on ship badly in Key West, Florida. I told him, "Anytime that you get ready to go down there and you want to punch some of those guys, I'll go with you." Of course, we didn't go, but I would have. The way they treated him...and he was a fine fellow, fine fellow. Like I say, the South--dynamite.

P: Did you travel through the South during the Service?

P: Yes.

M: What are your experiences from that time?

P: Well, the one that stands out mostly is right after World War I. I re-enlisted so that I could go to the United States Naval Aviation School in Pensacola, Florida. The classes were nine months long. So by the time that I got to Gulf Port, Mississippi--that was the training camp--I had to wait six months. The class had just started, so I had to wait six months. I was assigned to that camp at Gulf Port. Because I had done recruiting duty here in El Paso prior to going there, they put me in there on recruiting duty. Our team worked all of that backwoods country from Gulf Port all the way up the river and through Louisiana, and all through there. There's where you see the difference. If your skin was just a little dark, brother, that's it. I didn't attempt to go to any picture shows there because I knew that I would have trouble. In restaurants the man in charge--usually a Lieutenant or a Lieutenant Commander at the most--had to step down on a meal to keep them from putting me out. But when we got ready to go up north to Chicago to take our mechanical training on the Great Lakes, there were 1500 seamen that were going for training at the Lakes station also. So they put us in charge. When I say "us" I mean the rated men. I had a Lieutenant Commander in charge of the group, and there were two chiefs, and there were about ten of us first-class petty officers. We were in charge. Actually, in the Navy, you know, you travel first-class. We had dining room service and everything right on the L&M railroad. So the first night out of New Orleans, we went into the dining car and we sat down. There were a couple of vacancies there. One of the civilians came and sat down and he turned around and looked at me. I noticed he got up in a hurry. He walks up to the steward and

he came back, and he said, "You think I'm going to sit along side of that Black so-and-so?" just like that. When I heard that, that's all I wanted. I got up and I swung at him. By that time the Commander in charge of our group came over and he wanted to know what was wrong. So the steward told him, "This man refuses to sit here." The Commander said, "Why are you trying to force him to sit here? Get the hell out of here," and he gave him a push. And he said, "He's not good enough to sit along with my men here. Don't you sit anybody else here. I don't care whether there's five vacant seats. This is our group here, and that's the way it's going to be." But, oh boy--that left an everlasting memory in my mind that is bitter, very bitter. To think that I was in uniform and I was very well presented; I was a first-class petty officer; clean. And this yokel here--the way he called me "that Black son-of-a-bitch"--like that.

M: Did you actually punch him?

P: Yes. I had a chance to punch him once, anyway.

M: Did he fight back?

P: Oh no, no. He knew better, because I was just young enough to not have any better sense. I didn't have any compunction about beating the hell out of him! So that stands out; oh yeah, that stands out. Like I said, I've had to fight my way, literally. In the training camp I was in charge of the recruits while we were waiting for our school. Most of the recruits were from East Texas. In the morning, at reveille, I'd have the recruits fall in and out, report, and all of that. And the Master at Arms, which was me, goes through the barracks. We had hammocks there for the recruits. The hammocks were high. I had a billy club. And you'd just go down the line and feel [the hammocks].

If there was anybody there, you'd dump them over [and] they'd hit the ground. There was one of them there. When he hit the ground, he got up and he was fighting. He got it. I fought him; and I told him, "Right after you get dressed up and everything, I'll be over at the parade ground. I'm going to show you that when I give you an order you take it." He said, "No goddamn Mexican's going to tell me what to do." I did, I did; I went out and I showed him. About two days later I was taking a shower, and actually the only thing I had was a bar of soap in my hands. Here comes this particular fellow with four more to the shower. He said, "Chief, I want to talk to you." And I figured they were going to gang up on me. He said, "Wait a minute," and he pulled this arm here. I have this tatoo of an Indian there and he showed it to the other fellows. He said, "See, I told you. I told you he was an Indian; he's not a Mexican." He didn't mind being punched by an Indian, but he wasn't going to be punched by a Mexican. [There were] many things like that.

M: Did you know other Mexicans in the Service?

P: Yes. The first one that I ran into was a fellow by the name of González. He was an older man; he was from San Francisco. Then there was a fellow by the name of Martínez who was a musician--a wonderful piano player. He was from San Francisco. Then I didn't meet anybody until my second enlistment. I met several up at Great Lakes, Illinois. One of them was a young fellow here from El Paso--Tony Villegas. He was a very, very smart student here at one of the Catholic schools. His brother, Benny, is a big optician in México today. Whatever became of Tony, I don't know; I lost track of him. But there were not many.

M: What kinds of positions did they have in the Service?

P: The highest rank that I can remember was that of Chief Petty Officer. I met one officer, but he was a doctor and he was a Commander. He was just a reserve officer on active duty. But I never knew a single one that was a regular Navy man above the rank of Chief. Never met a one. They didn't have them in those days.

M: What years were you in the Service?

P: 1917 to 1921.

M: What did you do after you came out?

P: When I came out, I came back here to El Paso. I had, like everybody says, the full and beautiful intention of finishing school. I was supposed to study law, according to my father. And I liked it; I did. I actually liked the study of law. But the glamour of the uniform (because there weren't very many that wore a Navy uniform here in those days)--between the parties and this and that and the other--I kind of lost my intentions of going back to school. And the local politicians grabbed ahold of me, and I went into politics.

M: Right after the Service?

P: Right after the Service.

M: What kinds of politics did you go into?

P: The first job that I had was walking up and down the streets as an Inspector. That was my title--I was the Sanitary Inspector. But what I was actually doing was collecting votes. In other words, I was shaking hands; a "glad-hander." That was my job--a handshaker. [I'd] greet everybody--especially if the guy's got five votes, you shook hands with him twice! If he was opposed to your candidate, you kind of turned around and didn't shake hands with him. That was the first job that I had.

M: Did you get that job through helping somebody get elected into office?

P: No, not that job. I got that through the instigation of some of the old politicians who were already in there. They knew that there was an election coming and they wanted me to go around and fix up for future voting strength. That was the first job that I had in politics. And then when the election came by, I was a speaker at all the rallies. I organized the different precincts; and we had meetings and I was the speaker. The first one was for R. M. Dudley. He was running for Mayor. We won mighty handily. After that, naturally, I got different jobs. But that was my original job in politics.

M: When you spoke at these rallies, were you talking to Mexican people?

P: Yes. The South and East side. Of course, I graduated up to Cleveland Square and some of the large places where the audience was pretty well mixed. But we didn't have any folks from north of the tracks. We didn't have any votes in those days. Everything was south of the tracks, and the Valley, of course.

M: What are some of the other positions that you eventually got into?

P: When Dudley got into office, the first job that he gave me was that of Timekeeper for the city. After that administration, the next Mayor that I worked for was Marvin A. Harlan. I was his hatchet man, you might say. They don't call them Field Deputies here. In California, you remember, they had Field Deputies. But in those days they didn't have them [here]. They had to stick you in some particular department in order to get you on the payroll. So that was my job. I went around and I organized for him. At that time I organized the Young Men's Democratic Club and the Marcos B. Armijo Post, and the Spanish American Veterans of the World War; all of those. Armijo Park that you see today, that was mine. It was given to me by Mayor R. M. Dudley. It used

to be Hidalgo Park; and I went to him and he changed the name over to Marcos B. Armijo Park. That was way back in 1922.

M: Why did you request a name change?

P: Because that was the only paisano that was outstanding in World War I. He got killed in about the first attack that the 36th Division launched. He got wounded and he was very heroic about trying to get the men to go ahead and lead them on, for which he got decorated. So, I figured that he should have that place named after him. It was nothing in those days. It was nothing but a dust heap, and it stayed like that until Marvin Harlan came into office. Then I got him to give us, with federal money, a wall around there, put a rock fence around it, and fix it up.

M: When you were involved with these local politicians, how was the Mexican community organized politically? Was there very little activism here?

P: It was practically the same way it is today--30 chiefs and 3 Indians. That's the way it was. Everybody was out on his own. So in order to wield a working mass, we used to have a heck of a time, one heck of a time. So we organized the Young Men's Democratic Club out here in East El Paso. And we had the Latin American Civic League. It sounded a little better, you know. We had that downtown. And, of course, we had the veterans. But that's the way it had to be done, because you couldn't appeal to them any other way. The reason why we, the veterans, had the best success is because we could command more jobs than the other [organizations].

M: Were there many Mexicans holding the kind of position that you held?

P: No, sir. During the Dudley administration [there was] myself and the Clerk of the Corporation Court, Ben Escajeda. That's just about all in the city; that's just about it. We didn't have anybody else. We

had, of course, truck drivers and we had laborers and all that. But I mean the white collar jobs, no.

M: What was the reason for that?

P: They just didn't make them available to us. [It was] not that we didn't have the material. Policemen were few and far between, too. And they were all just buck privates--patrolmen.

M: Would you say there was discrimination against the Mexican in employment?

P: Definitely. That was the thing that was glaring. I used to get out there and lead a fight for that, and our own people were the worst enemies that we had. I don't know how familiar you are with LULAC, and I don't ask you whether you are favoring LULAC or not; but some of the very men in LULAC used to oppose every move that we made. J. C. Machuca had a heck of a time. He is the organizer of LULAC here in this town; and there, mister, I can give you the low-down on all of that. J. C. Machuca is the man who is responsible for LULAC here. But LULAC did not enjoy the reputation that it has today. I'll not talk about reputation. Let us say the extent of its membership--we were just a little handful because we were stepping on the toes of the Anglo group. And the ones who were responsible for all of that animosity were some of our own people.

M: How was that?

P: Because the Anglo was the employer. I'm not going to name names, but I'm going to name incidents. Building and loan outfits--they got a mortgage on your house; you're paying for it. And sometimes it's a little bit shaky and you don't make a payment on time. Well, that guy's got you by the collar. So, what's happening? "Oh, that bunch of Mexicans over there, Charlie Porras, and so forth and so on. Let's see, who have we got that belongs to this thing?" "Oh, so and so." "OK. We'll call so and so." "Now look, you're a member of LULAC. What's the idea of

you fellows raising all that hell about this and that and the other? And besides that," he says, "why should that guy Porras come in here and run this show when you ought to be doing it?" So the poor guy is between the devil and the deep blue sea. He has no fear from me, but he has got fear of the guy that's got the notes on his house. So, what have you got? This man is doing the bidding. This is actual fact; not one case, but several cases. There was one bank here that was outstanding, and there was only one [Mexican] employee; and naturally he was afraid for his job, too. So they sent him in to join to see if he could divide and conquer. That was used quite a lot.

M: What were some of the activities that LULAC was involved in that they objected to?

P: Well, you've got something that's practically the same, only on a larger scale today--the influx of aliens from México coming in to work here. We were against them taking away the jobs from the local people. And I'm still against it. So I finagled through some of my friends, who happened to be in the Congress of the United States, and a few others. We had that bridge closed up till 9:00 in the morning.

M: When was this?

P: It was the early '30s. I would say '31 or '32. Things were tough. That's when your relief outfits started here. We needed the work here, and here were all these people coming from the other side. So, I got the smart idea and I organized the Domestic Workers' Association--all women, local, from here. Mind you, \$3 a week! I wouldn't let them take a nickle less; and they had to get car fare and this and that and the other. You'd be surprised to see the number of women, I mean the upper class women here, that went to the Immigration outfit and tried to get me deported and

tried to get me arrested because I was getting these women to stay away from them.

M: These were maids that you organized?

P: Maids; and then I organized a separate outfit for laundry work. The laundries here were the worst offenders of any of them when it came to cheap wages. The greatest offender of them all was the International Bricklayers' Union. They owned the International Brick Plant, and they owned a laundry at that time that was headed by a very big politician locally. I clipped his wings. In fact, I might sound egotistic when I say that I'm responsible for kicking him out of his Commissioner's job in the county. And it came about through this laundry that he ran. But, brother, the women used to go there and kick like the devil because their maids couldn't come over before 9:00. We stopped a lot of them from coming at all.

M: How long were you able to maintain that?

P: Not very long, because in those days my boy was little, I was building a house, and things were tough. So I couldn't weather the storm financially. So instead of knuckling under, I picked up and went to California.

M: During the Depression?

P: Right after the Depression. I went to work here for the Federal Emergency Relief Administration. I was the first Investigator that they had. The rolls were full of aliens. L. J. Trotty was the head of the outfit here, and he knew that I could weed the aliens out; and I did.

M: How many aliens were on those rolls?

P: Mister, it's been so long that I don't have a clear idea of it. But the first trip that I made, they were building a rock wall on Rim Road, the Scenic Drive. There were 750 men on that project. I made my first trip there, bumping them out. We started at Cincinnati Street down

below, and before we got to Scenic Point there, I picked out 25. From there on I don't recall off-hand, because I had 2 assistants and I turned over the thing to them.

M: These were people who had federal jobs?

P: Well, Federal Emergency Relief Administration was supposed to be only for American citizens; and it wasn't so. So I didn't establish a great reputation of friendship over there across the line. In fact, I couldn't go across there for a long time, I mean officially, on account of those activities.

M: What kinds of criticisms did you receive from Juárez?

P: I not only got criticisms, I got threats. The head of the taxi drivers over there called me up personally and told me that he'd be very happy to see me on the other side. They threatened the Night Chief of Police and myself. He wasn't going to play ring-around-the-rosey with us or anything like that. And I come back here today after 30 years, and I find the situation is worse today than it was then.

M: Just a repetition of history.

P: Only in greater size.

M: How long were you able to keep that bridge closed until 9:00?

P: Not very long. Maybe two months. The irony of it is, one of our big city officials today, his father had the to-do with coming across the bridge there. It wasn't the Immigration Service in México. He could close that bridge at 11:00 or he could close it [whenever he wanted]. I mean, he had the power to do so unquestionably. The incident that led to this threat by the head of the Taxi Drivers' Union was that at that time I had the title of Chief Deputy License Inspector for the city here, and my buddy was Night Chief of Police, Leonard Buchofsky.

Well, I caught this fellow on this side, a taxi, without a local license. In other words, he just had the Juárez permit. I caught him, and [he gave me] the old guff about "Give me the ticket and I'll come back and pay." I said, "Look chum, I know what you'll do." I didn't know who he was. So I took him down to the station and I even got the Chief himself. I said, "You hold this guy and this car. If he's going to go over and get money to pay for the ticket, you hold his car; don't turn this car loose." So he did just that. He let the fellow go, supposedly to get money. But in the meantime, we're checking up on this car, and we find that it's stolen in Juárez. They had a make on it; it was stolen. So this fellow called my friend Buchofsky on the phone, and he made the threat to him. And he said, "You tell your little so-and-so friend that I'll be waiting to see him, too." So Buchofsky called me at my office, and I went down there and I called him. And I find out that he is the Jefe del Sindicato de Choferes over there. So, when he said that, I said, "Tut, tut, buddy. You're not going to see me over there; but if you want to come over here, then I'll see you." Incidentally, I didn't go for a long time because he wasn't the only one that was gunning for me. We put a stop to the taxis coming over. I used to stand at that bridge and, brother, the first one that'd come over, WHAM, I'd take them right over to [the police station]. But we couldn't stop the maids. The Chamber of Commerce here, they were bitter against me. They were fighting like hell, by golly, to bounce me. Mr. So-and-so's wife is kicking about her maid not getting over here, and the old man belongs to the Chamber of Commerce, big people. So, we lost out on that.

M: Were they also complaining about losing business?

P: No. They didn't care so much about the business as the hell that they were catching at home because the wife didn't have her maid over there. That's the principal thing. It wasn't so much the business, no. They

weren't losing any business because they were forced to come over here.

M: During that time, many Mexican people went back to México. Do you recall people leaving voluntarily or forceably?

P: I can remember a lot of them leaving forceably, especially in Los Angeles. I happened to be there at the time when that big drive for repatriation [was going on]. I was in the dairy business then in Los Angeles. And it seems that about half of my route was made up of those people, and about half of those people owed me plenty of money; so I can remember that very vividly. They were sent back. And, incidentally, I can recall one family especially. They didn't go back voluntarily; they put them across. You won't believe it, but they took them down there either to Manzaní or Mazatlán, one of the two. Well, do you know that that family of father and mother and about 4 kids walked across the mountains and landed over here in Juárez? You can just imagine what hardships they went through. They came over here to Juárez in order to walk across this river. I know that, because I met them later here. You can imagine how desperate they were to get away. But they walked all the way from the coast down to here, across the mountains; they came to Juárez. Then the first chance they hit, they were here.

M: How much money did you lose in the dairy business? Any idea?

P: That helped me go broke. I had worked for a couple of years building that business up, so I lost everything that I had. I had a couple of trucks, my personal furniture, my automobile and all that. In other words, they broke me. That's when I came back here; I got that job on the Federal Emergency Relief Administration.

M: When did you get to LA and when did you leave?

P: I left here in 1928.

M: Then when did you come back?

P: About 1931.

M: And that's when you got involved with the federal program here?

P: Yes. Roosevelt had just taken office. He is the one that set up this program. Everybody in El Paso here that was in the automobile business went broke. My old friend L. J. Trotty was a big man for Dodge Motor Company; he had the distributorship here. He went broke, and they gave him this job of heading the Federal Emergency Relief Administration. And, incidentally, he gave me a job. But that's the way that I got that job.

M: Did you get back on your feet once you got back here?

P: Yes.

M: How was life for the Mexican community here during the Depression?

P: Well, we can't say that it was any tougher, because at least they had a partial work program, they had lots of food. Maybe it wasn't the food that they were used to, but they had food of some sort. And they had medical attention. So it wasn't too bad for certain people. Of course, the ones that were used to working and all of that, they didn't fare so well; it was tough. But they had canned food that they used to pack and send over here, and they had lots of surplus meat. It wasn't too bad, like I say, for the people who were not used to getting out and working for themselves.

M: What differences were there between the Mexican community here in El Paso and the Mexican community in Los Angeles when you were there?

P: None, except that they had far more welfare relief in California than here. Here, the federal government didn't put out as much as they did over there. They still do. One thing that I hold against California is that the alien has taken too many jobs away from our people over there. I say "our people," because our people are the ones that are suffering more. Did you know that the city of Los Angeles, the state of California, and

the county of Los Angeles have got a great, great number of aliens employed on their Civil Service jobs? That I know; it's not hearsay. Before, it used to be you were an American citizen before you could even take the examination for those jobs. You see, I was connected with the city over there, too.

M: Are you talking about resident aliens or illegal aliens?

P: I'm talking about any kind of alien--legal aliens or illegal. The Civil Service rulings were that you had to be a citizen in order to get those jobs. The reason I know is that I owned some apartment houses in Los Angeles. I had wonderful people there, mind you; I had nothing to say about them. But they came in here from Guatemala, and those people there are not citizens yet; this is years back. Very wonderful people, well educated; they went to work for the County of Los Angeles. They're still working and they're still not citizens.

M: When did you first become involved in LULAC?

P: In 1932, when I came back from Los Angeles.

M: What were some of the issues that LULAC was involved in in those years?

P: Job protection.

M: Having to do with the people from the other side coming over?

P: That's right.

M: What about cases of discrimination?

P: There were a few; but those cases there were very hard, because you didn't have enough backing from our own people to make a showing. The case that I mentioned to you about this Building and Loan outfit grew out of that--from LULAC--the original Council #8, the old Toltec Club. That's where it started.

M: I'd like to backtrack a little bit to the 1920s during the years of Prohibition. What do you remember about Prohibition and the activities in Ciudad Juárez?

P: Well, there was a blast in Juárez because everybody was in business over there; and some of our people here, too. Some of our pretty good sized politicians were interested in the liquor business over there. And, naturally, they sold to the bootleggers. The old Peyton Packing Plant--do you remember where that was? What is today your Chamizal. Boy, that was a beautiful spot there. The activity there at night was just like Fifth and Main in Los Angeles--that's the way it was at night. People [were] coming across the line there with sacks of booze and cans of alcohol and all of that. Yeah. I remember very clearly, because I had a lot of it brought over for my personal use.

M: You were a young man then. Did you make frequent trips to Juárez?

P: Unfortunately, yes; I did. We used to have a group that played dominoes over there from 6:00 in the evening till closing time at the bridge at 11:00. We played in various bars over there like the old Central. We'd start there and work our way around. We'd park our car on this side of the river. But we used to be there every night playing dominoes.

M: Do you remember some interesting incidents during those years?

P: Oh yes, yes. I remember the incidents very, very vividly. There was an old friend of mine that was one of the outstanding boxers of the border. He was one of our members. Every once in a while he'd have to lay somebody out because they'd try to come over and barge into our game there; and he had to use his fists on them. That was a very common incident. But the thing that stands out, one time they had an uprising over there. They started shooting. It was about 11:00 at night, they started shooting. We were at the Annex Bar there in Juárez. That's on 16th of September, right close to Villa Street. They started shooting and somebody said, "There's been a mutiny in the barracks." I didn't

stop to hear any more. This friend of mine, this boxer and I, led the way down the railroad track on Pancho Villa Street all the way to the border; and we crossed not at the bridge [but] the tressle at the railroad bridge. The General in command of the garrison of there was playing with us that night. So when they came to report to him about this mutiny, he didn't trouble himself. "Eh," he says, "use force if you have to. Calm them down." He objected to us leaving because we were into him for quite a bit. We used to play for so much a game. He started bawling the hell out of us, "Oh," he says, "you fellows are supposed to be veterans of the World War." [Laughter] It was quite a town.

M: Do you remember any other interesting incidents like that?

P: No. I can remember when the last time that Villa went in. I can remember that.

M: In 1919?

P: [Yes.] I'll tell you the reason why I remember. I was standing by to go to Gulf Port, Mississippi to wait my time to go to the Aviation School. I remember when Villa came as far as the Juárez monument there. And his aide-de-camp, Colonel Delarco (who was quite a military man, he was a fine fellow), got badly wounded in the stomach. It happened [that] my brother-in-law and I, and another friend of my brother's were drinking at this particular bar when this happened. So they sent Delarco over here to Hotel Dieu. The garrison headquarters for the Mexican Army is right in back of Lerdo and 16th of September. Right behind there used to be Central Café, right on the corner--González's place. That was the outstanding night club-bar in those days. And the Comandancia Jefatura Militar was right in back. Well, this [man in charge]--this "Bozo" here was smart. He sent a platoon of men right straight down the street

to the river, on the bank there. You know where the El Paso Building Company, that lumber outfit, is on this side of the river, on Stanton? It's about 2 blocks long and it's sheet metal; tin. He had his men fire directly into it. There was nothing but lumber in there. They fired about 3 volleys directly into it. That was enough. The man from the 7th Cavalry was a Major. He was over there and he was quite guzzled. [The Mexican Commander] told him, "Bullets are falling over there in the American territory." Fifteen minutes later the 7th Cavalry was on the way; the 82nd field artillery was on the way. The 7th Cavalry came right straight down from Fort Bliss and crossed over here on Hammett, what is now the Córdoba bridge. There was no bridge then. They crossed over. The 82nd field artillery came and they parked their guns right along side Stanton Street, this side of the river and they started. The old racetrack over there had a beautiful cupola over it. They knocked that off with the first shot. So, Villa had to go. He didn't retreat, but they cut down and went; they didn't take the town. They left the town and got out.

M: You say that the federal soldiers, then, shot over here to get the Americans to enter?

P: You bet your life. Yes, sir. That was done purposely.

M: Did people over here find out about that?

P: Well, you know, they don't publish these things. But people "in the know" on both sides [did know]. This Major was from 7th Cavalry; his official title was Provost Marshall. But he acted as liason between the Mexican Army over there and the American Army here. He was a very good friend of the Commander over there. He couldn't afford to have his social hour ruined. He told the Commander, "Just set them down there. There's nothing in the warehouse there. It's stacked with lumber to the roof."

So they did. That's what actually happened. 7th Cavalry and the 82nd field artillery--I'll never forget those. We went over to in front of the church, the little park there [in Juárez]. The American Commander was Brigadier General Irvin. That was his command post right there. He was sitting in his car. You get those things very quickly done; that is, if you happen to be in the right place. But that's something that was known by everybody that's had anything to do with the local big-wigs.

M: Mr. Porras, when is the first time that you heard the word "Chicano"?

P: In Los Angeles, lately. That was just about the time when this boy Salazar was killed.

M: Ruben Salazar?

P: Ruben Salazar. Just about that time.

M: You hadn't heard it before then?

P: I heard the name; that is, "Chicano" was a slurring term for one of our people. But [it was] not used the way it is now.

M: How was it used when you were a youth?

P: Well, like the word "nigger." He was a "chicano"; he was either a chicano or a zuromato, one of the two.

M: What is a zuromato?

P: Zuromato is one of the people from Zacatecas, the very lowest class.

We used to get them here. They were poor track workers, laborers. "Chicano," like I said, was a slurring term for a Mexican.

M: It referred mainly to a poor Mexican?

P: Yes, definitely.

M: Very low class?

P: Very low class. But the way they're using it today is the way they started there in Los Angeles. In fact, I'm against it. Nobody calls

me a Chicano. I refused to be called a Chicano. And I know that Salazar never called himself a Chicano, never; not him. Salazar was all together a different kind of a cat.

M: Did you know him?

P: Slightly. I knew him in a couple of veterans' rallies that we had over there in the East side. But Roybal happened to be a very good friend of mine, and he had [Salazar] at his house at a party of some sort. I got to talking to him because he was also a University of Texas man, here, and my son had been there before him; so I introduced myself. When he got killed, I went down there immediately to see the place; in fact, the body was still there--Whittier Boulevard, just the other side of Indiana. I ran into an announcer from the Mexican station there. What was the name?

M: KMEX?

P: Something like that. Channel 34. He was with Salazar when he got killed. At least he was when they started shooting. By the time Salazar got killed that boy was long gone. He was a Colombian boy, but I can't remember his name.

M: When did you go back to Los Angeles?

P: When World War II started. My boy enlisted, and he was going to take his medical training there in San Diego. My wife insisted that we go over there and be with him as long as he was here. We did. We rented out our home here and we went out. I was working at Fort Bliss then. I was in charge of the ordinance warehouses here. I tried to get back into the Navy, but I couldn't pass on account of my eyes. But I did make it as an Inspector for Naval Aviation. They sent me down there to inspect material for the Navy planes in San Diego and Los Angeles both. So we stayed there. My son didn't last a year.

M: You were in San Diego?

P: Los Angeles. But I used to go to San Diego quite [often]. Convair had large factories over there.

M: Where did you live in Los Angeles?

P: It was the East side, right in front of the Continental Can Company, on Prado and Union Pacific. They were a big supplier of wings for us, the PBV-2's--the big sea planes. They were the chief supplier of wings, so I used to have to go over there to inspect practically every day.

M: You got a new job when you got there?

P: Yes. I quit, because I didn't like this job here. It was too far away from where the action was. And I'm not an Army man anyway. But I was in charge of the civilian personnel here in the ordinance outfit.

M: Were you there when the zoot-suit riots took place?

P: Yes, sir.

M: What do you recall about that?

P: I say that it was a glaring case of anti-Mexicanism. That's all that I can say--anti-Mexicanism. You used to read in the paper that these zoot-suiters used to go out and beat up the sailors and all of that. Phooey. It was just the reverse. Oh, I'll admit that there were a lot of hoodlums wearing zoot-suits and their women--the black widows and all of that. But they didn't deliberately go out and make it a point to attack the Servicemen. Oh no. My wife and I used to go to church downtown on Main Street, the Cathedral there--it's on about 3rd and Main. Of course, that was during the War. I didn't have an automobile; I had a company car that I used, but I couldn't take it home. Anyway, my wife and I used to ride the bus. So we used to walk from the Cathedral there over to Broadway, and stop in some place and have a bite to eat; then come

down and catch our bus on 7th and Los Angeles. Lots of times I've seen those guys come out of the P E Depot there on 6th and Main and deliberately attack any chicanito that happened to be passing by. Naturally they retaliated. I'll say one thing, they were not tough enough. They should have done more, but they didn't.

M: Who wasn't tough enough?

P: The paisanos, the so-called zoot-suiters. There were not too many of them--that's the reason why. They were outnumbered, too, because we, you might say the "respectable" people, had no use for them. In the first place it was on account of their outlandish clothing and they were strictly not our type--their mode of living and all of that. But they were just a handful compared to all of the Servicemen that were there. They had no backing from our people, which they didn't deserve anyway. But when they were ganged up like that, I would have joined myself, because I can't stand that.

M: Did you get involved at all in the protests?

P: No. I didn't have time. I was so busy with my government work. My boy was across the line then, and I didn't have time for anything. Once a week we went to church over there, and that was it. We had to work day and night. My wife took a job right across from there. She made wings for the Navy. We were right across the street from the Continental Cam Company.

M: You mentioned that you were involved with the Roybal campaign. Did you get involved with the CSO over there?

P: No. This was strictly on a personal friendship basis. When Eddie spoke about running, there were a couple of boys that used to work with me at Continental Cam during the War. They knew Roybal, they had gone to

school there--Roosevelt High School. And they're the ones that first told me that Eddie was going to run. The Jews, the businessmen there on Brooklyn, from Soto Street down about 3 blocks there, were all very good friends of his. **The Cantor outfit** had a big restaurant, and then the Warsaw Bakery, and all of those people--they're the ones that pushed him into running. The Jews are the ones that elected him, out on West Temple Street, all of those. I regret to say I was never so disgusted as [with] some of our paisanos there; because I went campaigning for him personally, and some of the replies that I got were, "Eh, psss Chicano ~~lo mismo que yo.~~" That's where that "Chicano" came [from]. It didn't set right with me. Like I used to tell them, "Eddie is descended from Americans, people that were here before George Washington ever thought of leading the Armies here. Don't be saps." But he got elected; but not with the Mexican vote, [but] because the Jews turned to be for him.

M: The Mexicans just didn't vote at all, or voted against him?

P: You'd be surprised to see the number that voted against him, yes, sir; simply because Eddie's opponent had a hatchet man that was very well liked in the East side. He's the one that walked up and down the street against Eddie, but I blame the people for it.

M: When did you come back to El Paso?

P: Well, I just got back here 17 months ago.

M: You lived over there all that time?

P: Thirty-two years.

M: Then you were there during the start of the Chicano Movement.

P: That's right.

M: What feelings do you have about everything that happened there in LA?

P: I don't like it. I never have liked the attitude. I never have. To be frank with you, I don't believe that the bilingual program over there,

the way they started it, was ever intended to be the way that they carry it out over there.

M: In LA, you mean?

P: Yes. I don't know enough of it here yet, you understand. But in Los Angeles, I don't think it was ever intended to be that way.

M: Do you think that the Chicano Movement has done more harm than good?

P: Yes, sir. I definitely do.

M: In what ways?

P: Well, in this way; let me just mention this example. Do you remember the Negro Movement a few years back, how rough and tough it was and all of that? And do you remember how they changed from one day to the other, and how they've been advancing ever since? Well, the so-called Chicano Movement, they don't know when to let go of the old violence and all of that. They have still continued it, so it's not gaining any popularity for them. At least from what I saw, I don't think it's proper. I definitely am not in favor of the Chicano Movement as they interpret it over there. I don't know enough about it to see how it's going here.

M: Let me ask you this question: Throughout your life you've been aggressive and a fighter and so forth, and you've mentioned before that too many of our people were too submissive.

P: That's right.

M: But now comes the Chicano Movement in the middle '60s, asserting themselves and being more aggressive, more the type of behavior that you feel.

P: My pattern, that's right.

M: Where's the conflict?

P: You've got to cut it off somewhere in order to consolidate the gains. I think you'll agree with me that fear plays a great part in the feelings

of people. Fear is one thing that has gained respect for the Negro. But he knew when to cut it off. He didn't continue with this aggressive-ness. I'm in favor of [being] aggressive, yes. But you've got to cut it off someplace. In other words, let us say you turn on the water in order to feed the plant; but you've got to turn it off somewhere or otherwise you're going to spoil it. It's just exactly the way with this. Sure, you let the people know that you want justice, you want equality. That's good. Why carry it further? Why carry it beyond that? Let's bring in the benefits now. I don't say it for myself because I never have needed anybody to go out and fight my battles for me.

M: Why did you come back to El Paso?

P: Well, let us say that I have a dream of building a memorial to my son, which I'm going to do. That's the reason why we sold out over there and came back over here. [My wife] doesn't like it. She came back just so I would come.

Mrs. P: It's just that we promised my son that we would come back.

P: When we went over there, she went over there first. He told her definitely, "I don't want you to stay here. I want you to go back home." So after spending all that time over there and seeing that we were getting nowhere as far as the racial end of it was concerned, I decided we'd come back and start working on his [memorial].

M: What kind of memorial do you want to build for him?

P: A memorial playground. That's what he'd want. We had a small piece of land here on Wenda Way off San José Road. When he was going to high school, he wanted to put in a swimming pool and a small playground there for the neighborhood kids. So that's what I have in mind.

M: What do you think of the Bicentennial and the way it's being run in El Paso?

B: Well, frankly, I haven't noticed too much action for it because I've been so busy fixing up the place here. This was nothing but bare sand. In 17 months we've fixed this up the way we want it. We're just about through now. Really, I haven't had much of a chance to notice what's going on regarding the Bicentennial celebration.

M: Thinking back to when you were here before and some of the celebrations that we've had here in El Paso, when they commemorate historical events, they talk about the pioneers of El Paso. The emphasis they put is on Anglo Americans, but very little is said about the Mexican. Do you have any feelings about that?

P: Yes, sir. I have always taken part in all of the celebrations when I was here; in fact, any kind of a celebration, including some of my own making you might say. But the paisano was never asked, and never did offer, to take part. The outstanding celebration in my mind is way back, the Osaple^{*} Parade. It was beautiful. It stands out in my mind, and my wife and I often discuss it. But outside of that, the 4th of July or any of the other feast days, the paisano was always backward. Like I say, aggressive yeah; I used to get out and fight like hell in there. Did you know that I started the Bicycle Derby from Ysleta down to El Paso on the 4th of July?

M: When was this?

P: About 1934. While I was here, that went on under the auspices of Marcos B. Armijo Post. When I left here we had a bicycle safety club. Do you remember old Liberty Hall here? We used to have a court there. That place was jammed with kids that belonged to the bicycle club. When I left here, things were gone. And the celebration in San Elizario, we used to go down there and put on some big wing-dings. There are beautiful people down there in San Elizario. I like them all. Of course, most of them are gone now. But, outside of the little regional celebrations,

the paisano never participated.

M: What do you think about the assimilation of the Mexicans into the dominant society?

P: Let me say this, and I say it very frankly. Our situation here is such that we, the native born, are carrying a load on our shoulders due to the proximity of the border. Too many of our people here have not forgotten that they were either born in México or their folks were born in México. And when you try to carry water on both shoulders, you can't be a Mexican and be an American both. You can't do it. That's the way I see it. You've either got to forego one or the other. I respect the fellow that is a Mexican citizen; brother, I'm for him 100%. And I feel the same way about the fellow that is an American. But there's too many of the people here that holler just as loudly on 16th of September or 5th of May or 4th of July. And you can't; you either carry out the dictates of one or the other. In other words, you can't be fish and fowl. That has been the trouble here. We would go out, I say "we"--LULAC was one of them. We'd go out to the schools and preach Americanism. I don't know whether you know the ritual for LULAC. What does it say? Americanism is--was, anyway, when I was a member--the main theme. We'd go out and preach this in the schools and all of that; and the first thing you knew it some big wig from across the line would come over and say, "Regardless of where you were born, you are Mexican." I didn't like that. Did you know that I stopped the paisanos from using Liberty Hall to celebrate the Cinco de Mayo, the 16th of September? I'm the guy that was responsible. Judge McGill got so damn mad; he said, "Look, hereafter you're going to be responsible; you be in trouble. If you want them to use it, good; and if you don't want them to use it, no.

But I'm not going to get caught in the middle any more." Do you remember Professor Esquivel, the head of the Palmore College? He was the head of the organization [that] represented the so-called upper-class Mexicans. They used to celebrate 16th of September and all of that. Oh, he and I had a lot of clashes. My good friend Frank Galván got mixed up there one time. He left in a hurry, too. It was very bitter. Like I say, I object to that. You're either going to be one or the other.

M: Many Anglo Americans seem to feel that the lack of progress among Mexicans has been due to the Mexican culture, that there's something in the Mexican culture that prevents people from having the work ethic, the Puritan work ethic. There's a stereotype that Mexicans are lazy. What do you think of that?

P: No. I say that there are different types of people in every race. That has been proven. If given the opportunity, I don't give a hoot if the guy comes from "Cusiburiachi" or he comes from New York City or from Havana. You give him the opportunity to get out into any chosen field and he'll make it. But, let me just tell you this: Our own people are the ones that have held back their own. In other words, unfortunately our paisanos here see one of our boys going up; and that damn jealousy, that spirit of hatred [starts up] just because the man is on his way up. In other words, the old adage "If you raise your head above the common herd, you immediately become the target of all abuses and all of the jealousy." We're loaded with that. But I definitely don't believe that the paisano is lazy. No. We raised a boy; he wasn't our son. We brought him here; poor kid was 11 years old and practically starving.

M: From México?

P: Yeah. We brought him over. My wife laid out cash bonds and this and that and the other. We raised him, sent him to school. Today that boy's

got a darn good job with Bank of America in Los Angeles; he graduated from college over there. He's married and has a beautiful family now. He was born and raised in México till the age of 11.

M: How did you happen to adopt him?

P: Well, we didn't adopt him. We just raised him. My wife had a business-- a catering service. At her place of business there was a man that repaired the appliances--refrigerators and everything like that. This woman--this boy's mother--was living with this man. He smuggled her over from México and they were living there illegally. The poor tot used to sneak peaks through the window where she was, her big kitchen. Naturally the odor of food was there, usually turkey, chicken for the catering service. And she saw him. Right away she grabbed him, and she went to the Immigration Service. They made her put up cash bonds and all of that. But like I say, that kid there is wonderful. My boy was not any better brought up than he was.

M: Mr. Porras, I've exhausted all the questions that I have. Is there anything else that you would like to mention in this interview?

P: The only thing that I say is that I am not in favor of this Chicano Movement. If they change that name, then I might. But I'm for anything that will give our people a boost. That gripes me, when they designate themselves [as Chicanos]. The people from the National Association for the Protection of Colored People don't call themselves niggers. I think that they're on the right track because when they cut loose and got rid of all of the tough element, they consolidated their gains, and brother, look where they are [today]. Well, in Los Angeles, take a look at all of the progress that they've made. They would not have made it; because if you irritate people to the point where if they weren't against you, they'll go out and fight you. If the Negroes had continued with all of the rioting and

all of that, that's what would have happened. I don't like our people to do that.

M: Thank you very much, Mr. Porras, for a very interesting and enlightening interview.

P: Well, I'm speaking to you frankly. Like I say, I've lived a long time, and I've always liked to mess around in all of this.

M: Thank you very much, sir.

*El Paso spelled backwards.