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## Interview no. 803

Cecilia Concha

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UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO

INSTITUTE OF ORAL HISTORY

INTERVIEWEE: Cecilia Concha  
INTERVIEWER: Javier Enrique Salgado  
PROJECT: World War II  
DATE OF INTERVIEW: November 22, 1993  
TERMS OF USE: Unrestricted  
TAPE NO: 803  
TRANSCRIPT NO: 803  
TRANSCRIBER: Javier Enrique Salgado

BIOGRAPHICAL SYNOPSIS OF INTERVIEWEE:

Native El Pasoan, student at St. Joseph's Academy, 1941-1945

SUMMARY OF INTERVIEW:

Family background; memories of World War II years while a high school student at St. Joseph's Academy in El Paso; Pearl Harbor; employment in El Paso during and after the war; serviceman brother's returning on leave; reactions in El Paso when war was over; rationing, avoiding rationing by shopping in Juarez; discrimination towards Hispanics by local businesses.

Length of Interview: 45 minutes Length of Transcript 52

S: First of all, I'd like to thank you for the interview. And, uh, my first question is, uh, I'd like to get a little background about your family in El Paso.

C: Okay. On my maternal side, uh, the family goes back to the, umm, probably mid-nineteenth century. That's when my great-grandfather came from Chihuahua. [He] settled in Ysleta, and that's where my maternal side comes from. On my paternal side, my grandfather, who was the first to come from Mexico, came to El Paso in 1896, '94, thereabouts. My father was, uh, about nine years old when he came to El Paso.

S: Okay. Could you tell a little about, uh, your mother, your father, and, uh, your brothers and sisters?

C: Okay. My, uh, mother of course was born in Ysleta, and her father died when she was very young. Her mother was left with, uh, very small children. There was no, uh, he was a sub-contractor. [He] used to come all the way to El Paso to work wherever the work was. Uh, from my mother, I understand he worked at some of the buildings still here in El Paso. One of them he talked about was, uh, I think the Immaculate Conception Church [in] downtown El Paso. So, he would commute from Ysleta. That was quite a commute back then, from Ysleta to El Paso. When he died, she was left with -- I think my mother was only about four years old -- with no means of an income or how to support your children.

S: Uh-huh.

C: So, she decided, "The best thing for me is to move to El Paso."

S: Uh-huh.

C: So, she moved all her children to El Paso, and obtained employment as a cleaning lady at night at the, umm, I think it was a post office. I vaguely remember the old post office, which was located in what is now Kress. You know how Kress's department store kind of comes in on Mesa and comes out on, uh, Oregon and Mills?

S: [Yes.]

C: That, I remember very vaguely. I was so young when they finally tore it down to build Furr's. And she worked there. She had, uh, some sons, two of her sons had already left to go seek employment in Colorado.

S: Uh-huh.

C: And they stayed there, and raised their families there, and died in Colorado. We have relatives in Colorado.

S: Uh-huh.

C: She had one son -- he must have been a teenager, I guess, -- and, uh, the other boy was two years old. She had three daughters between those two boys, and one son, this one son started working for Wells Fargo.

S: Uh-huh.

C: I'm not sure what they wore. Were they kind of . . . isn't there a Wells Fargo, still? They're kind of delivery. They deliver money from one place to another, something like that. He went to work with them. One of the girls, the

eldest girl -- who must have been in her mid-teens. I guess, fourteen, something like that -- dropped out of school, started working with the Sisters of Hotel Dieu, in the laundry.

S: Uh-huh.

C: So, that way, my grandmother was working as a cleaning lady, her daughter was in the laundry, and her boy was, uh, with Wells Fargo. So, I think there was enough there to take care of the three youngest.

S: Uh-huh.

C: And my mother was one of them. She went to school, uh, they lived in that area, south El Paso, around St. Ignacius Church.

S: Uh-huh.

C: So, my mother went to that school, parochial school, and graduated from it. Uh, now I'll stay with my mother. She went to El Paso High, which was not where it is now, but I think it was where Lamar used to be, but she only went one year.

S: Okay.

C: And then, she dropped out. She, umm, she was a little late graduating from grammar school. I think by the time they came from . . . for some reason she must have been about seventeen when she, oh, let's see. She was born in 1902. I guess she was about fifteen when she finished, uh, grammar school, went to El Paso High for one year, started working at the school. . . .

- S: Uh-huh.
- C: . . . as a kind of a substitute teacher. Then she went to work at The Popular.
- S: Uh-huh.
- C: She was the cashier.
- S: She was a cashier at The Popular.
- C: She worked there until she married.
- S: Okay.
- C: My father, uh, having come from Mexico, uh, with his family, went to work, went to Sacred Heart School up until the sixth . . . fifth or sixth grade.
- S: Uh-huh.
- C: He also started working, and back then, you know, you had, the family had to go out and work to help the parents raise the other kids. He started working as an apprentice with a contractor, umm . . . can't think of his name . . . Frank Powers. I remember, now, because he's the one who helped him get his citizenship.
- S: Uh-huh.
- C: And, in the shop, in the carpenter's shop, he was a "gopher".
- S: Uh-huh.
- C: They have him bring supplies to whatever site they were building, and that's how he learned his trade. He became a carpenter.
- S: Oh.

C: A very good one. He was a really good carpenter. Umm, when he married my, when they married in the early twenties, he was working for another firm. I think Mr. Powers went out of business, or sold the business. And, uh, they decided to try their luck in California. You know, everybody was going to California. (S laughs) That's the land of the milk and honey. So they went out there, and he had a little money saved up. My older brother was born in Richmond. And he said, well, he wasn't quite sure what he wanted to do in California. He started a little grocery store.

S: Uh-huh.

C: And, umm, one of his brothers wrote to him and said, "The banks are having a little problem in El Paso." And my father got a little concerned because he had some savings here. Not too much, but he had some savings in El Paso, and he said, "What if the banks go broke?"

S: Uh-huh.

C: So, he decided, "Let's move back to El Paso."

S: Okay.

C: So, he came back to El Paso. So, I was born here.

S: Oh, okay. So, you . . . .

C: I was born in '25, so that must have been around that year. And I don't know, that was way before the Crash. That was in '29.

S: Uh-huh.

C: And we really didn't feel the Depression until the thirties. You know, it kind of dribbled down. The millionaires felt

it in '29, the Crash. But the lower income people didn't feel the Depression until the thirties.

S: Okay.

C: Then that's what started all these programs. So, he came back to El Paso. They came back to El Paso, and he went -- again, he was a good craftsman, so he had no problem getting employment -- and he went to work for another contracting business. They built a lot of businesses in El Paso. One of them -- that was before he was married -- he worked at the, uh, some of his work is still there at the old Union Depot. And if you see up on what's called the balcony, you see all those little turn things, what do they call them?

S: I'm not sure.

C: Okay. Well, you see this fancy furniture that has a lot of [a Spanish phrase.]

S: Oh, [yes.]

C: He did all of those. He said, "I did every one of those." And I said, "You did?" He said, "Yeah, you do [them] at the shop." He'd learned to use the lathe, and he did all these fancy work, uh, woodwork.

S: Uh-huh.

C: And, then, he would deliver it to the Union Depot, where the other guys were working, and they'd put [them] up. He said, "I did all of those." (S laughs) I don't know if you go to the Union Station, but when you do, look up on the Mezzanine, and you'll see all these little . . . .

S: He did all of those?



- C: He did all of that. That's how he learned his trade. He worked at what is now the, umm . . . the bank, uh. Continental Bank? Used to be the SF building. He worked there. He could point out buildings. "Oh, I worked at that building," and "I worked at that building."
- S: Uh-huh. (laughs)
- C: Uh, a lot of homes were built in this area. They started building some homes in Austin Terrace and this area. He said, "We used to work at those homes." So he became a very good craftsman. The war came, and building . . . contractors were just, they were not building.
- S: Uh-huh.
- C: So, there was a depression in that construction business, so he said, "What am I going to do?" By that time, he was working with two brothers called Francis Brothers Contractors, and he decided, "I'm not going to do much in [the] contracting business, because that business is not going to be doing anything during the war.
- S: Uh-huh.
- C: You know, everybody started working in factories, building planes, whatever.
- S: Uh-huh.
- C: So he started to citizenship, so he could become a citizen.
- S: Uh-huh.
- C: And when he did, he was hired for the -- I don't know if you've heard of this. You were not around. -- the CCC.
- S: No.

- C: That was a program that was started by Roosevelt during the Depression to give employment to young boys . . .
- S: [Yes,] I've heard of that.
- C: . . . who were out there, you know. "What are we going to do?" And a lot of guys now say, "What I know of my trade, I learned in the CCC." So my dad was hired as an instructor for some of these boys.
- S: Uh-huh.
- C: Teaching them the carpentry.
- S: So, he was a teacher.
- C: So, he was, uh, well, an instructor, really, to say, "How are you doing?" To show them in the shop. From there, he went on to Civil Service.
- S: Uh-huh.
- C: He got into Civil Service I think about, uh, '41 -- the war was on -- '41 or '42, thereabouts. He got into Civil Service, and he stayed there until he retired.
- S: Oh, okay.
- C: Uh, my mother, of course, did not work after she married. She became a housewife, and they had eleven children.
- S: Eleven children.
- C: There are eleven of us. One has passed on.
- S: Okay.
- C: That's very briefly my parents.
- S: Uh-huh. Okay.
- C: I'm the second child of the eleven, and, uh, we lived in south El Paso. He built a home, uh, right next to his

parents, right on the corner of Virginia and Fifth. The home is still standing, and the one he built is still there. Every now and then we go by, reminisce, because we all grew up there. We didn't move to this area. I bought this house and brought my parents with me.

S: Uh-huh.

C: And that was in '66. There were only three of us still at home. Everybody had gone their ways, married, gone to war. My older brother went to war. So, we all went to St. Ignacius School, because that was the school she had gone to.

S: Uh-huh.

C: She sang. She had a beautiful voice. She sang in the choir with Mr. Crenida Concha, my grandfather. And that's how she met my dad.

S: Oh, okay.

C: Because he also sang, and he played an instrument. He had to, with his father. He had all his kids playing instruments. (S laughs) And that's how my parents met. So, they . . . the church at that time became -- and you may hear this from other people who grew up in those years -- the church was the community social center of all these families.

S: Uh-huh.

C: We belonged to youth groups there. My brother belonged to the Boy Scouts troop. Troop 21. I won't forget that. (S laughs) was based right there at the church.

S: Uh-huh.

C: So, all of our activities were centered in the church. My mother, when she was a young girl, she met my father, they married there. We all went to school there. We were all baptized there, all made our first communion, uh, no, I mean my first communion with the nuns. They had a nursery right across the street, and that was very helpful for my mother, you know, she'd send us all there. [I] graduated from, uh, St. Ignacius in 1941.

S: Uh-huh.

C: And then I went, as I was telling you when you called, I went to St. Joseph's Academy.

S: Uh-huh.

C: That was a school that was, uh, the very first Loretto Academy in El Paso was at that location.

S: Uh-huh.

C: That's been torn down, with the freeway.

S: Uh-huh.

C: [It] was on North El Paso street. Then they built this big one here.

S: Uh-huh.

C: And that was in '29, I think. So, they left that location, and moved over here to Austin Terrace, where they built this beautiful school. Much later, in the thirties, they decided the girls in El Paso who cannot afford to come to Loretto here . . .

S: Uh-huh.

C: Too far, number one.

S: Right.

C: And expensive, according to our means. So they said, "Why don't we re-open Loretto on North El Paso, but name it St. Joseph's Academy? St. Joseph is the patron of the Sisters of Loretto."

S: Okay.

C: I think there was a virgin sister (a Spanish phrase). Anyway, they re-opened it in the thirties for girls of, uh, lower income to give them a good education so that they could go out and be employable, you know, have some kind of a skill to offer an employer.

S: Uh-huh.

C: It didn't start out as an academic school, or prep school.

S: Mm-hmm.

C: But more of a commercial school.

S: It was a commercial school.

C: They teach commercial courses.

S: What kind of things would they teach?

C: Typing, shorthand, accounting . . .

S: Mm-hmm.

C: . . . courses that would make you . . . give you some skills to offer an employer. But, as the years went on -- I think the first graduating class was '39 -- they decided to become accredited.

S: Uh-huh.

- C: And they did. They became accredited by the State of Texas. Then they offered other academic courses, which would enable you to go into higher education.
- S: Well, when you attended St. Joseph's, was it already accredited, or was it still a commercial school?
- C: Uh, it was, because I went in in '41, and I think at that time, they already offered algebra and other courses that you would need to enter a university. So it must have been accredited shortly after they opened.
- S: Now, this was during the World War II era?
- C: [Yes.] because I, uh, graduated in May of '41, from grammar school, so in December of '41, I was already at school.
- S: What was your reaction when you heard about . . . .
- C: We had been, my sisters and I had been to the movies. That was an attraction. I mean, you went every Sunday. (S laughs) And we had walked from, uh, south El Paso. They would come to the Plaza, or whatever movie was showing. We were on our way home. We got home, and my dad told us. He had either . . . you know, at that time, they had extras. They had kids running the streets with the newspaper. Extra.
- S: Oh, okay.
- C: And they would go into the residential areas, and sell the extra for five cents. And I think my dad had bought it. I don't know how my father found out. So, when we got home -- early, because we probably went to a very early feature --

and, uh, we got home, and he told us. Oh, it was . . . really bad. But I didn't know where Pearl Harbor was.

S: Uh-huh.

C: I had no idea where Pearl Harbor was. So, then, the next, uh -- this was a Sunday -- the next Monday at school, the sisters told us that it was in Hawaii. But, to me, Hawaii was the end of the world. (S laughs) But that's how we found out. We were shocked, but we did not get the impact that you now get through television.

S: Uh-huh.

C: It was just word of mouth.

S: Word of mouth. [yes.]

C: And there was the newspaper. I think it was the newspaper. I'm not sure how my father found out about it. And he and my mother were talking about it.

S: Uh-huh.

C: "There's a war starting."

S: Uh-huh.

C: So, then at school the next day . . . even the next day, because this was December the 7th. I think the next day was a holiday. It was a religious holy day, and I don't think we went to school.

S: Okay.

C: [I'll] check my dates. There is December the 8th, which is Feast of the Immaculate, and of course, we got all the religious holy days. (S laughs) It was a holiday [at]

school. Anyway, our first day back in school, [the] sisters were telling us where Pearl Harbor was, what had happened.

S: Uh-huh.

C: Then, the next Sunday, [we] probably went back to the movies, and that's how we got the graphic information.

S: In the news brief.

C: They had the news on TV, you know. Then, they would have, I think they were called . . . .

S: It was like a news brief?

C: I'm trying to think of the name. I can almost hear the theme song (humming), and then they'd show what like you see on TV?

S: Uh-huh.

C: They would show a movie. And that's where we saw . . . .

S: That's how you really . . . .

C: . . . the attack on Pearl Harbor, bombs dropping . . . .

S: Everything like that. And then . . . .

C: That was my first visual experience of the attack on Pearl Harbor.

S: And that's how most people first experienced visually? And what your impression? What was your reaction?

C: Well, as a fourteen-year-old . . . .

S: [Yes,] you still didn't realize . . . .

C: Yes, but again, to me, that was happening in another . . . .

S: In another world.

C: World. There was not any talk even though we had been attacked, the United States, of . . . what was my impression



as a fourteen-year-old (S laughs) of that attack on Pearl Harbor. I know it was, uh, you know, when they tell you as a kid. "Oh, they bombed, and there were ships being sunk, and all the bombs." And then we saw it on the newsreels. Umm . . . something very exciting happening.

S: Uh-huh.

C: But my reaction was not, we couldn't go into immediate war.

S: Right.

C: And what was war? I didn't know what war was!

S: Right.

C: You know, my mother used to talk about the First World War, but what I remember was that they were short of sugar, and they were short of coffee.

S: The rationing.

C: Even in the First World War, the rationing . . . how things were expensive.

S: Uh-huh.

C: But other than that, I don't remember my mother, my dad did tell us, but this was later. I don't remember him telling us his experience in the First World War. He was not in the service.

S: Uh-huh.

C: But, he had been drafted. But by that time, he was in his thirties, late thirties, and they were not taking that age yet. But I remember him saying his brother had gone, and, uh, younger brother, and he said, "I was drafted." Well, he went and enlisted. I don't know what happened in that age

group. But he wasn't married yet, because he married late. He said that he had told them, "I want to be in the engineering corps."

S: Uh-huh.

C: Because he knew carpentry and all that, and I can think after two . . . the war ended before they called him, so he didn't go. But that he told us later. So, I didn't know what war . . . what is war, for a fourteen-year-old?

S: Right.

C: What is war?

S: Uh-huh.

C: You study history in school, but that's something that happened years ago.

S: Right. So, you don't . . .

C: [It] didn't really register. So, my being very emotional about the Pearl Harbor attack, I guess I can say no, I wasn't.

S: Uh-huh.

C: It was just something happening, very exciting happening.

S: Uh-huh.

C: But way across the ocean, you know.

S: Uh-huh. Something that, uh, you really couldn't understand, well, I mean you, uh, you knew it was important.

C: Yes, because it was America that had been, it was American ships that had been sunk.

S: Mm-hmm.

C: And the sisters would tell us. You know, you have other thoughts when you're fourteen years old. (laughter) But, [yes,] it was important at the time, but then, I guess you put it in back of your mind, until . . .

S: Uh-huh.

C: . . . we saw the war . . .

S: Starting to affect you. [yes.]

C: . . . in the States, you know. Boys were starting to, my brother, you could hear my parents talk, "Well, George is going to have to go," you know.

S: Uh-huh.

C: But he was still in high school. So, he graduated in '43.

S: Uh-huh.

C: So, by that time, there had been, oh, neighbors, families we knew, their boys were going to war.

S: Uh-huh.

C: They were being drafted, going to war. Then the war gets closer to you. And I remember, we used to hang a little banner on the window with a star. The blue star meant you had a boy, a boy in that family was in the service.

S: Okay.

C: And if the boy died, then it was a gold star.

S: Oh.

C: So, when I started seeing these little banners . . .

S: Then you knew . . .

C: . . . in windows, then I would know, "Oh, they have a boy who is part of a war!"

S: Uh-huh.

C: Then it happened to boys much older than I, that I knew from school. And I would say (whisper) "Oh, he's going to war!"

S: Uh-huh.

C: And, "Oh, they're going to war!" Then you begin to see Ft. Bliss acting up.

S: Uh-huh.

C: Let's see, I don't remember much about Logan Heights, the Air Force that we had here. I don't remember much. But Ft. Bliss, then you'd see soldiers downtown.

S: Uh-huh.

C: And that was something new for us. We'd never seen anyone in uniform before, and then, all of a sudden, here, we see all these, well, a lot of Anglos, you know, they came from other parts of the [United States.] And then, when it hit home was when my brother had to leave. I mean, he graduated from Cathedral. (snaps fingers) He was gone.

S: Uh-huh.

C: Then I think two weeks later, he was already gone. He went into the Navy, though. I think they were giving them a choice, "Where do you want to go? Army, Navy, Air Force, whatever."

S: Uh-huh.

C: But he chose the Navy.

S: He chose the Navy?

C: Then, the war became very much a part of you.

S: [Yes.]

- C: I think my mother used to worry, you know, and then she'd cry, and then she'd get letters from him. They were all censored, and they used to cut . . . he'd write, you know, and then they'd go through censor, and they would cut out portions of the letter, because it was such, uh . . .
- S: Sensitive issues.
- C: Sensitive issues. Anything that they might, uh, felt would be out.
- S: Really?
- C: I think he was on a ship, on a battleship, and I remember my mother, "Look at this letter. This is all torn up." (S laughs) And then they had special mail. They used to call it, oh, it was just a fold type card. What did they call it? I can't . . . I'm sorry. I can't think of the name. It was a special letter [that] was sold by the Post Office. It was already stamped, a post card, but it opened up . . . ask my brother. He might remember. And my mother started buying those to write. And we would write to him.
- S: Uh-huh. Would . . .
- C: And then we had cousins go, too.
- S: Would your letters be censored?
- C: Oh, [yes.]
- S: When he received them?
- C: Well, ours to him?
- S: [Yes.]
- C: No, he never talked about that. But his to us, yes.
- S: [Yes.] they were definitely censored.

C: Yes.

S: Wow, that's weird.

C: So, you'd hold up this letter (S laughs), and it's all cut out.

S: (laughing) It's all torn up.

C: And then, I think they were told not to write sensitive things. Later, when he came home on leave, he would tell us, uh, I remember this. "Well, what were you telling me in that letter?" He says, "Oh, well, we had a kamikaze hit one side of the ship.

S: Uh-huh.

C: He was on the other side. Otherwise, he would have been killed. And he said, "It was so bad. I went down to . . ." what do they call it, uh, down where they have the infirmary? But they have an official name in the Navy for it. And he said, "I could smell the burning flesh."

S: Oh, God . . .

C: You know, he'd come home on leave, and we'd all sit around him . . .

S: {Yes.}

C: . . . just waiting for him to tell us what he had gone through.

S: Uh-huh. What are . . .

C: He had to go back to the Pacific.

S: Really? Well, first of all, what was the one story that stuck out the most?

C: I think that one.

S: That one?

C: I think that one. We were all sitting, we had a big table in the kitchen, which was a dining area. We have a dining room.

S: Uh-huh.

C: And we were all sitting around just listening to him, my parents and all of us, and he was telling us this, and he was all choked up, you know.

S: Uh-huh.

C: But seeing him so moved telling us what he was experiencing.

S: [Yes.]

C: You know, [a] young boy. He was . . .

S: Impressionable.

C: . . . not even twenty yet.

S: Uh-huh.

C: About nineteen, I guess, and he said, "To walk down," -- and I'll never forget that -- "down below the." and imagine the size of a battleship.

S: Right.

C: He was [on] the *Mississippi*. And going down below and smelling burning flesh that had, the boys that been hit by the kamikaze on one side. He was a gunner on this side. And my mother said, "Well, it was my prayers." 'Cause she prayed all the time, like all mothers, you know.

S: Exactly.

C: So, and I remember the little banner. And then boys we knew were going, and so you asked me about our social affairs at school. [Of] course, St. Joseph was an all-girl school.

S: Okay (laughs).

C: But, there was Cathedral up the hill, so you know (laughing) very close.

S: St. Joseph's, uh, they . . . .

C: So, our socials, see, as a freshman and sophomore, I didn't date. You know, I mean, that was . . . .

S: Uh-huh.

C: We were very sheltered.

S: Uh-huh.

C: My mother sheltered us a lot.

S: Uh-huh.

C: But, we had friends, and we used to go out in groups.

S: Uh-huh.

C: It wasn't just the two dates. I mean, we'd be in a little group, and here come the Cathedral boys, and we all go in a group to the movies.

S: Uh-huh.

C: We all go in a group to, uh, get an ice cream soda or whatever.

S: Uh-huh.

C: And that's about what the boys could afford, you know.

S: Really (laughs).

C: And I think it was only a nickel. That was our social life.

S: Uh-huh.



- C: Uh, then, as the boys were graduating . . . (Spanish phrase) . . . not many of them I think even went to college. I don't remember any of them going to Texas College of Mines then . . .
- S: Uh-huh.
- C: . . . without going to war. I guess they were drafted. My brother didn't go to UTEP until after he came back from the war.
- S: Uh-huh.
- C: Uh, because that's when the GI Bill started.
- S: Uh-huh.
- C: So, anyway, that was our social life. We had little parties in somebody's home.
- S: Uh-huh.
- C: And then, we'd invite the boys from Cathedral, or other boys come around. Umm, when I was an upperclassman, I mean, as a senior, the Army started the Armed Forces YMCA, so what did they call it then? Canteen . . . what did they call it? But they were at the Y, and then another one opened up on North El Paso Street, very near our school.
- S: Mm-hmm.
- C: But my parents wouldn't let me go (S laughs) because they say, "We don't know who these boys are. They're already in the service."
- S: Uh-huh.
- C: And I was still in high school.
- S: Uh-huh.

- C: And, they were very protective of us going to these places. "Oh, but Mother, all my friends are going." You know how this is. "All my friends are going. Well, I don't care about that (S laughs) but you're not going. You're not going." I think they were afraid that, uh, that these were boys from . . . they were young kids, you know, like my brother and all, but parents were very protective of us, to go out with, uh, soldiers.
- S: Okay. (laughs) It's forbidden.
- C: And many of my friends eventually married some of them.
- S: Oh, really?
- C: Well, they were just passing through. They were stationed at Ft. Bliss, and they'd go to these places to dance.
- S: Uh-huh.
- C: I think only once, I went to one. It was an afternoon party at that, uh, because it was a catholic CYO . . . what did they call them . . . it was Catholic Youth Organization, and they opened one on North El Paso Street, very near the school. And I did go to one party there.
- S: Mm-hmm.
- C: She let us go, only because run by the catholic school. (S laughs) She said, "Well, she'll be safe there. And I wasn't the only one that was overly protected.
- S: Oh, really?
- C: Parents were that way then.
- S: Uh-huh.

C: They needed to know. "Where are you? Where are you going? What time are you coming back? And who's going with you?" And originally, we had chaperones.

S: Oh, really? (laughs)

C: Oh, yes. For our proms, our senior prom, uh, I invited a boy from Cathedral. [Of] course, I guess he went to war right after that. But, umm, as a senior girl, you see the senior boys much younger than you. You know, girls mature quicker than boys do. So, you tend to look for older boys. But there weren't any.

S: Uh-huh.

C: They were in the war. So you had to settle for Cathedral (laughter). But this one girl, she's already, she's a pretty girl, still a very pretty lady. She invited some officers from Ft. Bliss.

S: Uh-huh.

C: And I don't know how she met [them] or how she got [them.] And, we had about six of them show up at the prom, at the senior prom. [It] was at the Plaza Hotel in downtown. And, of course, the Cathedral boys didn't like that, you know.

S: Uh-huh.

C: I mean, we were going for the . . . for the mature (S laughs) they couldn't have been more than twenty-one, twenty-two.

S: (laughs) But they were a lot older than the Cathedral . . .

- C: [Yes.] but 'who invited these guys to come in? You're going to be one of [them] pretty soon yourself, you know (laughter). But that was funny. That was a funny incident.
- S: They got jealous, too.
- C: [Yes.]
- S: Very jealous. During the war, how did, umm, the rationing affect you?
- C: [Yes.] we had . . . .

## END OF SIDE A

- S: Okay, go ahead.
- C: Then, oh, uh, I don't think we ever were short of stamps to buy whatever my mother needed. I'm not sure.
- S: Mm-hmm.
- C: But she ran the house. But I remember, we had stamp books, like they have for food stamps now?
- S: Uh-huh.
- C: So, they would use them for sugar, coffee -- we didn't drink coffee. She wouldn't let her kids drinking coffee -- uh, sugar, meat . . . .
- S: Cheese . . . .
- C: I think meat was also rationed. I don't remember about cheese. She used to shop in Juarez.
- S: Oh, okay.
- C: [Yes.] We had that advantage to go to Juarez and buy whatever you needed.

S: So, the rationing . . . .

C: It didn't affect us. As far as food was concerned, we didn't have fancy food, but we didn't go hungry.

S: Really?

C: Oh, but shoes, I remember, oh, they were horrible: They were plastic. Plastic came out, (S laughs) and then they had these clear, plastic shoes. They were horrible. We couldn't get a decent pair of shoes. (S laughs) And I remember one time my Dad said, well, he had seen -- I guess it was in the paper or something -- that singer, Carmen Miranda, you may have heard of her.

S: Uh-huh.

C: She used to wear these platform shoes made out of wood.

S: Mm-hmm.

C: And, uh, I guess he'd decided that he could, in a lathe, make the bottom part of a wooden shoe, and he made us some. And you know, I liked them. And then the top was leather, and I guess maybe through some of his friends, he made my sister and me a pair of these wooden soled shoes, and I remember wearing them. Uh, [yes,] those were my dress shoes. (S laughs) School shoes, we wore uniforms, so . . .

S: Uh-huh.

C: I think we wore loafers, or saddle shoes were popular then. The saddle shoes were the . . . they came back, and I think they're still back. They were white, and had a saddle in Navy blue or brown.

S: Uh-huh.

C: I know they came back a few years back. "Saddle (?)", we used to call them.

S: That was what you called them?

C: [Yes.] that was part of the uniform, or, uh, the loafers.

S: Oh, the loafers, [yes.]

C: They're still around.

S: [Yes.] (laughs)

C: We used to wear them. But, dress shoes, oh, they were horrible. Umm . . . clothing, well we wore uniforms, so we had a couple of nice dresses that we'd wear.

S: Mm-hmm.

C: For, you know, social activities. We didn't wear slacks.

S: No slacks.

C: No. No slacks, no shorts.

S: They weren't allowed.

C: We wore shorts for P.E.

S: Uh-huh.

C: But, uh, no, you didn't.

S: (laughs) It was forbidden. You were saying that you bought meat in Juarez.

C: Yes.

S: How was the activity in Juarez?

C: Uh, going back and forth?

S: During the war.

C: Since ever, I don't know that there was ever any restrictions.

S: Mm-hmm.

- C: The movement was back and forth, soldiers, uh, we would see [them] going across the river. I guess they were going to the bars.
- S: Uh-huh.
- C: Umm, no problem, and we had relatives. One of my dad's sisters lived in Juarez.
- S: Oh, okay.
- C: So, we'd go back and forth.
- S: Oh.
- C: I don't remember any problem. But, of course, the streetcars ran all day. So, the transportation was good, you know. We'd go downtown, and get on one of these big, uh -- they were red -- streetcars . . .
- S: Uh-huh.
- C: . . . and go. My aunt lived right off Avenida Juarez.
- S: So, it was really no problem.
- C: No problem. And my mother would buy groceries over there. Remember the meat with the, uh, at the market . . . old market over there by the church. They were run by, umm, Chinese.
- S: Uh-huh.
- C: Let me see, I was going to change . . . (S laughs) so, you see, we never, uh, I don't remember a shortage of food.
- S: Uh-huh.
- C: For us, we had enough stamps, you know, there were so many kids.
- S: Uh-huh.

C: We each, she was given ours. She had to go pick [them] up.  
uh, a book for each child.

S: Okay.

C: And the little ones didn't eat as much . . .

S: Right.

C: . . . and she'd use those for shoes for us.

S: Okay. And also during the war, did, uh, what was my next  
question here? [I'm] kind of blank right here. Uh . . .

C: I was telling you about one project that was, uh, really was  
a very good one, because I know some ladies who made a  
career out of it, and that was to go into nursing school,  
where your tuition would be paid by the government.

S: Uh-huh.

C: Very similar to R.O.T.C. They would pay for your training  
as a nurse.

S: Mm-hmm.

C: [As] soon as you got your certification, you would have to  
give so many years of service to the Army, and become an  
Army nurse. I probably, even if I had gone into it,  
probably wouldn't have continued, because the war ended that  
summer of, uh, '45.

S: Uh-huh.

C: Uh, [yes,] it was June of '45 was, uh, no, what was first,  
Pacific? It was June, I remember, June was one, and August  
was the other one.

S: Uh-huh.



C: But, I decided that nursing was not for me. But some of my friends went into that program.

S: Uh-huh.

C: It was a very good program, because it gave you additional education.

S: Mm-hmm.

C: Umm, okay, so after the war in '45 when I graduated, I had received a scholarship to Loretto Heights in Denver.

S: Uh-huh.

C: But my parents were not, uh, well enough to send me there. We sat down, and, uh, say, "Okay. What is the scholarship?" The scholarship was for my tuition only.

S: Oh, okay.

C: So, then my mother said, "Okay. You're going to need transportation. You're going to need your room and board. You're going to need clothes for Denver. It's cold up there in Colorado." And, uh, whatever else. So, my dad made a list, you know, and he says, "We can't afford it. We cannot afford to send you."

S: Mm-hmm.

C: So I thought, "Well, maybe I can work." So, I remember going to different places to work, umm . . . some of my friends were going to Texas College of Mines. And I said, "No, I've got this scholarship. I've got to take advantage of it." So I applied [at] different places trying to find work.

S: Uh-huh.

- C: But the minute I said, "I want summer employment, because I'm going to continue my schooling," they wouldn't hire me. They wanted permanent people. And I made the mistake of telling them. You know, I was very, very truthful, very honest.
- S: Uh-huh.
- C: "I only want [a] summer job, because I want to save enough money."
- S: Uh-huh.
- C: But then, I wasn't very realistic that whatever I was going to earn could pay then, 'cause that was my first job after I decided it wasn't going to work. It was eighteen dollars a week.
- S: Uh-huh.
- C: And that was the going rate. Well, I would have needed -- I think my father told me, my mother, they made . . .
- S: An estimate?
- C: . . . all kinds of counts -- probably about 1200 dollars.
- S: Uh-huh.
- C: I mean, that was a fortune!
- S: [Yes.]
- C: You know, this was only the tuition they weren't paying, that the scholarship was paying. Room and board was six hundred dollars, and that's just, you know, that was expensive. It was more expensive for the room and board.
- S: Uh-huh.

C: It was a private school. So, finally I said I was very disappointed and very sad, and I cried and all, but I said, "Okay. That's not going to work out. It wasn't meant to be. I'm going to go to work."

S: Uh-huh.

C: And there was employment everywhere. They were hiring everywhere.

S: Uh-huh.

C: My first job -- it wasn't much of a job, but [it] gave me some experience -- was at a little jewelry store.

S: Uh-huh.

C: And they needed a girl to do clerical work.

S: Uh-huh.

C: Do the office work.

S: [Yes.]

C: So, that was my first job: eighteen dollars a week.

S: Eighteen dollars a week? (laughs)

C: Eighteen dollars a week. From there -- I didn't stay there very long -- I went to the White House.

S: Uh-huh.

C: They needed a steno, a buyer's steno, they called it. I had that skill. I could take shorthand. I could type. And they needed a steno for all the buyers for the departments.

S: Uh-huh.

C: So, I started there, and I think my pay was twenty. . . . I think when I left them to go to the telephone company, I was making like twenty-two dollars a week.

S: Twenty-two dollars a week?

C: So, after the war, oh, the war ended that summer, and there were celebrations in El Paso all over.

S: How was the, what was the climate?

C: Oh, it was great! We went downtown honking cars. I think some of my cousins were home on leave.

S: Uh-huh.

C: And, uh . . . we didn't have a car, so they came [and] picked all the teenagers up, and we hollered all over the streets of El Paso. I mean, everyone went [to] downtown El Paso. They were throwing, uh, strips of paper from office windows. I remember the Mills Building.

S: So, it was like a parade?

C: Oh, just people went wild. It was, I mean, you can imagine like after a game (S laughs) when you want to go downtown, and just honk and just drive around.

S: Uh-huh.

C: That's what we were doing, just driving around and hollering and honking cars.

S: And every, it was just, uh . . .

C: End of the war.

S: . . . the end of the war.

C: Everybody started coming back, and like I say, there was a lot of employment, and, uh, my father was working at Ft. Bliss. And from the, umm, White House, that was good for me, because it gave me a lot of experience.

S: Mm-hmm.

- C: Shorthand and typing. I went to the, uh, telephone company [in] 1950.
- S: Uh-huh.
- C: Five years after the war. So, it was five years I gained, a lot of experience.
- S: Uh-huh. Working on different kinds of jobs.
- C: And that's where I stayed until I retired.
- S: Okay.
- C: Then, you got a good job, and I think that was the, umm, attitude of most parents then. They gave you, like my parents would say, "Well, we don't have any money to give to you, but we'll give you the best education we can."
- S: Uh-huh.
- C: And I worked in high school.
- S: Uh-huh.
- C: I worked in the cafeteria.
- S: That was my next question. You worked in, uh . . . .
- C: Even though the tuition wasn't as much as Loretto.
- S: Uh-huh.
- C: It still, and my other kid brothers and sisters were still at St. Ignacius.
- S: Uh-huh.
- C: And, I know my mother didn't pay too much there.
- S: Uh-huh.
- C: The more, the cheaper, you know.
- S: Uh-huh.

C: But at St. Joseph's, I helped in the cafeteria and in the office, and that reduced my tuition. I think it was only three dollars a month.

S: For the total tuition at St. Joseph's?

C: Uh-huh. But then there was the expense of my uniform.

S: Uh-huh.

C: Transportation, lunch, little extras.

S: What time would you work at the cafeteria?

C: Umm, when I didn't have a class. (laughter) Uh, the cafeteria, oh, yes, I remember going there, we were. I was through with one class at eleven or eleven fifteen, and then I would go down to the cafeteria and help.

S: Uh-huh.

C: And then, I stayed for lunch. I'd get my lunch free. I didn't like the food, (S laughs) but I'd get my lunch free. I'd rather pack my own lunch. And then the office, uh, was I think as needed. Sister would call me and say, "I've got some typing to do," or whatever I had to do.

S: Uh-huh.

C: It wasn't really much.

S: Was it really light work?

C: Oh, [yes.] And not for very long, because I had classes.

S: Uh-huh. So . . . .

C: I think the office work. I think I stayed a little bit after school.

S: Oh, okay. I was going to ask you, when you were going to St. Joseph's, what time would you usually go in, and what time would you usually come out of school?

C: We would leave the house . . . I had some, uh, friends who were a block away, and the mother would [sometimes] -- she had a car -- would [sometimes], oh, that was another thing that rationed was gasoline.

S: Uh-huh.

C: Uh, she would give us a ride to school. It was quite a ways. Or we'd take the bus. So, we had to start early, because classes started at 8:15. So, we would have to leave the house, well, I guess about 7:15. I don't remember. We'd walk to, let's see, from Virginia Street and pick up my friend, and, uh, we would take the bus on what is now, what, Paisano?

S: Uh-huh.

C: [That] was the first street that I remember, second street, is Paisano now. We catch the bus there, go downtown, and transfer to another bus, go up to North El Paso. Or, if the weather was nice, we would walk from downtown up there, and that's, what? That's not too far.

S: Uh-huh.

C: It's about where Community College has their downtown offices . . . campus?

S: Oh, okay. On Rio Grande Street?

C: [Yes.] It was in that area.

S: Okay.

- C: St. Joseph's. That was not too far. We could walk from San Jacinto Plaza up there. We would walk. And then, in the afternoons, we'd walk downtown. Sometimes you'd walk home.
- S: Really?
- C: It's a long walk, (S laughs) but we did it. We were walkers then. It was either the bus, or we walked.
- S: What time did you, uh, leave, uh . . . .
- C: Uh, 3:15.
- S: 3:15?
- C: [Yes.]
- S: And could you tell me a little bit about the classes you took? Do you remember what classes you took during that time?
- C: I took, umm, again, you know, you'd rank (?) the college credit, academic course.
- S: Okay.
- C: But, to protect myself, I also took, uh, shorthand and typing.
- S: Uh-huh.
- C: I didn't take accounting.
- S: Uh-huh.
- C: A lot of my friends did, and they became bookkeepers . . . .
- S: Uh-huh. Right after, uh . . . .
- C: . . . with different firms, right after school. None of us had any problems getting jobs. I mean (snaps fingers) you'd get a job like that! There was a lot of employment.
- S: Uh-huh.



C: A lot of employment. Well, boys were gone.

S: Right.

C: But, then the boys started coming back. (S laughs) looking for work. Most of them went back to school to get their college degree. I know my brother did.

S: After, the people that went . . . after the war?

C: Uh-huh. They established this, uh G.I. [Bill], you know, most of the, umm, older Hispanic lawyers that, uh, you hear about here in El Paso, some of [them] became judges. That's how they got their education. [They] came back from the war.

S: Uh-huh.

C: And they had their, uh, G.I. Bill.

S: Uh-huh.

C: Some of them were married, and that gave these Hispanic poor boys from poor families an opportunity to get their career, and a lot of them went for law.

S: Uh-huh.

C: A lot of [them.]

S: A lot of [them] went for law.

C: [Yes.] Became lawyers.

S: Would you like tell me anything else about, uh, St. Joseph's?

C: Okay, back to St. Joseph's. There was a small enrollment.

S: Uh-huh.

- C: They weren't very large classes, run by the Sisters of Loretto, and, uh, like I say, opened in the thirties, and for lack of faculty, they closed in the late fifties.
- S: Okay.
- C: So, it didn't last very long.
- S: Uh-huh.
- C: They needed those Sisters who were teaching there to come and help at Loretto. They weren't about to close this one.
- S: Uh-huh.
- C: So, there was lack of, uh, faculty. They pulled them away, and they closed it, for economic reasons.
- S: Right.
- C: So, it was a good school.
- S: Uh-huh.
- C: Umm . . . when you're in an all-girl school, you're not, uh, you're very uninhibited, you know.
- S: Mm-hmm.
- C: You don't have to act like, "These boys are watching." (S laughs) You know, there are all girls, and we had a lot of fun. Uh, the friendships were so tight, so close, Javier, that I still have friends I went to school with in high school.
- S: You shared so much during that time?
- C: We shared so much, we became like one big family. The classes were not large.
- S: Uh-huh.

C: Umm, twenty, maybe, in a class, so we had a good, uh, faculty and student ratio.

S: Uh-huh.

C: It was very good. The Sisters of Loretto are great educators.

S: Mm-hmm.

C: I think I owe a lot to them. And my mother was for them. She loved them. She went to school with them, and she just loved the Sisters of Loretto. She didn't (laughs) well, my mother was . . . thought that way. She didn't want her girls going to Bowie [High School]. In fact, she didn't want the boys going to Bowie. Why, I don't know, but I guess there was rowdy kids (S laughs) in south El Paso, and she said, "No, my kids are going to go to Catholic schools." (S laughs) So, we all, all of us went to Catholic, except one sister kind of rebelled, and she went to (S laughs) (cannot understand word). El Paso. After grammar school, she went to El Paso High. Every one of us went to, uh, St. Joseph's. Later on, when my dad was in better shape, he sent the two youngest ones to Loretto.

S: Oh, okay.

C: We went to Loretto. The boys went to Cathedral, and one went to (cannot understand word). It was my mother's [idea.] She said, "I want you all to have a good education, because that's all we can give you."

S: Mm-hmm.

C: "We have no money to leave to you, but (Spanish phrase).  
Education was always with you."

S: Uh-huh.

C: She had a good thought, I thought.

S: [Yes.] I think it is very important.

C: "[We] have no money to leave you, but you have a good  
education."

S: Uh-huh. And that's, uh . . . .

C: And then the rest was up to us, so, the, uh, brothers and  
one sister who went on to the university did it pretty much  
on their own, because my parents said, "High school, and  
that's it. You want to go on to college, it's up to you."

S: Okay.

C: And that's all there was, to go on and get higher education.

S: Okay.

C: But, I think they gave us a very good foundation, not only  
the, uh, the religious values, but she . . . my dad was  
not, uh, great for religion. (S laughs) He wasn't. She  
was, uh . . . anyway, that was that new school up on the  
hill, St. Joseph's Academy, that doesn't exist any more.  
but, uh, in fact, the lady I was talking to when you rang  
the door bell is getting, they're getting ready for their  
fiftieth reunion, which we still have.

S: Uh-huh.

C: We have reunions even though the school doesn't exist, (S  
laughs) because we have Loretto here.

S: Uh-huh.

- C: And we're associated with them as far as the alumni is concerned.
- S: Okay.
- C: We have activities with them.
- S: Uh-huh.
- C: And they're getting ready for their fiftieth reunion. She was '44. She was a year ahead of me.
- S: So, then you'll have yours . . . .
- C: We'll have ours next year.
- S: And do you look forward to it?
- C: I am in a way, because I saw the '43. [The] Class of '43 just had theirs last year. And it was beautiful. They had a beautiful ceremony. All the ladies were there. They came from Pennsylvania, they came from California, you know. There's about as much -- I don't know if you're, are you local?
- S: No.
- C: You're not local. But you know how the Bowie groups are so close even after fifty years?
- S: [Yes.]
- C: Well, same way with the Loretto and St. Joseph's.
- S: That's great.
- C: Because we were small, and I think the years that we went to school. Those years formed a bond that is still very tight. We still see a lot of them, and the Class of '43, I knew the lady who was in charge as chairman. And she called me, and she said, "Oh, I'm so excited! I called so-and-so." We

keep in touch. [Of] course, Loretto works that way. We have a newsletter that they send out to former students. And we're on their mailing list, St. Joseph's. We get [them.] and we can keep track of where they are. So, I think it was the times then. There were times, of course, will not come back, much different than they are now. Our values -- I'm not knocking the young kids -- but our values were so . . . into us by our parents. You don't lose them. You still have [them.]

S: [Yes.] I think that's very, very important.

C: Uh, of course, times change, and with changing times come other things that I see and like divorce.

S: Mm-hmm.

C: It's happened in my family, and I'm around to see it, but, uh, you know, you think things are always going to be constant.

S: (laughs) They're not.

C: There are changes in your lifestyle, and people give in to them or stick it out.

S: Exactly.

C: I never married, uh, no, I didn't, and probably because I didn't ever establish a relationship then. The boys were leaving.

S: Uh-huh.

C: And then, when they started coming back, I was still interested in having a career. And then, uh, that was

another thing that happened. When you married, you stayed home and raised a family.

S: Uh-huh.

C: That's what two of my sisters did. (S laughs) However, one of them kind of rebelled, and went on working until she married. But that was for economic reasons.

S: Right.

C: But, the thing was, you married, you stayed home, and had children. I didn't want that.

S: Even after the war?

C: I wanted to have a career.

S: [Yes.]

C: And I did, and that was my choice.

S: Mm-hmm.

C: That was my choice. I was able to do lots of things. I said, "Well, if I marry and stay home, I won't be able to travel, I won't be able to do that, I won't be able to do that. I want this." And you make a choice there. I may have been able to do it had I married, maybe.

S: Mm-hmm.

C: But I don't think so. But I did, because I travelled to foreign countries, and I travelled all the time.

S: Uh-huh.

C: So, you sacrifice one lifestyle for another.

S: Uh-huh.

C: [Of] course then, by the time things . . . you know, (Spanish phrase).

S: [Yes.] (laughter)

C: But I had a good job, and I had a good profession.

S: My next question is . . . .

C: Enjoying my retirement.

S: So, you did exactly what you wanted to do.

C: Mm-hmm.

S: That's the most important thing, if you're happy with what you do.

C: That's what I wanted to do.

S: And that's what you wanted to do.

C: I said, "Okay, I cannot become a professional, can't go on to college. But I have a good job."

S: Mm-hmm.

C: And every job was better than the other, and with the telephone company, I was . . . even though [the] telephone company was, again, one of those places where they didn't hire Hispanics.

S: Uh-huh.

C: Uh, if they did, they'd put [them] in a department where they had no contact with the public.

S: Okay.

C: Oh, oh, [yes,] and I had some friends who worked there. They were in Accounting. And [they] said, "Accounting? Well, [yes,] they have us over [here,] but we don't speak to the public right." They'd say, "You have accents," and whatever, you know.

S: Uh-huh.



- C: Whatever the racist mentality is. But then, uh, I was one of very few to go into a customer contact department. And after me came many.
- S: After you were there.
- C: [Yes.] I think I was about the third one who went in. But, again, the, uh, the employment, and they looked at me, they interviewed me, they interviewed me over the telephone. I went through like four interviews.
- S: Uh-huh.
- C: But, I think what finally sold me to them were my skills.
- S: Uh-huh.
- C: I was a stenographer, I could take shorthand, I could type, you know. And they needed one.
- S: Uh-huh.
- C: And I guess they couldn't get one. They even gave me a test.
- S: Really?
- C: I said, "Why am I going through all this?"
- S: Was there a background check?
- C: Huh?
- S: Did they give you a background check, too?
- C: Uh, no, a test of my skills.
- S: Uh-huh.
- C: To see if I really had those skills.
- S: Uh-huh.
- C: I had five years experience, you know.
- S: Uh-huh.

C: So, [yes,] they hired me. And then, they made inroads into that, and this . . . uh, stenographer. I became a secretary. I became a secretary to the CEO.

S: Mm-hmm.

C: And then I went into middle management. But that was much later. And now, there's a whole bunch of Hispanics (S laughs) there. But, it was hard to get into those big companies. El Paso Natural Gas was hard to get into. Even though I said there was a lot of employment, El Paso Natural Gas, El Paso Electric -- uh, what were the other big firms that were hiring -- Ft. Bliss was good. They hired a lot of Hispanics. They had to. It was government. But, uh, the banks.

S: Uh-huh.

C: We had a hard time getting in. And there was a man in El Paso -- you might hear his name now and then -- Cleo Vasquaeros. (?) He was kind of an activist, you know, he was an older person. He would contact these companies, and I understand he contacted the telephone company, uh, way before even LULAC became very active.

S: Uh-huh.

C: And he got after them for not hiring Hispanics.

S: Uh-huh.

C: And I guess he must have made some noises, and they started hiring, very slowly. (S laughs) [The] Electric Company was bad up until way into the fifties.

S: Uh-huh.

- C: They were bad. El Paso Natural Gas wasn't good about hiring Hispanics.
- S: Uh-huh.
- C: Now they have them . . . top management. [The] Water Company . . . well. [the] Water Company wasn't too, too bad, but, you know, they didn't place you, they didn't let you go into the real customer. I mean where you were visible.
- S: Uh-huh.
- C: As being Hispanic and being part of that company, you know. [Yes.] they gave you menial jobs.
- S: Right. Out of sight?
- C: [Yes.] Uh, [the] Water Company wasn't too bad, because we had a cousin there. He became a head cashier, I think.
- S: Mm-hmm.
- C: [Of] course, he retired. Umm, but I wanted to to get El Paso Natural Gas so bad.
- S: Mm-hmm.
- C: [They] didn't hire me. They wouldn't hire me.
- S: Do you believe it was because of, uh, discrimination?
- C: I think so.
- S: You think so?
- C: I think so, yes. And, uh, the telephone company became good. El Paso Natural Gas I think must have been the last one that started hiring. [The] Electric Company, they had the installers, (Spanish phrase).
- S: Uh-huh.
- C: Uh, Police Department.

S: Nothing?

C: Uh, even umm, postmen . . .

S: Uh-huh.

C: . . . were, I guess when I was growing up, we had one black.

S: Uh-huh.

C: We had, and his name was Willie, and he was a really nice, neat guy, and he lived in south El Paso.

S: Uh-huh.

C: Uh, postmen, Post Office didn't hire. It's true, whatever that lady told you, except for the Popular. I go to the Popular again, now, because my mother used to know a lot of people who worked there, and they were Hispanic.

S: Okay. But, uh, more of the departments were, like, uh, were all Anglo, most of the attendants were Anglo?

C: Oh, [yes.]

S: Most of the businesses?

C: Oh, yes. It was just in the last, uh, when, sixties . . .

S: Uh-huh. After the war . . . .

C: . . . when they opened up.

S: Uh-huh.

C: Students at, uh, [a] friend of mine told me. She went directly from St. Joseph's to, uh, College of Mines.

S: Uh-huh.

C: When did it become Texas Western, in the sixties? Anyway, she went straight from high school.

S: Uh-huh.

- C: And now, she tells me, she's retired from, she became a teacher, a principal. And, uh, she now tells that Hispanics were few.
- S: Uh-huh.
- C: It wasn't until after the war that, uh, this university started admitting, well, not admitting them, but that they felt free to go.
- S: Uh-huh.
- C: And she said they would be clanish. They would be in their own little group here.
- S: Mm-hmm.
- C: And were they ostracized? Maybe. She said, "We stayed in our own little groups. We'd get together."
- S: They'd stick together. Everybody would stay together.
- C: And stick together. I guess for protection.
- S: Uh-huh. Maybe, [yes.] for different reasons.
- C: Look at it now.
- S: [Yes.] (laughter)
- C: They are now in the little group. (laughter) They stick together. I see them, you know, so . . . Hispanics on the runway, you know, sometimes I see a little group of Anglos over here.
- S: [Yes.] Now, it's different. It's the opposite.
- C: [Yes.] Well, it had to be.
- S: [Yes.] It had to be.
- C: But, back then, so I've seen that, that you guys don't see.
- S: Mm-hmm. The change, how everything's changed.

- C: How eventually, it evolved to where the Hispanic is here, now.
- S: [Yes.] That's true. Okay, then I would like to thank you for the interview.
- C: You're very welcome. I hope it comes of some help to you.
- S: Of course, it will. Thanks a lot for taking some time out of your schedule.

END OF INTERVIEW