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Interview no. 1660

Andres Bustillos

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THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO INSTITUTE OF ORAL HISTORY

Interviewee: Andres Bustillos

Interviewer: Dr. Monica Perales

Project: Smelertown Oral History Project

Location: El Paso, Texas

Interview: March 27, 1998

Terms of Use: Unrestricted

Transcript No.: 1660

Transcriber / Summary: Vanessa Pantoja

Andres Bustillos was raised in Smelertown. He attended El Paso High School and the University of Texas at El Paso. He describes Smelertown as a place where everyone knew everyone. Bustillos discusses the ASARCO led poisoning case, where fumes were being carried in the air. ASARCO sent flyers and held meetings inside of churches which rose awareness. Bustillos discusses his father attending these meetings and seeing people suffering of lead poisoning. He also discusses the political actions taken by those of Smelertown, such as going to city council. When city council suggested that people move out of Smelertown, but the majority did not because they were comfortable where they were. It was the newer families who launched complaints against ASARCO. He also detailed the migration of multiple families outside of the area into El Paso's Southside and lower valley. He does acknowledge the health concerns of those who moved out of the area and a split within the community with those who did and did not file a lawsuit against ASARCO.

Length of interview 43 minutes

Length of Transcript n/a