

**REBECCA ORDAZ**

**Interview 78a**

**August 16, 1985, Diboll, Texas**

**Becky Bailey, Interviewer**

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**ABSTRACT:** In an interview with Becky Bailey, Rebecca Ordaz reminisces about moving to Diboll in 1969 as part of a Manpower initiative to bring Hispanic workers into Diboll. Her family came to Diboll so her father and brothers could work in the sawmill and fiberboard plant, and they were one of the first families to come with this program. She discusses life in an East Texas sawmill town as a Mexican-American woman and also marvels over how much Diboll has changed.

**Becky Bailey (hereafter BB):** My name is Becky Bailey and I am interviewing Rebecca Ordaz at her home in Diboll, Texas. Today's date is August 16, 1985. Becky, let's start by telling me when you were born and where?

**Rebecca Ordaz (hereafter RO):** I was born June 5, 1955 in San Juan, Texas, that is in the Valley, around the Rio Grande Valley.

**BB:** What is it close to?

**RO:** San Juan is a small town right between Pharr, Texas and Donna, Texas, Mission, Texas, all that area. A whole bunch of little town's altogether, the biggest city is McAllen and Edinburg, you know, population maybe of sixty-four thousand.

**BB:** Okay, about the size of Lufkin. Okay, how long did you live there?

**RO:** Well, we lived there, well, I was born in San Juan and then we moved to California, Bakersfield, California and we lived there quite a few years and then we moved back in 1963. To Edinburg, Texas, right next to San Juan, maybe four or five miles off. Then we moved in 1963 the day President Kennedy got shot, we were on the road to the state of Texas. We lived in Edinburg from '63 to '69, which was six years. Then in '69 we moved to Diboll.

**BB:** What kind of work did your dad do in California and San Juan?

**RO:** Daddy, when we lived in California, my daddy did labor work, hard labor, fieldwork.

**BB:** Was he considered a migrant worker?

**RO:** No, he wasn't considered a migrant worker because we never came in late for school, we were always at school on time. When school started we were there to start the year and we never did leave until school was out so we would not be considered migrant workers.

**BB:** But during the summer you did travel some, or did you?

**RO:** Not that much, we worked during the summer for the six years we lived in Edinburgh, we went to Plainview, Texas.

**BB:** Oh, what a long drive.

**RO:** We picked cucumbers. My daddy would have a contract with a man and we would go work the fields for him for four years and then we decided to move to Diboll in '69. I have a relative, Camelo Esteves, that works with Manpower Government and when he joined this program he asked my father if he would like to work for a company in East Texas. He said it would be a better paying job than fieldwork and so my dad decided it was a good idea so we talked it over with my mother and my older brother and they decided it was fine. So they have to go through these classes for Manpower, you know, they have to go through this training period, and then after they qualify for it Temple sends after them.

**BB:** Oh, so he was in that bunch that came that Temple sent for and that was in '69?

**RO:** Yes, which – all the people that came in '69 were Mexican Americans; they were not people from Mexico, you know, they were Mexican Americans, because they were in a government program which was for people that spoke English.

**BB:** Oh, that was part of it. They had to be bi-lingual in order to do this. What were some of the other qualifications that they had to have?

**RO:** I don't remember what the other qualifications were but, you know, I do remember that, from what I used to hear them discussing, was the government project and you know, man power, education, training, it was, it isn't any more. So we came to East Texas with that program.

**BB:** Was your older brother in it, too?

**RO:** Yes.

**BB:** Tell me about your family real quick.

**RO:** Well, I have five brothers and three more sisters besides me. So there were nine of us.

**BB:** Do you want to name them real quick?

**RO:** My oldest brother is named Robert, next to that is Roy, Reme, then me, of course, then Rosalinda, Rosaura, Martha, Ruddy and Reuben.

**BB:** Yes, we know Reuben. You will have to spell a couple of those names for me. Reme, how do you spell it?

**RO:** R E M E

**BB:** And the one after Rosalinda, what was her name?

**RO:** R O S A U R A

**BB:** Okay, so Robert was in the program, just he and your dad?

**RO:** I don't remember actually if Robert was in the program or not, to tell you the truth. I know definitely that Roy was, but I don't remember if Robert went to the classes or not.

**BB:** But they just moved when the family did, he wasn't already married, was he?

**RO:** No, he was not married at that time.

**BB:** Tell me about Roy.

**RO:** He was in the program for sure. He was already married and had children. So whenever they discussed coming to Diboll he was in the group and he moved with us and so did Robert.

**BB:** How – now you said you had a cousin in the program? How did the rest of the people hear about it? What kind of information was given out?

**RO:** I really don't know, but all I remember is that they talked to some people. You know, I imagine they issued out applications for it to find out who they would accept, so they went to these classes and decided which families were going to move to Diboll.

**BB:** Do you remember what your folks were saying what Diboll might be like? Was there any apprehension on their part as to how they would be accepted and that sort of thing?

**RO:** Not really. My dad never thought anything about it other than it was supposed to be a better job for him and he needed a good job to support his family.

**BB:** Well, with that many kids I imagine so.

**RO:** But, you know, that is all I can think of.

**BB:** What sort of work did he have when he came here?

**RO:** He worked for the plywood plant.

**BB:** Do you know what he did at the plywood plant?

**RO:** Lay up machine, or something like that.

**BB:** Yes, I know what that is. How did your mom like it here?

**RO:** She liked it because it was a small city, you know, a small town and very, very quiet, nothing like South Texas. She really liked it. She thought it was a nice town.

**BB:** How many Mexican families or Hispanic families were living here when you first came?

**RO:** When we first came the only people that I can remember living here were the Martinez, Miranda and Guerrero, maybe all together ten, you know, I don't know, that's about it.

**BB:** What sort of housing – where were they putting everybody that was coming?

**RO:** When we came there were a couple of families that came with us, they were the Morales.

**BB:** Were you like the first ones on this program? This bunch?

**RO:** Yes, and there were probably, let's see, there was our family, maybe four or five families together came. There were young couples, hadn't been married maybe a couple of years, you know.

**BB:** I'd say your dad was the oldest one in the bunch.

**RO:** Probably so.

**BB:** Where did you live, did they have housing ready for you?

**RO:** When Temple sent one of these big trailers to move us, he told us they were building a government project here, a housing authority, so he said we would have a house as soon as we got here, there would be no problem. So we moved into the housing authority, which had houses on Avalon which were just being built. In fact, the ones across from South First were not even finished at that time.

**BB:** So that's where you stayed as a block. But yet, none of you live down there now. When did you start getting your own homes out away from the project?

**RO:** In about two year's time. We lived there only two years and then Roy decided he would buy a home and he bought it on Highway 59, which is located right next to Dr. Cathcart's office, right behind him, an old pink house.

**BB:** An old company house?

**RO:** I don't know if it was an old company house. I knew it belonged at one time to Busby's. Then my parents decided they would have a house built on Ryan's Chapel and they had their house built there and, then of course, I got married and we bought our home right here on Dennis.

**BB:** Okay, what was it like whenever you first started high school. Of course, you are so completely bi-lingual that I'm sure you didn't have any trouble with that part, but what was it like when you started school here, because you were 14, that's a funny age.

**RO:** Well, when I started school here it was really very lonely at the beginning, because there were not many Mexican American people around other than the ones who were here and we didn't have much communication at all because they were either in a higher class than I was and we didn't get to talk to each other much.

**BB:** You were just like the only one in your class?

**RO:** Right, at first I thought it was really lonely, sad. I didn't want to go to school here, I wanted to go back to Edinburgh High School because I thought Edinburgh High School was the best then. So, to me, it was very sad in the beginning, but after that I got so used to the idea it didn't bother me any more.

**BB:** It wouldn't take you long, not too long to make friends. When – okay, you were in the first bunch that came, like the first four families that came, were there a lot more that Temple moved in?

**RO:** I don't now if Temple moved them in or the Manpower moved them in, I don't remember. I didn't pay a lot of attention to some of the conversations that went on over that. But there were quite a few people who came after we did, within a couple of years after we did, a lot of people started coming in.

**BB:** Why, why would they come here?

**RO:** I imagine it was because one relative told the other and probably thought it was a good place to work so they decided, other people just started coming in.

**BB:** So it was mainly relatives that would tell others?

**RO:** Mostly, I would say, and then, now, it's just, I don't know where they are coming from.

**BB:** Who knows, huh? But those that came, they have come now they are different than what you were. I mean it seems you were so completely bi-lingual and Americanized, or did you consider yourselves Americanized, or not?

**RO:** Yes, since I am born here, I'm sure.

**BB:** I mean, you are, but I mean, maybe it's the language thing that gets me sometime, that those that come right now seem more intent on staying Mexicans, is that because they are from Mexico or are they still coming from the Valley?

**RO:** Well, some are coming from Mexico, I wouldn't say they are all from the Valley, they are either from Eagle Pass or somewhere else other than the Valley. My descendants are from Mexico. My grandparents are from Mexico. I'm glad, you know, but my parents are legally born a USA citizen, my mother was born in Jerrenton, my daddy was born in Alamo, Texas. My daddy served in World War II so all of us were born here. We have always lived here, in fact, we lived from Reynosa, Mexico which is maybe fifteen, sixteen miles from Edinburg and I don't think we ever crossed the border. It was just of no interest to go across the border.

**BB:** So there is just not the tie with Mexico as a mother country like some of these others have now. Because, you know, at the drop of a hat they are gone, you know, they are gone for several weeks. And that sort of thing. Well, I just wondered how you felt or if you noticed the difference.

**RO:** Well, you know, there is a difference between them and a natural born Mexican-American.

**BB:** When you were going to school what kind of aspirations did you have, what did you want to be when you grew up?

**RO:** I always thought I wanted to be an airline stewardess.

**BB:** Oh, really?

**RO:** To me, I thought it would be great, and travel all over.

**BB:** That does sound neat. Mine was never that – hum.

**RO:** After I saw that Delta crash I was glad I decided not to take that kind of job.

**BB:** After you graduated from high school what did you do?

**RO:** I really didn't graduate from Diboll High School.

**BB:** Oh, you didn't?

**RO:** I got married young; I was going to be a sophomore when I got married.

**BB:** You're kidding, I didn't know you got married that young.

**RO:** When I got out of school I stayed home for quite a while and then I decided I'd work at the candy kitchen, for Atkinson Candy Company, and I worked there for maybe five or six years and then I decided "I'm going for my GED." I thought, "Well, I'm sure I can get it." Then I was offered to work for the Diboll Independent School District. Mr. Robbins was looking for somebody that was bi-lingual and my sister-in-law, Julia, worked for Diboll Elementary at that time so she called me and asked me how I felt about it and if I would take the job. I told her that I did not have my GED then but if I would get the job I would get it and I was sure I would. So I went to talk with Mr. Robbins and he gave me the job. He asked me to go and talk with Mr. Porter, who was the Temple Junior High Principal at that time and, of course, Mr. Porter knew me from junior high school so he said I could – I would be the one to be considered for that job so I went on and took my GED and got it right then.

**BB:** How long have you worked over there?

**RO:** I have been there eight years, at junior high. I worked in Special Ed; I have for the eight years.

**BB:** Oh, really, the whole time? Takes a special person to do that, I honestly believe that. I didn't realize you married so young. When did you meet Romero?

**RO:** Oh, in 1970.

**BB:** Was he going to high school here?

**RO:** No, he was not going to high school; he was working here for Temple at the fiberboard plant.

**BB:** When did he move to Diboll?

**RO:** In 1969.

**BB:** At the same time that your folks did?

**RO:** A month different, we moved, like in October and he moved in November.

**BB:** Did he come by himself or did his whole family come?

**RO:** Yes, him and one of his cousins came; he had just gotten home from Vietnam and was down in this area for something. His cousin was Rueben Zavalla; he was down here for some reason and he found there was a job so they decided to come.

**BB:** Now, his mother lives here now?

**RO:** Right.

**BB:** Did he bring any more of his family along later?

**RO:** Well, his brother; he has a brother who is legal, I mean born in Mexico and he immigrated. He got a passport so he moved to Diboll.

**BB:** Tell me something about the Hispanic community life, some things that you do that are a little different from what we might do, you know. I know you have July 4<sup>th</sup> and all those other things but do you have any special holidays that you celebrate?

**RO:** Well, to tell you the truth when you are born in the United States and raised in the United States you have all the customs of the Americans, then you are an American. But a lot of the traditions from Mexico have come to the United States from years back. You know, people that celebrate, you know, like the 16<sup>th</sup> of September.

**BB:** What is that for? You don't even know what it is for?

**RO:** I don't. And then they celebrate the 5<sup>th</sup> of May, Cinco de Mayo, which I think has something to do with the French War.

**BB:** Yes, independence, I know more than you do. There are bound to be some differences in Christmas customs, are there any?

**RO:** Well, yes, maybe so, the Mexican race, like from years back, my grandparents and their grandparents, their parents that came from Mexico had a custom to make tamales at Christmas. They thought when the 24<sup>th</sup> came they all had, they would all get together and go to midnight Mass, you know, on the 24<sup>th</sup>. Before they went to midnight Mass they would get together and talk and make tamales and cook them for that evening or that night, Christmas Eve, to eat. I'm not talking about a couple dozen. I mean a hundred and a hundred and fifty dozen.

**BB:** Don't invite me. I'm not coming to that, although it sounds like fun. Do you have piñatas at Christmas?

**RO:** Well, as far as I can remember, no, we didn't have any as far as I can remember; we only had tamales and all the good food and all that stuff. We didn't have any piñatas, though.

**BB:** But you have Christmas presents just like regular Americans?

**RO:** Yes, a Christmas tree – right.

**BB:** Well, I was trying to think that little parade I saw...you said that was the 16<sup>th</sup> of September and that is through the church. Do they do it through the church?

**RO:** Well, right now it has been doing it for the church. They have a little fiesta, or you know, a little carnival and everything at the church where they can raise money also for the church and at the same time they celebrate the 16<sup>th</sup> of September. They are going to have one this 16<sup>th</sup> of September. They have lots of food, they sell plate lunches and they have games and bingo and they have everything and everything that is collected for that day goes into the church building.

**BB:** I saw that going up back there, you have a nice – what is it – Sunday school rooms, maybe?

**RO:** Yes, for Catechism.

**BB:** Tell me something about the Catholic Church here? When you came, was it already a growing concern, I mean was it...?

**RO:** No, not right away, we used to go to St. Patrick's in Lufkin. They did not have a Catholic Church here in Diboll. Then a couple of years after, they started building Our Lady of Guadalupe, which is our Catholic Church across from the Temple Day Care Center. There were a few people then; now there's a lot of people. Now it has to be built bigger because it does not hold everybody in the church.

**BB:** What – the Catholic Church here, do they send a – do you have a resident priest or does he live in Lufkin?

**RO:** He lives in Lufkin right now; eventually we hope to have a resident priest when the church is built bigger.

**BB:** Now, does he – are there any nuns that come down?

**RO:** Yes, there are a couple of nuns.

**BB:** Are they bi-lingual; are they white, or what?

**RO:** Yes, they are white but they are bi-lingual.

**BB:** Oh, must be nice to be able to do that. Oh, I know one thing I wanted to ask you. In the paper today, I noticed when I was looking through, that they had a picture of a girl and they said something about celebrating her 15<sup>th</sup> birthday. It sounded like a huge production, is that pretty common for those girls?

**RO:** Well, I didn't have one. Some people that are natural born American citizens have it, not everybody. The people believe, in Mexico, that their daughters, at the age of 15, is a time that they become young ladies and that they are...

**BB:** Are they thinking they are of marriage age?

**RO:** Not necessarily, they just think it is something and they have a Mass because they want, to me, the way I understand it and heard the priest talk about it, is that they bring them to the church and give the Lord thanks for fifteen years and then they have their party, or whatever, they believe in dancing. Personally I don't care for it.

**BB:** Patricia won't have one?

**RO:** No, she doesn't care.

**BB:** It sounded almost like one of those coming-out balls, you know, a debutante party almost. It was really neat looking in the paper anyway. Think a minute about the job opportunities in Diboll, that sort of thing. Do you feel like the Hispanics have an opportunity to work at jobs that they can advance in and that sort of thing?

**RO:** Well, I'm sure they would if they have a chance, really. Because not just in Diboll, the East Texas area, I believe that because you are a Mexican you are just a Mexican. You know, you have no quality, no credentials, whatever, you know, and a lot of times if a Mexican American were to ask for a job, like me, if I were to go ask for a job and walk in the door, they would see me as a Mexican. They don't see me as a Mexican-American and they believe that because all people from Mexico come here to work for lower wages that all Mexicans are here for the same reason, which is not true. I don't like to go to a place and to be looked at as if I don't have any rights to be here, because I believe I have a right...in fact, a lot more right than some of those other people here. So I'm an American. They think, they say that the people from Mexico came to take jobs away, maybe so, some do, the ones who are not legal, the ones who come from Mexico, but not the ones who are living here, the ones who are really Mexican-Americans. They are here for the same reason that you are or anybody else is. They are here because they want to get a better job, go higher than whatever type of job they already have. I feel like sometimes they classify one as Mexican, all Mexicans are the same, you know, which is not true.

**BB:** You know, it's funny but I can't imagine working for lower than the minimum wage anyway; I don't know how you can make ends meet.

**RO:** That's what I am saying, like me, I can't. I can't. My husband can't either; my brothers can't either. The people who live here who are natural born citizens, or even the ones that have a passport because they are legally here; they have paid money to go to the American Consul to give reasons why they want to become American citizens. Eventually they will either apply for citizenship. They will have to take a class and if they pass their test they become American citizens. Now there are a lot of people in East Texas that have passports that are legally here. There are a lot of people who are not. And of course, people that have passports, some do not speak English. You know, if you were coming from Korea, Vietnam, these Vietnamese that come from Vietnam, they

speaking no English and they have to have a passport to come to the United States, to live in the United States. They are just like the Mexican people. They have to have a passport to live in Texas, or to live in the United States.

**BB:** It would be a hard thing to contend with. Do you feel like, within the company here, within Temple, since they initiated the program and said we want your labor, we want you here, so you feel that you have a better opportunity to advance in the company, that Romero has a good opportunity to advance here as opposed to somewhere else, maybe another company in East Texas?

**RO:** I don't know. Probably if he had applied at Lufkin Industries in '69 and would have worked for them, I feel like he is a good employee. He has gone this far so I'm sure he is, he is still working. He started off working for \$1.65 an hour at that time, it was minimum wage and I'll bet Romero has not missed 10 days in 15 years. He is always at his job every day and now that he is a foreman he has more responsibility.

**BB:** So he has advanced?

**RO:** Right, he has advanced in his job. There are some more people...

**BB:** Do you think there is an opportunity for management?

**RO:** I don't know, I do not know.

**BB:** I wonder about that sometimes, whether, you know, you get locked into a job situation.

**RO:** I don't know, I really don't. I can't answer that question right now, I don't know.

**BB:** Tell me some differences that you see between Diboll as it was when you came in '69 and now. That's not that many years, really, when you get down to it, what – about sixteen years, or so?

**RO:** Well, when we moved to Diboll there was only the drugstore, which was Rexall, at that time, the Village, and there was, of course, Baskins. I don't know if it was called Baskins at that time or what it was called. I can't remember but it was across the highway, it was where Brookshire Brothers is now, all that little area in there and there was a Dairy Crème, it was not a Dairy Queen, it was a Dairy Crème at that time and, of course, the theater and that's about it, and Pavlics which was owned and managed by Mr. Pavlic, whatever.

**BB:** And that was the only grocery store besides...

**RO:** As far as I can remember yes, oh, they had that little one over across the track. And, oh yes, Mr. Lee had a store, the Jiffy Mart where State Farm Insurance and Poulunds are, there was Mr. Lee's store there.

**BB:** Oh, was it a grocery store?

**RO:** Yes, a little grocery store.

**BB:** When did Brookshires come in?

**RO:** I don't remember. It was Piggly Wiggly before Brookshires.

**BB:** Oh, really, I didn't know that.

**RO:** Yes, before Perry's came it was Brookshires, and before Brookshires it was Piggly Wiggly and then Brookshires built theirs and Perry's took that store but I don't remember. I didn't even remember what was on that area, other than the drugstore, Dick's Pharmacy.

**BB:** And the Pine Bough?

**RO:** The Pine Bough was in that area, too. No, the Pine Bough was right there where the bank was.

**BB:** Okay, so it was all over on the other side of the highway?

**RO:** Yes, there was no Tinsleys, there was no Dairy Queen, there was no Western Auto, and Baskins, and the City Hall. The City Hall was where the police department was. There was no Jiffy Mart, no Okay and, of course, Max Pac built, the Sonic and the car wash. So, it is growing. When I moved here, to me, it was so kind of bare, because I came from a district that had 12 elementaries, one high school and a university. So it was, gol, what am I doing here? Then you came to school here, I was used to like playing softball and basketball and everything and there was nothing...I mean absolutely nothing for girls at that time, you know, and I thought "Gol, this is horrible, what am I doing here? I don't want to go to school here." In Edinburg, Texas there's seven, eight hundred graduates when it comes to graduation so it is a big district. All these little towns like Burke, Beulah and all those areas around it come to Edinburg school district, so you know, and even now it is bigger, they have two junior highs, I think, twelve elementaries, two junior highs and the high school and the university.

**BB:** So that made a lot of difference when you moved here?

**RO:** Yes.

**BB:** The show now only shows the Mexican, or Spanish film. When did they change over, how long has that?

**RO:** I don't know to tell you the truth because I have never been there, maybe one time when they opened it we went to see a funny movie but we've never been back. So my

kids have never been there, especially my son. If I told him to go watch a Mexican movie he'd say I'm crazy. He thinks he ought to see all – wrong also because to me he's going to learn both languages and he is going to speak both languages whether he likes it or not. I am Mexican-American and that is what he is going to learn – Spanish.

**BB:** Well, that's so much better than just being one language.

**RO:** To me, it's wrong when you are of Mexican descent and expect your kids to speak all English. You don't necessarily have to speak all Spanish or all English, you can still communicate because when I went to school there were Mexicans and whites in school and we all spoke English, you know, it was in English. Not only that, my parents also spoke English so it wasn't really hard for them, but you know, I can understand where some kids' parents don't speak any English and they have some problems. But I feel like my family anyway, we can all get together at Christmas or any celebration, or birthday, Mother's Day, Father's Day, whatever and we can sit outside in the yard and part of our conversation is in Spanish and the other half is in English. Two or three words are in Spanish and the rest is English but we know what we are talking about because we are so used to it, it doesn't bother us. It's not hard for us.

**BB:** I envy you to be able to do it. You know my one or two little words that I can pick up here and there.

**RO:** Our kids are the same way. They are used to hearing both languages so to them they speak both languages.

**BB:** Orlando doesn't use it as much as Patricia does, does he?

**RO:** No, he doesn't. He really doesn't but I force him to. I make him use it.

**BB:** He doesn't have any trouble understanding anybody, does he?

**RO:** No, he has no trouble at all. He understands perfectly well. You know, he may want you to think he doesn't, but he does. I fell like when he gets older he will start using it more...will care more about it because Patricia was like that when she was little. All she wanted to speak was English. She didn't care for Spanish, but eventually she started where she, in fact, she has learned to read a little bit of Spanish herself, and just like I say, just because you are Mexican does not mean you can read and write in Spanish. Because you can't. I have some of my sisters and brothers who can't at all. If you ask them to write something in Spanish they will tell you to go find somebody else and when I went to school in Edinburg, 90% of the teachers in South Texas are Mexican-Americans but they don't speak to you in Spanish. They speak to you in English. When I went to junior high, when I was in junior high in Edinburg I took a Spanish course three years, so I could learn the correct Spanish, read and write it. You have to practice it just like English, just like people who have never been to school. Give them a book and they can't read it in English doesn't necessarily mean because they are white they can do it, you know?

**BB:** That's right. But you know, we don't think anything about it. We talk English, you know. The kids start in fifth grade taking English as a subject and they take it for seven years so, of course, there are correct ways to do Spanish, too.

**RO:** And like I said, my family, I have a couple of sisters, well, two of them have taken Spanish in school to learn to read and write it but, Linda doesn't know how to read and write in Spanish, Rennie doesn't know how to read and write in Spanish, Reuben couldn't tell you anything in Spanish, you know, as far as reading and writing, because he has never practiced it. He has never had a course and the kind that is offered in school is what you would call "conversational Spanish," just to communicate with a person. What Reuben needs is like an English class but in Spanish.

**BB:** I think they will get that in high school really, from what I understand about it, because Teena Kellam teaches it. It's hard, she said. They come in thinking it is easy but it's not.

**RO:** It is not easy, not when you have to write theme papers in it, it is not easy at all.

**BB:** When you went to school here, were there any concessions for you being bi-lingual. I mean, say if somebody moved with you who could only speak Spanish, what happened to them in school? How did they cope with that? Of course, there weren't any in your group, were there?

**RO:** I don't remember, I don't think so. There was one young fellow named Amando Flores; he speaks good English now but he came to school here – I think he was in the seventh or eighth grade also at the time, and he had a hard time but he's a pretty smart fellow. He picked it up pretty fast.

**BB:** When did the bi-lingual program come in?

**RO:** To be exact, I think about, maybe eight years, something like that. I don't approve of it.

**BB:** Why? What are your reasons?

**RO:** My reasons are that when I went to school there was no such thing as bi-lingual, and like I said, 90% of the teachers were Mexican-American. 100% of the kids were Mexican-Americans and that's all we spoke, was English. We were not allowed anything in the classroom. We were allowed to use it on the playground but we were not allowed to use it in class and, to us, it was all right, it didn't bother us. To me, I feel like if a child is taught in English when he is in the kindergarten or first grade he learns a lot quicker than he does in Spanish. I wouldn't approve of it. If they told me my child had to go into a bi-lingual class I'd – I think I would have a fit.

**BB:** For you that's putting it mildly.

**RO:** Yes, I would hit the ceiling. To me, I don't think it is right.

**END OF INTERVIEW**