

Voices From the Past

The Spanish Speaking People Among
Us

By Agustin Gutierrez

February 27, 1982

Tape #4

Oral Interview conducted by Harold Forbush

Transcribed by Joel Miyasaki July 2003

Brigham Young University- Idaho

Harold Forbush: Mexican-Americans, Spanish speaking peoples among us. This is an initial tape. Interview with individuals who can share with me concerning the history of these peoples here in the Upper Snake River Valley. This is side one of tape one and this is an interview which I'm conducting with Mr. Agustin Gutierrez on the 27th day of February, 1982, here at Rexburg, Idaho. Now Augustine I'm going to ask you to give me and you pronounce in the Spanish way, your full name and give me the spelling of your surname.

Agustin Gutierrez: Okay, Agustin Gutierrez, this is my name, and I'm going to spell that: A-G-U-S-T-I-N G-U-T-I-E-R-R-E-Z.

HF: Now what is your present address?

AG: New Dale, Box 8.

HF: New Dale, Idaho, and how long have you lived in the New Dale area?

AG: Twenty-three years.

HF: Now what induced you to come? Well, let me ask this question: you are married?

AG: Yes, I'm married.

HF: And to who were you married?

AG: I married Candida Salazar.

HF: And that's a Spanish name?

AG: That's a Mexican-American name.

HF: A Mexican-American, okay, Spanish . . . ?

AG: Spanish name.

HF: And how many children have you had born here in the Upper Snake River Valley?

AG: We got five here from Rexburg and two from Texas.

HF: I see. Now were you married before coming to this Upper Valley?

AG: Yes, I married in Farr, Texas in the Catholic Church in 1955.

HF: In 55. And two of your children were born in Texas?

AG: Yes.

HF: And then five here in Rexburg?

AG: In Rexburg.

HF: Now, you were not born in the United States were you Agustin?

AG: No.

HF: Where were you born?

AG: Monterrey, Mexico.

HF: And is that near the Texas border?

AG: It's about 155 miles from the border, from Laredo.

HF: From Laredo, Texas?

AG: Texas.

HF: How—were you born into a large family?

AG: Yes my Dad was named Cesario Gutierrez and my mother Juanita Gonzalez. They had ten children. They're eight alive and two died when they were just babies.

HF: Did your parents bring you to Texas?

AG: Yes, they brought me when I was thirteen years old to Texas, and then from there we started coming in to work in these areas here. We came to Montana two years and then in 1950 we came to Rexburg, Idaho and we started working for Bob Frew.

HF: For Robert Frew?

AG: For Bob.

HF: Bob Frew?

AG: Bob Frew, And then . . .

HF: Now, were you initially, did you initially come to the United States and particularly up this way as a kind of a labor group?

AG: Yes.

HF: Mexican nationals?

AG: Yes. Well, my father, before we came to the United States--my father had his citizen papers for all of us and it's called passport. We got our passport and we was legal to be here in America.

HF: On a full time basis?

AG: Yes.

HF: So, when you came to Texas and settled in Texas in 19 . . .? What year?

AG: 1947.

HF: In 47, you came with a passport?

AG: Yes.

HF: And you didn't have to go back across?

AG: No.

HF: And you were allowed to remain here?

AG: Yes.

HF: And your mom and dad had full authority to remain here?

AG: Yes.

HF: Now, but that wasn't a citizenship?

AG: No, it was a passport to be here all the time as long as we want to live here.

HF: Did you later get your citizenship?

AG: Yes, yah I got my citizen papers, I think it was 1960 here in Rexburg.

HF: Before the District Court?

AG: Yes.

HF: I see. And did your wife do the same?

AG: My wife, she's a citizen for five generations.

HF: Oh, isn't that interesting. She's--in other words, her great-great-great grandparents were here?

AG: Yes.

HF: And so she and all those between were born here in the United States?

AG: That's right.

HF: Probably down in Texas or in the Southwest somewhere?

AG: In San Benito, Texas.

HF: I see.

AG: Right by Boswell, close to Mexico, close to the border.

HF: Now, and you're a citizen now and congratulations on that. I think that's wonderful!

AG: Thank you.

HF: Now, when did you first then come to Rexburg, Idaho?

AG: 1950.

HF: And you worked for Bob Frew?

AG: Right.

HF: Now how, let's see, 50, you would be 16 years of age?

AG: I was fifteen going on sixteen.

HF: Going on sixteen?

AG: I was born in 1935.

HF: Uh huh, in Monterrey?

AG: Right.

HF: Monterrey (pronounced incorrectly)

AG: Monterrey (pronounced correctly)

HF: What does that mean? Oh Monte, that's mountain isn't it?

AG: Yes, and then *rey* is king.

HF: King Mountain?

AG: King Mountain.

HF: Or something?

AG: That's right, that's right.

HF: I see. Now did you come here with your mom and dad?

AG: Yes, my father came with my wife's grandfather, here, and worked in the beets. And we just worked one year for Bob Frew and then we went--we come back in 51 and start working for Keith Clements.

HF: In Archer?

AG: In Archer.

HF: Why, what did he have you do?

AG: Work in the beets.

HF: In the beets?

AG: And help in the farm, working the hay, and most everything in there. He used us for labor.

HF: And this included yourself and your brothers and sisters?

AG: Yes.

HF: I see. And did you live right there, out there on the farm?

AG: Yes, we lived right by Keith, yes we lived . . .

HF: He provided the home?

AG: Right.

HF: How many members were there in the Gutierrez family?

AG: We was ten all together.

HF: Mom and Dad?

AG: My father and mother and I was the oldest and then seven more.

HF: Now, at that time in 1950, do you know of other families, Mexican families that lived in the area?

AG: I—they're not in here, but I used to know people. They used to come from San Antonio, Texas, from Hager Pass, from Hondle, Texas and really wonderful families. I still think about those families once and a while because we used to have a lot of fun getting together because there was just a few Mexican-Americans coming over this way and working in the farm. And you never forget those wonderful times that we had because we worked, we get together and we . . .

HF: But they weren't relatives?

AG: No they were just friends.

HF: Just friends?

AG: Yes.

HF: But none of those families are here?

AG: No.

HF: Now they would come here specifically for labor purposes?

AG: That's right.

HF: And they, during the summer months and then in the fall after the harvesting they would go back to Texas?

AG: Back to Texas.

HF: To Texas and work in the cotton?

AG: Yes, and vegetables like carrots and a lot of other things you know.

HF: Now, did your family ever go up to Driggs and pick peas up there?

AG: No, my family. You mean my father and mother?

HF: Uh huh.

AG: No, we never went there.

HF: None of you went up there to pick peas or work in the carrots or anything like that?

AG: No.

HF: Now there are some of these families that go up there specifically for that purpose?

AG: That's right.

HF: But they seem to be kind of itinerant laborers. You know, they go there for a few weeks when pea season is on and then they go where the potatoes are and where the beets are?

AG: That's right.

HF: Or earlier in the year they might go over to Caldwell and help in the picking of cherries?

AG: That's right.

HF: And then in the wintertime they go back to Texas to work in the carrots or picking cotton or whatever?

AG: Well, we used to do that to until 1957 and '58. I decided to stay here with my wife.

HF: So in '50, in the winters between '50 and '58, you people did leave then--your family?

AG: Yes, that's right.

HF: And you were just here during those summer months?

AG: That's right.

HF: From '50 to '57?

AG: '57, that's right.

HF: And then in 1958, you decided to stay here all the time?

AG: That's right.

HF: You had married by then?

AG: I was married, yes. When we stayed here, we stayed in '58, the fall of '58 and I started working for Harvey Swendiman in New Dale.

HF: And that's when you started living there in New Dale?

AG: That's right.

HF: What did Harvey have you doing?

AG: Well, Harvey put me to work in a warehouse, working in the potatoes. And me and seven other Mexican-Americans, we worked there. And we had a pretty good time there. They treat us pretty good there. I was really pleased because they really treat us real good. Because we work hard there and I guess anybody who work hard, nobody's going to complain about it.

HF: Now, these other seven companions were citizens?

AG: Yes.

HF: They had acquired citizenship like you had?

AG: Yes.

HF: At least papers?

AG: Right, passport.

HF: Passports to be here, so you had the necessary papers and now were these seven employees, your colleagues, were they married men?

AG: Yes, they had their wives and kids.

HF: Do any of them still live here?

AG: Yes, Candelario Garcia.

HF: Tell me a little about Candelario Garcia.

AG: Candelario and his wife, they're really a nice family. They're a little different then I am. I think they taught them the gospel of Jesus Christ, but they never accepted the gospel, but they got a really wonderful qualities. People, they work hard, they give their kids education, and I mean a lot of respect. I love those people.

HF: Was it quite a big family?

AG: Yes, well no, they had two boys and two girls.

HF: And those two boys and two girls have grown up and they live here do they pretty much?

AG: The oldest boy, he moved to Texas, he married and moved to Texas and he's been in the service.

HF: I see.

AG: He had his education, the degree, so he's a pretty good young man.

HF: But Candelario, does he still live up there?

AG: Yah, he still live up here in Rexburg.

HF: He would be then, quite an elderly man, wouldn't he?

AG: Yes, he's in the fifties and I see him once and a while because I just pass by driving the automobile and--but every time I see him, he's talked to me real good, real friendly, him and his wife.

HF: Now, do they own property or just work for labor?

AG: No, just work for labor. They work in the quality pack, in the warehouse up here in Rexburg for many years.

HF: I see. Incidentally since you've been there working for Harvey Swendiman for years and I guess his son in law in the family, Mr. Walters. Have you acquired--you have a home don't you?

AG: Yes, I work for a few winters for Harvey Swendiman. And then in the summer in 1958, excuse me, 1959, I start working for Grant Klingler and Darwin Klingler and I work for those people for 16 or 17 years and I feel really, really, proud to work for those people because they treat me like a brother. And I so grateful to say this and I'm proud of that family: the Klingler brothers in New Dale.

HF: Grant . . . ?

AG: And Darwin.

HF: And Darwin. I went to school with Grant in Sugar City. He is a good guy.

AG: You bet he's a good man.

HF: He was a bishop up there to wasn't he for a little while?

AG: Yes, he was my bishop.

HF: Was he?

AG: And he's my--he's a stake president, he's one of the counselors right now in Sugar City and I like that man. He's just a--Grant reminds me of President Kimball, and he is just really--he's short just like me, and you just can't help loving Grant. He's just really a wonderful man and this comes from my heart.

HF: Well, that's wonderful Agustin. Well now, have you acquired any land other than just your home?

AG: Well, I own this store right now in New Dale. I bought the store that Jay Robinson used to have. And that's the only store in town.

HF: Well now, before Jay Robinson had it, let's see, who were the former owners?

AG: I can't tell you.

HF: Don't you?

AG: When I came to New Dale in '58—why, Jay owned the store and I never

HF: That's the one?

AG: Yes, that's the one. Good man to.

HF: I see, and you own it now?

AG: Yes.

HF: Does your wife work in it?

AG: Yes, my wife run the store.

HF: I see

AG: And then I work in the spuds. I still work in the potatoes.

HF: And some of your patrons of course would be Mexican-Americans.

AG: Yes.

HF: You're keeping a good supply of beans.

AG: Yes. They're great people, and they have a great love for the American people. We call them gringos or white people. The American people would be surprised how much

respect and love we have for them. We don't show that. It's probably because we don't have the same culture, but we got love for these people. We want to be with these people. We love them.

HF: Do you feel that you have been well received by the people of this community?

AG: Oh yes, let me tell you something Harold. In 1951, when we meet Keith and Opal . . .

HF: Out in Archer?

AG: In Archer. My father, after we work in there for two-and-a-half/three months in there. He said, "Son, I want you to know that these are the best gringos I ever see in the United States. I want you to love them like your parents." And I did it. They're my father and mother. I love them with all of my heart.

HF: Now isn't that something?

AG: And my kids, they call them grandpa and grandma. And I want to tell you Harold that those people; they really believe that I'm their son, for the last thirty years, thirty-one years. I go and visit them like my father and mother. Because my father and mother, they moved to Texas and they never stay here. They just don't like the winters.

HF: Are they deceased? Are they dead now, your mom and dad?

AG: Mother, mother's still alive. My father's been dead since 1974.

HF: I see.

AG: So, I want to tell you that my Western parents is Keith Clements and Opal Clements and I love them with all my heart. That's my father and mother—American father and mother.

HF: I appreciate you saying that. Now what is your comment about the next person we have on this list who was up here before 1960? Andy Lopez?

AG: Andy, he's one of those guys that--he helped a lot of Mexicans. He's got a good quality, but he can't work you know, he hurt his back and what he do in his spare time is helping people, help the farmers to take some guys to work those Mexicans from Mexico. He helped me once in while, he call me in and he say, "Agustin you need some help, you need some of these guys from Mexico?" and I say yes, I need one or two or three or four, you know. And so, for myself, I say that he's a good man. He's got his habits, he drinks you know and all that, but he's got some good qualities.

HF: He's a real good coordinator, helping people who just arrived to get a job.

AG: Yah, and some people won't like him for many things, but it's just that some of us can get along with somebody else. That's all it is.

HF: Now, did the Lopez family come out of Mexico?

AG: No, they're coming from Texas.

HF: In other words, they've been Americans for a long time?

AG: For a long time, right.

HF: Does Andy have a big family?

AG: Yes, they got, I think there are six or seven.

HF: And some of these kids are grown up now to.

AG: Yes, they've grown up. Some of them, they--Andy Lopez Jr., he's been in a problem, a lot of times, but he's a good kid. He worked for me. And I'll tell you, he'll obey orders. He do anything that you ask him. The only bad thing about him is when he go and have party you know on Saturday why they get loaded and that's when they get in trouble.

HF: Do you think, Agustin, that the Mexican-Americans have a tendency to drink heavier then maybe the rest of the population?

AG: I say right now, Harold, the Mexicans, they're getting better. I don't know, maybe the Lord's making these people understand that those things are not good. They got more knowledge; they understand a little better that drinking is no good. I say that about the same right now, Americans and Mexicans.

HF: I see.

AG: Before, I say in 19 . . . , in the sixties, I say the Mexicans, they was worse and the Indians. But right now I can say they're about the same.

HF: I see. When you compare the skin coloration, for example, of the peoples out of Mexico like yourself or others coming here. Is your skin a little darker than white?

AG: Yes.

HF: Now of course, you know why I'm asking that?

AG: Yes.

HF: Because I don't see, but it's my understanding that the Mexican people of course are a cross between . . .?

AG: Spanish and Indian.

HF: The Spanish that came here with Cortez and Pizarro and some of those from Spain.

AG: That's right.

HF: And then married the natives.

AG: That's right.

HF: And so on. And they're a good people. I don't want you to think otherwise. I mean, you're a good people. Now we talk about a Maria Gonzalez who was a lady. Did she come here with a family or something?

AG: Yes, she came with her husband, is Rudy Gonzalez, the one who got into problems here well last year. Mary, she got shot from this man, her husband. But she came when this old man, Rodolfo Gonzalez came into Teton, and they're good people. Rodolfo was-- he moved to Texas, But he still—their son's here. The old man moved to Texas, but their sons are still here.

HF: I see.

AG: Pete Gonzalez is from Ashton, married an American girl. And they're doing pretty good working in the farm and they're progressing. You going to see that those families, some of them they already got kids in college. They finished high school and they're just like the Americans now.

HF: I see. Well now, in those early years you commented that you worked for Harvey Swendiman. He was just starting to become the potato king of Idaho?

AG: Uh huh.

HF: In the fifties wasn't he?

AG: Yes.

HF: And you worked for him and some of these others worked for him, what did he have you do?

AG: Well, we . . .

HF: Helped raise his potatoes?

AG: No, we work in the warehouse.

HF: Oh.

AG: We sacked a hundred pound bags and put them in a freight car. And we worked pretty hard in there.

HF: Really hard?

AG: But we never complained because they treated us pretty nice there.

HF: Your wages were comparative to the gringos, or the whites?

AG: They was just the same.

HF: Just the same?

AG: Just the same. They pay us—I don't see any difference. That's why we started working for Harvey, we was getting the same wages. We never got any less money then the gringos. They pay us just the same.

HF: Did they provide a home in which to rent?

AG: No, we rent homes. Some of these people live in Teton and I moved—I stay in Teton for three or four months and then I move to New Dale and I buy me a home there and that's where I stay.

HF: Okay, now, later on you had commented that you worked for Grant Klingler for some sixteen years?

AG: Sixteen or seventeen years.

HF: Sixteen or seventeen years. Now you've come to know some other people from I guess, Mexico. Ismael Gonzalez, was, who was he? Was he another family member of that family or a different family?

AG: A different family. Gonzalez, Ismael Gonzalez is my relative. He came up here and they live in Plano.

HF: Uh huh.

AG: They live in Plano, him and a bunch of brothers and sisters and when I joined the church I went over there to teach the Sunday school in Plano and that's where I meet these people. And by talking to those families, I find out that they're my mother's second-cousins.

HF: Oh. . .

AG: So I feel pretty good about it because when they was coming from Dalter Gonzalez close to Monterrey Mexico; that's where my mother was born and then they told me that they knew my grandfather. And then they said that there was this uncle. So we find out that we was relatives. And Ismael Gonzalez is a pretty good man.

HF: You know I've noticed, one of the rather unique features, characteristics of the Mexican-American people is they have a very close feeling and kinship one for another. You know: we're cousins, you're uncles, this is my cousin. And you're proud of the fact that he's your cousin.

AG: Oh yes.

HF: This is my uncle or this is my aunt and you're proud of that fact.

AG: Oh yes, poor or rich, we're proud.

HF: You're close-knit; you're family oriented aren't you?

AG: Yes, yah we love one another. You hear a lot of problems. Once in a while they have fights. But that's when they're drinking you know. But when everything is sober, we're close together and we love one another and I guess that's the way—we're brought up that way. That culture has been for years and years that we're proud of our ancestors.

HF: How about Jesus Acedo.

AG: Jesus Acedo, he came from Sonora, He came from Sonora and he came and helped me work in a farm for Greg Klingler. And that's where I got to be a friend and to be his boss, you know.

HF: Did you encourage him to come up here?

AG: Yes, well, no he just came up here by himself.

HF: I see.

AG: And he started out working for Grant and we like him, and he's really a good citizen he tries to do the best he can to be a good citizen here.

HF: Doe he have a family?

AG: Yes, he's got a family.

HF: There are quite a few Acedos then?

AG: Well, he got four kids. He's got one girl, the oldest girl and three boys. And I think the girl; she's only twelve years old, twelve or thirteen years old.

HF: Comparatively young family then?

AG: Young family, that's right.

HF: And do they still do farm work?

AG: They still--he work in the timber in the summer, and then he work in the spuds for me.

HF: Oh, I see.

AG: And the potato cellar.

HF: Okay, I guess we've talked about Rodolfo Gonzalez haven't we?

AG: Yes.

HF: And he was Mary's—Maria's cousin?

AG: Yes.

HF: And he's gone back, he isn't here.

AG: No, Rudy is in jail right now.

HF: I see.

AG: His father is the one; Rudy's father went to Texas. The boys are still around.

HF: The boys are still around?

AG: Yes.

HF: Okay, there's another name here that you gave me, Tony Partiz.

AG: Partiz, yah. He came in the sixties. He worked for Remington, Keith Remington and Jerry Remington.

HF: I see.

AG: He worked in there probably for fifteen years. And he's been a good citizen. He's a good man. He raised his family here and gave them an education to the kids just like the

Americans. And my feeling for him is great because he never in all the time that I see him--he talk to me nice and he's a great man. He's a really good man.

HF: And he has kids growing up then.

AG: Yes.

HF: And educated. Okay, another one here who I know personally lives over in Sugar City: Domingo Vella.

AG: Yes.

HF: What can you tell me about him, when did he come to the area?

AG: Domingo Vella, he came in the sixties, late in the part of the sixties. He came to New Dale; he was working in Driggs picking peas.

HF: Was he?

AG: And he came in there and he never thinks that there was a family, a Mexican-American family there. He just moved there because he want to stay for the winter and he had a large family, but one day, probably about two or three weeks after he moved to New Dale, His older son, he, came in here and talked to me and he was pretty happy to see another Mexican-American there in that little town. And then from there, we started to visit one another. And then the church, the Mormon Church, you always have a job to do by teaching the gospel to those who are not members so I was a stake missionary in that time and I went to see Domingo Vella and tried to teach him the gospel. And some of the kids, some of the children joined the church, and later on he joined the church and that's all I know about Domingo. He's a good friend and a good citizen. He's been in the service and I believe he'd do anything for the country because you can't tell anything bad about this country because you've got a rebellious Mexican-American there. He loves the country. He loves the country.

HF: Oh, I see. Well that's, that's good. Now there's another one Tony Roguelas.

AG: He came in the sixties. Roguelas, he came and moved to Teton and he stay there for a while. Then later on he got to be a friend of mine and we taught him the gospel and he—most all the family, in fact all the family joined the church—the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. And I was there teaching the gospel to them to. Where I feel pretty good because some of the families that I visit, they're good quality people and they want to follow the Lord's way.

HF: All of your family are members of the church?

AG: Oh yes.

HF: You have a son on a mission don't you now?

AG: Yes, right now I got a son in Spain. Yah, Gilbert Gutierrez. He's in Spain and my oldest son

HF: Leon?

AG: Leon, we call him Leon, his name is Agustin Leonardo Gutierrez. He went on a Spanish mission in Arizona in Phoenix.

HF: I see. Did he marry a local girl?

AG: He marry a girl from Ashton, American girl, Jones' girl.

HF: I see. Has there been quite a lot of integration of the Spanish speaking peoples coming from Mexico or South America, coming in here and marrying you know gringos, or American girls?

AG: Yes, they're getting a little better. Say ten years ago, a lot of these Mexicans come up here and they want to marry an American girl just to get citizen papers. Now, they're getting serious because we've been telling a lot of these people that these girls, they really care for marriage and to have family. Not just for a little while. They marry for love, and not just for a little while and then these guys leave them up here and they go back to Mexico or some other place. And I've been helping quite a bit of those people. I just tell them, "Listen, what do you think if some of the Americans go there to Mexico and marry some those Mexican girls for a little while just to get the citizen papers and then leave those after they get the citizen papers. I guess it's not right." And I make them understand with good words. I mean I don't want to hurt anybody. And this has been helping in this area now that some of these boys that marry, they stay with their wives.

HF: I see. Well, let's see, going on just a minute or two more on these names is Cesar Sanchez. Where does Brother Sanchez live?

AG: He lives in Sugar City; I meet him about four or five years ago in the church. And the reason I put this man's name here is just because he's really a great man. I can say that he's just one of us because he loves people, he loves the American people very much and he's clean. He's really a special man.

HF: Are there many in his family?

AG: I think he's got a girl and a boy. That's all he's got and his wife.

HF: I see. And they are members of the church to?

AG: Yes, they're members of the church.

HF: And active?

AG: Yes.

HF: I see. And what kind of work does he do?

AG: He work in the site, up here in Arco. He works, I don't know what he do Harold, but he's working over there. He's got a good job.

HF: I see. An educated man?

AG: An educated man, right. That's where my boy works.

HF: Where did he come from?

AG: He come from Guatemala.

HF: From Guatemala?

AG: Yes.

HF: Within the last ten years?

AG: Yes. I say from I think eight or nine years. I think he used to live in San Antonio, Texas. And then they move up here and I meet him in a hospital here in Rexburg. I think he had somebody sick in there and I meet him and his wife Eden in that snack bar in the hospital. And I thought they was Mexican-Americans and I went and talked to them. And well, I think all the Latins they're always saying we're all mixed with the same blood: Indian and Hispanic. So we're just the same. I love them very much.

HF: I have become acquainted with a Victor Mendoza. I think he lives here in Rexburg.

AG: Uh huh.

HF: Are you familiar and knowledgeable about him?

AG: I don't know too much about Victor. Now, he don't want to be too friendly with me because I guess he's just a little afraid that I'm teaching the gospel. He don't want to get in that area—in that direction. There's, excuse me, there's another man that I'm thinking right now; he's Iliberto Paredes. He lives in St. Anthony. He's coming from Chile.

HF: How long has he been over in St. Anthony?

AG: He's been in St. Anthony. I think more than ten years. He came in the late. . .

HF: Sixties.

AG: Sixties, right. And he's a good man, good citizen. He got his citizen papers. His wife went to Chile mission and I guess that's where they meet. They call him Tito, Tito Paredes. He fixes televisions. He's got a store over there, a television store.

HF: Are you familiar with the name Jimenez?

AG: Jimenez?

HF: Uh huh.

AG: I heard about it, but I don't. . .

HF: But you don't know?

AG: I don't know Harold.

HF: I see. Okay, and then we talked a little about the Pacheco family but you're not too familiar with them.

AG: No, I know the boys. We talk once and a while. I don't say anything wrong about those boys. They always, when they come and talk to me—that's just once and a while. They treat me real good.

HF: I see. How about the Chavez? Do you know any Chavez's?

AG: Chavez, Yes I know a guy that used to work up here in the police. Chavez, I think his name was Chavez. Pretty good people, I believe they was pretty nice people.

HF: I see. Well we considered quite a few names here. Do you call to mind any other family names that we haven't talked about that you particularly are acquainted with?

AG: There is a few.

HF: Now, Agustin, what is the nature of your work, your employment?

AG: Well, we work in the potatoes. That's where I make my living. I hire some people to work in these cellars. I've got my own equipment to work in there.

HF: What communities would this be?

AG: I work in the Hamer area, Roberts, Idaho Falls, Shelley and then New Dale and Ashton. I don't do very much in the St. Anthony area, but that's where I work.

HF: You put men there who—some of these families there, we have been talking about, are some of your employees, some of your men?

AG: Yes.

HF: And I guess a lot of them are men that have just come in from Mexico and so on, wanting work.

AG: That's right. They come up here to my store and ask for work. And if I need them, I use them, I say that half of those people, they're Mexican, from Mexico.

HF: Without papers?

AG: Without papers, that's right.

HF: I see. You have any feelings about these people. I guess they're good workers to, aren't they?

AG: That's right Harold, they're a good people. They're easy to get along with. I think they're a lot easier than Mexican-Americans because the Mexican-Americans are just the same as the Americans. I could say, call them gringos. But they're a lot easier because they really, they really want to work. I mean they're really hungry for work.

HF: Because they have families to support maybe back in Mexico?

AG: That's right. Ninety percent of those people, I'd say they're that come and are willing to do anything you ask and they're really good, hardworking people.

HF: What age group do you find? Any kids—any under eighteen come up here?

AG: Not very many. Most all those people, they come around 21, 25 and 40, 45, and even 50 year old people come up here and work. And you ask for their families and they say, well I got them in school. I'm trying to see that my family make a little better then me by coming up here. They'd sure like to stay in Mexico but they have to have more of an occasion to get the better jobs over there.

HF: Of course we know that the influx, particularly of the illegals out of Mexico coming to the United States constitutes a tremendous problem of aliens here. I don't know how to resolve this wetback problem. Do you have any thoughts on the subject?

AG: Well, we need these people in the summer. All the farmers here in these places, I say in this country, they need these people to work because the Mexican-Americans and the Americans, they got better jobs. They kind of like to work in the cities and to make a little more money than what they pay in the farms. And we need these people, these people; we need them in the farms. And they got agriculture jobs.

HF: Well, would you say that maybe some type of a written authorization or permit or something like this would be helpful to allow them to come for a limited period of time?

AG: I think that's what we need Harold, is to have some people in charge of these people to all these farmers. Say we had an office here in Rexburg and have a man that can ask for help for all these farmers and they can get a permit say for six months or seven months. Then when that permit is done, they can go back to Mexico and it's not going to cost them very much to go back. They're legal, they're going to have a permit, and in the meantime it's going to help the country here—the farmers. Because they need that people; they need that kind of help.

HF: Well now as we come to a close of this tape. I'd like to ask you a little about your affiliation with the Mormon Church. I suppose you've become accepted; you've been active in the church. Were you involved in a branch administration over there in the North Rexburg Stake?

AG: Yes, I was the branch president in that branch. When they started we have a man that I love him very much. His name was Douglas Pincock from Sugar City, but he's dead now. He was the president. And I think a year/year-and-a-half after they'd put him on there in the branch to be the president of the branch, then they called me for that job where I accepted. And we had, we had a good time.

HF: About what year was that branch established?

AG: It was in 1970. When they started in 1975, they dissolved the branch. They decided that we better have the Mexicans to get together with the Anglos where the Anglos work hard to try to get these Mexicans at church. But a lot of these Mexicans by not having the facilities that they had (the gringos) like clean clothes because they work in the farm, in the fields, in the mud. They're just timid. They don't want to go to church. Anglos are clean, they got good clothes, and that's my feeling about these people.

HF: I see. It wasn't the language barrier particularly then.

AG: Yes, it's part of that to, Harold. I always had a feeling that they people, they had to be taught in his own language so they understand what they're talking about. So they know the organization of the church. I always think about that. And the Americans, in this area, they don't speak very much Spanish. And they don't know the culture. And you got to know the culture of these people and then after they've converted and they know that they've got a testimony of the church, they know that you're my brother, they're not going to be any difference than an Anglo or the Mexicans or the people from South or Central.

HF: Well now, when that branch continued up there in New Dale and you were the president of the branch, were all of the services conducted in the Spanish language?

AG: Yes, this branch, we had it up here in Rexburg. We had it up here in the seminary close to the Tabernacle. We had this branch in there. We started in Sugar City in the seminary, but we had all the meetings in Spanish. We had all the programs in Spanish.

HF: Now they've dissolved that?

AG: Yes.

HF: Why did they do that in Rexburg there in the seminary buildings?

AG: I think it came from Salt Lake, Harold, and I quarreled for a little while—I was against that, but when they come from the General Authorities why there's nothing you can do. They're close to the Lord. And those inspirations/revelations come from the Lord. And I can't say anything.

HF: Were you attending quite regularly there, Rexburg?

AG: Yes, every Sunday, yes.

HF: And all that was in Spanish, was it?

AG: All in Spanish yes.

HF: And you had three meetings, in other words, the sacrament meeting, Priesthood meeting, Sunday school, primary, the whole bit?

AG: yes.

HF: The whole program?

AG: Yah, the whole program, yes.

HF: Now, they've started a new group now. Will you tell me about that?

AG: Yes Harold. We started one up here in Nineteenth Ward. Bishop Thompson, John Thompson he's the bishop. We're under him right now and our president, they asked President Gary Case, he work in the college and he's a great man, I love him very much, and I'm his clerk.

HF: You're his secretary

AG: Yes, and at the same time I'm one of his counselors because he don't have any counselors because we're under Bishop Thompson. And they started about six weeks ago, or seven weeks.

HF: Just right after the first of the year then?

AG: Yes, and we're doing great there. We've started getting more Mexican-Americans there and Mexicans from Mexico into the church. And the people here, the Mormon people, they doing the best they can to make this go. To make these people understand

that God love us and trying to give those blessings to those people. They need those blessing from our Heavenly Father.

HF: Now, is it all conducted in Spanish?

AG: Yes.

HF: What hours do you meet then?

AG: We start at one o'clock Harold and we start priesthood meeting at one o'clock and Sunday school at two. And then at three we start Sacrament Meeting.

HF: I see. About how many do you have attending?

AG: Right now we have from twenty-five to thirty people and it's only seven weeks. So we gaining. We started with just a few there and we gaining.

HF: I see. And they coming from New Dale?

AG: They coming from—we got four stakes Harold.

HF: So they all come from the four stakes?

AG: Yes.

HF: I see. You don't have any coming in from other stakes then?

AG: No.

HF: Jefferson County?

AG: I don't know which four stakes they got, but this is what I heard.

HF: That they come from the four stakes then, from this region?

AG: Yes. So that's all I can tell you about that because all those four stakes—the persons of those stakes are in favor to see this branch progress and grow.

HF: Would you like to hazard a suggestion as to how many Spanish speaking or Mexican-Americans live in these four stakes?

AG: Oh, I'd say in these four stakes up here I believe there's about a hundred and fifty or two hundred Mexicans--maybe more. I don't want to say. . .

HF: So potentially if you have a goodly percentage of them attend, why you'd have quite group over there eventually?

AG: That's right Harold.

HF: But you think maybe upwards of two hundred potential members.

AG: Yes.

HF: Do you have any idea how many members you have right now?

AG: Right now we got--the purpose for this, Harold, is to bring the Mexicans from Mexico, those Mexican families that are around this area. That we teach them the gospel and when they accept the gospel and go where the Anglos are, they're lost, they don't know what they're talking about because they don't understand any English. And this is the purpose for this branch: to help these Mexican families from Mexico, to teach them the organization of the church.

HF: But rather than having a man like yourself at the head of it. They have one of our local men, brethren, heading the branch?

AG: Yah.

HF: Brother Case?

AG: Yes, they got Brother Case there. You know that the Mormon is to be called from the Lord from the Lord to do their duties in the church. And I believe President Case, I believe with all my heart, that he's a special man for the Lamanites, for the Latin Americans.

HF: Are you often referred to as the Lamanites?

AG: Yes, I say Lamanites because we got part of that blood. The Spanish and the Indians were mixed together and I know I got Indian blood so I say that I'm probably a Lamanite.

HF: And quite often they're referred to as Latin Americans?

AG: Yes, they call them Latins because they speak the Spanish language. That's why they call them that way

HF: Right, now as we close is there any further comments that you have.

AG: I don't think so; I think we cover just about all this time. And I'm glad that you call me for this information; a bit of history that I know of this community up here. I love-- I've got a great love for the people of this area, "Jack-Mormons" and good Mormons. I want to tell you and all those Catholics to. Because they're good people, just they need to be taught the gospel of Jesus Christ. I know that if we help one another, the color of skin

isn't going to make any difference from now on because all my family marry Americans, Anglos. I got five married; they all pick an Anglo, an American.

HF: Is that right?

AG: Yes, my girls marry all Americans. So I'm really proud to have that family with me. I know they already meet in the presence of God before they came up here and they're great people. I think we had problems before because we don't understand one another. But now that we understand one another, things is going to get better. Our kids, your kids, they's just the same. They're children of God. I'm glad you call me Harold.

HF: You're a good man Agustin. You are. You got a great spirit. Thank you so much.

HF: The following proper names were submitted heading families that are mentioned: Candelario Garcia, Andy Lopez, Maria Gonzalez and these people apparently were known by Agustin before 1960 who had come up here and were working maybe for Harvey Swendiman, etc.

Then he gives a list of those after 1960: Ismael Gonzalez, Jesus Acedo, Rodolfo Gonzalez, Toni Partiz, Domingo Vella, Toni Robles

and those coming apparently after 1970 were of who Agustin is aware is Cesar Sanchez and Victor Mendoza are the two names and there undoubtedly are others.