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Interview no. 1713

Ismael Holguin

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THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO INSTITUTE OF ORAL HISTORY

Interviewee: Ismael Holguin

Interviewer: Alex Garcia

Project: Asarco Project

Location: El Paso, Texas

Date of Interview: May 4, 2019

Terms of Use: Unrestricted

Transcript No.: 1713

Transcriber: Andrea Santos

Summary of Interview:

Ismael Holguin was born in Smelter Town (community of people who lived near Asarco) on June 17, 1933 and he had 8 brothers and sisters. He grew up in Buena Vista. At the age of 14 his mother moved to Buena Vista so he went there with him. He worked at the El Paso Independent School district and in Asarco.

Ismael had a pretty calm life in Smelter town. He went to school and then to the YMCA to play with his friends. He had the same routine in once he moved to Buena Vista. He enrolled in the Navy when he was about 18 years old. During his time at the Navy he served in the Korean War. He used to spend 6 months in the USA and 6 months overseas. His brother and brother in law worked at Asarco. Their job was to repair any damages that the machines had. At the time they worked at Asarco, Ismael was in the Navy.

Smelter Town had a church named Cristo Rey, where Ismael had his First Communion. Ismael was part of the boy scouts at the same time he had his First Communion. One of his favorite activities with them was when they walked they hike the Franklin Mountain. Another activity he enjoyed was going fishing with his friends.

During his time at working at Asarco many family members of him and close friends got sick due to the contaminated waste that Asarco let out to the environment. Many of these people lived in Smelter Town. Smelter Town was the community near Asarco.

One of Ismael's favorite experiences in Smelter Town was the 'kermes', which were little carnivals that the town organized. Ismael's life in Smelter Town was pretty good and he got to see and experience many things.

Length of interview 35:19

Length of Transcript n/a