

Tape 19: Interview with Frank Romero

Interviewer: Helen Krische

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Helen Krische (Interviewer): And this is basically a consent form. And um, sign right there. And I'm Helen Krische and this is Heather Bolyer.

Heather Bolyer: Hi.

HK: I don't know if you know any of the Krisches.

Frank Romero (Interviewee): [Murmurs.] Yes, how is he doing?

HK: Well, you know I haven't really talked to him.

FR: You haven't?

HK: [laughs] I haven't had a chance to –

FR: You sound like my family.

HK: Really keeping me busy.

FR: Yeah, there is twelve of us living [murmurs].

HK. Okay. Now, first thing I need you to do is write your name here. And this basically gives the museum permission to use the tape in both the video and the audio tape. And we have to do some other things. Right here, it says if you want, this one is if you don't have any restrictions on the use of the information and down here is if you do have restrictions and what those restrictions are. You can X, put an X by either one of those. Down here is your contact information. Sign, sign once again there and then your address. [long pause] A copy of this will also probably go to the Kansas State Historical Society. Um, because we will eventually ask them for a grant to transcribe the tape. And usually when we do something like that they want you know copies of, so...that, but for the most part it will be used for research purposes either that or else or used as exhibits for publications perhaps. There has not been anything written in Lawrence Mexican-American when they do a publication, and you know, like during the interview if there is any time that you want to stop and take a break or, you know you want to stop it completely and don't want to talk any more to me that's fine too, if you don't want to answer any of my questions, that's fine too. You know, just say I don't want to answer that. That is cool with me. So, all right?

FR: All right.

HK: Okay, and we will give you a copy of the consent form too before you leave. I'll give this to Heather. Heather is a witness on this too. [HK laughs] All right. First of all, the questions that I usually ask are about your parents, and where they came from in Mexico. If you know their names and when they first came to the United States.

FR: Well my dad's brother, my dad's name was Gonzolo [unintelligible] and my mother was named [unintelligible] Ramirez, and my dad's uh, mother, and her last name was Rivas. I don't know that we kept...this is when they celebrated their 75th wedding anniversary.

HK: 75th?

FR: Yeah.

HK: Wow.

FR: Like I said, my dad was born in Veracruz, Mexico in 1904. He moved to the United States at age seven. And my mother was born in Mexico City in 1908, and she came to the United States at age fourteen. They were married April the 2nd, 1924 in Topeka. And the couple moved to Humboldt in 1939, and they have lived in Lawrence since 1943.

HK: Wow.

FR: And these, they are the parents of Jimmy Hernandez, Frank Romero, Tony Romero, Peter Romero, Gonzalo Jr. Romero, Becky Stevens, Rick Romero - all of Lawrence. Then they had Tina Guerrero, Alberta Gutierrez, Teresa Martinez, and Laurie Aguilar (sp?) - all of Topeka. Their son Joe Romero is deceased. They have 39 grandchildren, 49 great-grandchildren, and 7 great-[great?] grandchildren. And Gonzalo Romero retired in 1969 from the Santa Fe Railroad after 46 years of service. And then my mother Melina used to homemaker.

HK: Oh.

FR: Kinda tells you their story.

HK: Yeah, it sure does. How many children were there altogether?

FR: Uh, thirteen.

HK: Thirteen.

FR: And Joe, he - he died.

HK: Mm-hmm. And where are you in the birth order?

FR: I'm second.

HK: You're second?

FR: Yeah. Jimmy is first. I'm second.

HK: Okay.

FR: [Murmurs] And out of the, out of – out of the six sons that they had, four of them served in the United States Service. The Army.

HK: Oh. Is that WWII?

FR: Frank, during the Korean War - that's me. And Peter, and then Joe, and Gonzalo Jr. served in Vietnam. That's about, uh – and they crossed the border, and I think my dad said they paid either 10 cents or 25 cents.

HK: To cross the border?

FR: To cross the border from Laredo.

HK: Oh, okay.

FR: Back in 1910 it was. And, uh, then they say, he told me that, uh, they lived in, kind of, barracks there till they were assigned what to [unintelligible] – where to come to.

HK: Uh-huh.

FR: They came to, uh, Lawrence, Kansas.

HK: So he joined the Santa Fe Railroad right away?

FR: Yeah.

HK: Yeah. Did they recruit him while he still lived in Mexico, or...?

FR: I think so, or they were looking for workers and laborers and they'd cross the border. [Murmurs] from there they would ship 'em, ship 'em [murmurs].

HK: Uh-huh, uh-huh.

FR: He worked for [murmurs].

HK: So did he, did he live in, uh, the Santa Fe apartments?

FR: Right, here in Lawrence.

HK: And you all did, did you...?

FR: Well, till we grew up and went our own way, where we grew up. A good playhouse there. [HK laughs] A good playground.

HK: You always had lots of –

FR: We had a lot of company there. All kids of all ages.

HK: Uh-huh.

FR: And, the, the good part about it – it was only about a block away from, uh, [laughs] from the dump. And whenever we needed a toy or anything else, we'd go over there and find toys or – or find wood to make toys with. Like I say, we had a lot of, uh, lot of children there, our age. And, uh, we had hills, we'd make caves in the hills. We had trees, climb trees and make slings – cut, cut, you know, slingshots there. Yeah, we had a – had a good time. And I, um, went to school. When I first started kindergarten, I didn't even know how to speak English. [Murmurs] I remember very clearly, I remember asking my cousin to tell the teacher when I wanted to go to the bathroom [both laugh]. So, that's uh, that's [murmurs]. We had good times. There, the, uh Chavez boys [murmurs] the picture of section houses. Pretty similar to what it used to be.

HK: Uh-huh.

FR: I don't know if anybody's ever brought the pictures up here.

HK: Yeah. Huh-uh. I haven't seen it.

FR: Well, I'll tell you what, when I, when I leave here, I'll think about it. It's – it's quite large.

HK: Oh, okay.

FR: It's, uh, it's, uh...that's where we all came from.

HK: Yeah. Well, maybe we can take a picture of it with the camera. And that'll be –

FR: Kind of [murmurs].

HK: Okay. That would be fantastic.

FR: I think this is, uh, Frankie Chavez.

HK: Oh, okay. What do you remember about the apartments? How were they –

FR: Well –

HK: Laid out, or – ?

FR: Well, they was laid out in a row. Two rows. And, um, everybody that lived there, they had, um, two or three rooms. So, and, uh...it was big enough, long enough to raise quite a few families in there.

HK: Uh-huh.

FR: So, they'd put families in there, got – they had two rooms or three rooms. There was a lot of families in there.

HK: Uh-huh.

FR: And, uh, like I said...it had outdoor toilets. And then, uh, before the dump filled everything up there in the back, we had a lake up there.

HK: Oh.

FR: It wasn't a very, very big lake, but it was a good-sized pond. And, uh, in the wintertime it would freeze up, and we'd, uh, we'd go out there and play ice hockey.

HK: Uh-huh.

FR: We'd try to fish, there was some fish, [murmurs]. Awful [both laugh]. [Murmurs]

HK: Uh-huh.

FR: Like I say, in 1951 the flood come through there. I was in the service at the time. But the city, they had filled it up twice... Third time.

HK: How did they heat, heat the apartments in the winter time?

FR: Uh, wood stoves.

HK: Wood stoves.

FR: Yeah. The, uh, the guys that worked on the railroad, they'd, uh, bring the old ties. They had big stacks of 'em. And at certain times of the year they'd, uh, they...they'd get, they had some kind of uh, a saw that they hooked up to a back tire of a Model T with. And it had a big blade on it. And, uh, they'd cut these, the ties. And, uh...to, uh, it was big enough for the, for your stoves. We'd put 'em on [unintelligible]. During the day, when they were leavin' we'd chop these blocks [murmurs] size sticks. That was our heating for a long time. I remember we had coal, we used coal quite a bit. I remember laying in bed and laying on the sofa when my bed was [unintelligible]. I'd wait till early in the mornings. Mother would get up and I'd lay in bed and just kind of laid back till she'd get a fire burning, burning. [both laugh] It was something else.

HK: What did she cook on? What did your mom –

FR: She had a wood stove. The old-time wood stoves. She was always cooking, [murmurs] every Monday, every Monday was washing day. Well, not only her but all the people - all the women that lived in the yards there would only wash on Monday. [Murmurs] wood stove and big tubs, put 'em up there and heat the water and, uh, get to washing clothes. The clothesline poles in the back. Those clothesline poles were dangerous.

HK: Yeah. Yeah.

FR: Because [laughs] as kids we used to play hide and seek, and at night time, at night time we'd run down through there and if somebody would forget to put one of the sticks up that hold the wire up –

HK: Clothesline you?

FR: Choke.

HK: So, when the women did the laundry, it was all, it was like a cooperative effort, they all came together?

FR: No, no, everybody was in front of their apartments.

HK: Oh, okay.

FR: Little, a little, in front of the [unintelligible] yard there, there was a good-sized yard, most of them. [Murmurs] going through the yards and [scratching sounds, murmuring]. It seemed like everybody wanted to wash on Mondays.

HK: Okay. So, did they, um, did they have one huge pot of boiling water, or did they each have their own?

FR: No, they – everybody had their own.

HK: Oh, okay. Okay. Yeah. How did they get their water?

FR: They had a – an old pump. Crank it, and water would come out.

HK: Mm-hmm. Was that City water, or, do you know?

FR: I hope so. [both laugh]

HK: Do you know?

FR: I think so. It was pretty clear. Nobody, no one ever died from it. [HK laughs]

HK: I guess that's a good sign.

FR: It must've been city water.

HK: Did your parents raise a garden during the summertime?

FR: Oh, yeah. Everybody raised a garden. Everybody raised a garden. Alongside the railroad tracks. [Murmurs] We always [had/hired?] some guy, come through with a horse and plow, plow all that up, everybody had to [murmurs]? My dad [murmurs].

HK: Someone mentioned that they used to have guards around the garden so that people wouldn't steal.

FR: Mmmm...No.

HK: No?

FR: No, I think somebody was thinking about, uh, back there in the war years, they had a prisoner of war camp across the railroad tracks.

HK: Uh-huh.

FR: And they had guards there. They had German prisoners there.

HK: Uh-huh.

FR: But, uh, that was something else too. [murmurs].

HK: Did you ever interact with the prisoners?

FR: No, but you could see 'em out there playing basketball. They would go out during the day and work.

HK: Uh-huh.

FR: [Murmurs] I never heard.

HK: So did – did the kids do anything, uh, for entertainment other than ice hockey and...and dumpster diving? [laughs]

FR: Well, like I say, we had those hills there, and, uh, [murmurs] birds [murmurs]. We'd dig holes in the – in the hillsides and make caves, and every once in a while we'd get a cave – cave in on us.

HK: [laughs] Did you swim at all?

FR: Uh, the only time we'd swim was in the river.

HK: Okay. On the sandbars?

FR: Uh...yeah, yeah.

HK: That's pretty dangerous.

FR: Oh, tell me about it. There was about three – about four of us out there, and we started diving off the sandbars [murmurs] to the middle of the river [murmurs]. And I dived off. And I hit the bottom.

HK: Oh.

FR: Yeah. The sand [murmurs] the current got hold of me. I thought I was gone. One of the guys was, seeing that I was in trouble down there, he grabbed me and pulled me out. I never went back in.

HK: That was enough for you, huh? [laughs]

FR: That was it.

HK: Did anyone ever drown there, or...?

FR: Uh, there was a little boy. I think he was, uh, one of the Mendoza boys. [Murmurs].

HK: Got caught up in the current.

FR: Well, he – he kinda, it kind of, the river was up and [unintelligible].

HK: Uh-huh

FR: He went swimming back there in the back [murmurs].

HK: Well, what would happen if anyone became ill? Was, uh, did they go get the doctor, or did your mom do home remedies?

FR: Uh, Dad, Mom would, uh, wake up Dad, and Dad would do up...uh...sometimes he'd go somewhere to some house where they had a telephone. [murmurs, back there in the yards?] Any time of night he would come. [Murmurs] Seemed like had a satchel had all kinds of pills in it [murmurs] give you a pill and [murmurs] got well.

HK: Yeah. Was, do you know if he was, like, contracted by the railroad to be the primary doctor?

FR: No, I don't think so.

HK: Or – or was it just who the people chose?

FR: Yeah, yeah. [Murmurs] He had his, uh, I think he had his office behind, on the corner [murmurs].

HK: Did you as children get to go to town very much, or...?

FR: Uh [clears throat] we went to, uh, [murmurs]. See the [murmurs]. I don't even remember how much it cost. [Murmurs] I mean, today's standard.

HK: Yeah. Yeah.

FR: But every Saturday [murmurs].

HK: Did you experience any prejudice when you went into town, or...?

FR: Oh, I kind of [murmurs] Mexican family. Place up at North, North Third street [murmurs] I think it's called [murmurs]. To top it off, now it's owned by uh, a Mexican family now. [both laugh] We stood –

HK: Kind of ironic.

FR: We went, we went in there, stood in line [murmurs] and finally got to where, you know, they give you a chair, or a table, to sit, and then they said "No, we can't serve you, can't serve Mexicans." So, we came out [unintelligible].

HK: Sure.

FR: So it happened that the guy that owned the, uh, the manager at that time, his mother used to work at the post office, that's where I was working. But she never mentioned it and I never [murmurs].

HK: Huh.

FR: [Murmurs, pretend?]

HK: Yeah. Where did you go to school at?

FR: Uh, New York.

HK: New York School. And did you, um, what was that like?

FR: Uh, I went to school till the, uh, fourth grade.

HK: Okay.

FR: Then, uh, my dad, uh, transferred into [murmurs], they had a reduction [murmur] section. So we had to transfer into Humboldt. We stayed in Humboldt for almost three years.

HK: Mm-hmm.

FR: And when I came back, when we came back, I was in ninth grade at that time.

HK: Did you go to the high school here, or...?

FR: Yeah, I went to...

HK: Liberty Memorial?

FR: Liberty Memorial, yeah. After [murmurs, granddaughter].

HK: Oh.

FR: She went to [murmurs] high school.

HK: Uh-huh, uh-huh, so did everything look familiar to you?

FR: It's all, it's all [murmurs].

HK: Uh-huh.

FR: [Murmurs] Yeah, I used to live in the yard, what they called section housing.

HK: Uh-huh.

FR: When I was going to Central, I used to, they'd give you an hour at twelve o' clock, [murmurs] run back and we used to run from Central back to the yard, and eat, and run back to Central. I used to make [murmurs]. Every once in a while, I'd [murmurs]. Jump on his bike [murmurs]. The hard time was when the weather [murmurs].

HK: Yeah. Did, um, did your mom do a lot of sewing when you were little, and making your clothes, or...?

FR: Oh, yeah, she, uh, well, I had to uh...I had to, uh, I had a – two pair of pants and, uh, two shirts and one I wore one day and then I'd wash, especially when I was got to where I was admiring girls.

HK: Yeah [laughs].

FR: I had to wash – I had to wash that fast, that shirt at night. You know, and have the - have the other one ready.

HK: Uh-huh. Did she make, uh, dresses, the dresses for the girls in the family?

FR: Uh, I – I guess she did. I guess she did. I remember when I was going to – I started working over at, uh, at, uh, Woolworth. I was about, uh, tenth grade. I got enough money – during the war years, we had to have, you had to have stamps to buy, to be able to buy a bike. Anyway, I bought, I saved enough money to get me a bike, and, uh, that's what [murmurs], if I was going to finish high school, that's what I would need. [Murmurs].

HK: So, you're pretty industrious.

FR: Well... [Helen laughs] I, uh, it seemed like I always wanted to make something of myself.

HK: Yeah.

FR: When I got out of school, I, uh, I went to work for the railroad.

HK: The Santa Fe also?

FR: Yeah, no, I went to, it was Union Pacific. And...uh, I met uh [murmurs] Bertha Bermudez? Her dad worked on the railroad. We had, let's see, a section going, going towards the [murmurs]. He stopped and talked to me. Her dad said: "Do you go to school?" I says: "Yeah," I says, "I graduated." He said: "What are you doing here?" He said: "You go to school [murmurs] more [something beeping in background] the more I got to thinking about what he said [murmurs]. And it so happened that, uh, they had in the – the paper about [murmurs] letter carriers for the post office, they had a test [murmurs].

HK: Uh-huh.

FR: Well, I took the test and I passed it, but my Army service took [murmurs]. And, uh, like six months later [murmurs]. I said yeah. [Murmurs]. Retired from the post office.

HK: Oh. How many years did you work for them?

FR: Uh, I think there's 34 altogether when I retired [murmurs].

HK: Uh-huh. Did you enjoy it? Were you, were you one that walked and carried the mail, or did you...?

FR: Well, I started out walking. And I had a couple, two or three different routes that I'd walk, and then I finally got the one where, where I was at home.

HK: Uh-huh.

FR: Well, I started, uh, I served the mail [murmurs]. So from then on, I – I drove, put the mail in, opened the box [murmurs].

HK: Uh-huh. What section of Lawrence did you work in?

FR: North Lawrence.

HK: North Lawrence.

FR: [Murmurs]

HK: Oh, okay. Well, that's being developed, isn't it?

FR: Pardon?

HK: That's being developed now.

FR: Yeah. Lot of new kids out there. [Murmurs], ball park open there.

HK: Do you still keep a garden? Do you have a garden over there?

FR: No.

HK: No? Not a gardener. [Laughs]

FR: No, it's cheaper, it's cheaper – it's cheaper to buy what you need than it is to try to raise a garden. Buy all the plants and all the fertilizer and gotta keep the bugs off of 'em. It's cheaper just to buy...my wife, my wife likes to [murmurs].

HK: How did you meet your wife?

FR: Uh...she, uh, she was born in Lecompton. And then, uh, her father and mother decided they was gonna go back to Mexico. So, she went, they - they went back. So, uh, she must [murmurs]. Anyway, and, uh, when she was about, uh, about fifteen or sixteen, her grandfather said, "Well," [murmurs] Her father decided that she was getting old and old enough to get married so they had to bring her back. [HK laughs] So her grandfather went back and got her and two brothers [murmurs] when she was, when she was eighteen, that's when. Then when I went into the service, she couldn't – she couldn't write any Spa- she couldn't write English. And I didn't know enough to write Spanish. So I got me a dictionary. English to Spanish.

HK: Uh-huh.

FR: So I started picking out the words that I wanted to, wanted to – to say, and that's the way I learned to write [murmurs] read and write in Spanish. I can read and write it, but not, you know, real good. Just enough to get by.

HK: Uh-huh. Uh-huh.

FR: [Murmurs] Anyway, all the time I was in service we wrote letters. The first letter took me about an hour, an hour and a half. And after that, [murmurs]

HK: Yeah. Does she – she apparently speaks English now.

FR: Oh, yeah. Too much. [both laugh]

HK: Too much? [laughs]

HK: What do you think of, uh, the new immigrants that are...coming here today?

FR: You know, these, a lot of 'em are educated. It's either the, when they, my parents and the other [murmurs] they were all laborers. And, uh they [beeping noise] didn't have much education.

HK: Mm-hmm.

FR: And some of the guys that are coming over, they already got their education [murmurs] themselves. But, uh, I don't know, there's a lot of... Myself, I think that the only thing that has to be done [murmurs] the guys that are hired. I see a lot of 'em working up there roofing and stuff like that. Those jobs are hard. But, uh they [murmurs].

HK: Yeah.

FR: I don't know, they...it's hard to, hard to answer because they're – they're taking jobs, jobs away from, from, uh, the kids, but our kids don't want those kind of jobs.

HK: Yeah. Yeah.

FR: They don't, they don't want those kind of jobs. So [murmurs] I know my grandkids [murmurs]. Kids they have [murmurs].

HK: Yeah. Do you remember, um, well let's see...when were you born?

FR: In '29.

HK: '29. So you were right at the start of the Depression, so do you – do you remember anything?

FR: The only – only thing I remember is my mother hated – hates rabbits. [HK laughs] She hates rabbits. I guess that's, uh, Dad, and...I guess, what they ate most of the time. Rabbit.

HK: Uh-huh.

FR: Must've been a good rabbit season. I remember when we was in Humboldt, they would, uh, [murmurs] my dad and this other gentleman would go out in the fields and they wouldn't even

take a rifle or anything... just a stick. It snowed enough that the rabbits had a hard time. Kept jumping and running.

HK: Uh-huh. Uh-huh.

FR: And they'd just club 'em. Put 'em in the sack. [Murmurs] That's why Mom would [murmurs]. She was a – she was a good mother.

HK: Yeah.

FR: And, uh, I remember, uh, [murmurs] during the Depression. These guys, they'd call 'em hobos, and, guys on trains [murmurs]. They'd stop [murmurs] get something to eat, and [murmurs]. Good thing they liked frijoles [laughs] And tortillas. But, you know, these guys would always, they'd eat, and then they'd head to the wood pile and chop wood.

HK: Oh.

FR: Never turned anybody out [murmurs]. Always had, always had plenty to eat, seemed like.

HK: Uh-huh. What would be, um, like at your, uh...what would be a typical meal that your mother would fix for you all?

FR: Well, uh, beans was always there.

HK: Mm-hmm.

FR: And rice. And, uh, spare ribs, pork chops [murmurs] everything together, kids started growing up and...[murmurs]. Tamales at Christmastime. Everybody would get together and make tamales. Just, uh, something [murmurs] tamales at Christmastime.

HK: Did you exchange gifts during Christmas?

FR: Uh, yeah. Well, you know, not too big. But I do- what I remember most of all is when we lived at the yard, um...every Christmas, uh, the Salvation Army would come and drive down there [murmurs]. And they would have a bag and they would have a toy. And, uh, an apple or something [murmurs] one of the kids that lived there. I don't remember they ever missed anybody that was going to school. [Murmurs] I remember that. [Murmurs]. Who turned our names in, I have no idea, but I do know that, uh, that was a welcome sight.

HK: Yeah. And did your family belong to St. John's?

FR: Uh, yeah. They went, – they came to church here.

HK: Mm-hmm.

FR: Uh, we all [murmurs].

HK: Did you always walk to church?

FR: Uh, you know, on, that's another thing that, uh, Christmas [murmurs]. Go to midnight Mass.

HK: Uh-huh.

FR: Uh, from the yard, you walked, you walked to church. And it'd wind up at about, like, one o'clock, and we were all walking back. That's, uh...oh, you know [murmurs] where Dillons is?

HK: Mm-hmm.

FR: Well, back then it was across the railroad tracks...it was about a quarter of a mile.

HK: I heard that, uh –

FR: You wanna, you wanna take the shortcut, you just, uh, go under the railroad tracks. The – the railroad cars. Instead of coming out on, uh, on, 8th Street, we'd come out on 9th Street.

HK: Uh-huh.

FR: Every once in a while you'd go under there, and, uh, a train [murmurs], and, uh, it's kind of a chance.

HK: Yeah, some of the other people talked about going underneath the cars to take the shortcut, and...

FR: It was awful dark down there.

HK: Yeah.

FR: It was awful dark.

HK: Did anyone ever get hurt doing that?

FR: No. I was, I remember one night I was going home, like I say, there was a dump back there and, uh, during the day, trucks would come by. And every once in a while, something would fall off. Anyways, there was this one night I was coming back from the movies, must have been about 11 o'clock. And, uh, [unintelligible] I got as far as the Poehler building. And over there, there was something on the – there was, it was just waving like this. [murmurs] "My God, what do I do now?" 'Cause I had to go by.

HK: Uh-huh.

FR: I got my courage up and I went up there, and what it was – was a piece of big paper had fell off of the truck and wrapped itself around one of the switches.

HK: Oh. [laughs]

FR: And that's – the wind, it had it going like this. [HK laughs].

HK: Thought you were seeing ghosts or something.

FR: Oh, I tell you. Talk about ghosts. One night, uh, I was coming back down that same street, [ten?] people used to [murmurs] beer joint at that time. I got to the, the alley between, I think it was on Pennsylvania, the corner of 8th and Pennsylvania.

HK: Uh-huh.

FR: I was, uh, when I got to the alley I turned there, and, uh...I was coming home and a woman come out of that alley with a big old black dog. So, I kinda slowed down, and, uh...I hollered to her, I said: “[Murmurs].” To the corner and she must have been, oh I'd say, from here to the wall, and, uh, like I say, I was slowing down. This woman turned the corner, went, uh, south on Pennsylvania. And all the dogs on – on the end of that block started howling. And, uh, when I got to the corner I looked up to see if she was there, but she was gone.

HK: Hmm. I'll be darned.

FR: But the dogs on the other end of the block, they were cryin' I suppose. I don't know what it was, but I still had about a half mile to go. And I was, it's funny to think about. Funny things happened to me out there.

HK: Yeah, yeah. So, were there very many people living, still living in the Santa Fe apartments when they, when uh, the '51 flood destroyed them, or...?

FR: Uh, my dad and mother was there. And, uh, I'm not sure if the grocery store was still there. Like I say, I was in the service at that time.

HK: Uh-huh.

FR: [Murmurs] Anyway, after the '51 flood [murmurs, rebuilding?] everybody went up, come up, come up town and [murmurs].

HK: So your parents moved to, uh, where did they move?

FR: They moved over there to, uh, 920 New Jersey Street. They moved up [there?]. Mom loved [murmurs].

HK: When your dad was working for the railroad, did he have any kind of, um, supplemental jobs that he did?

FR: Um...no, well, after he retired he kind of mowed yards [murmurs].

HK: Mm-hmm.

FR: Sometimes I would [murmurs, having kids?]. And having gardens.

HK: Yeah. Did he ever sell his produce to other people, or...?

FR: Uh...

HK: It was just for the family?

FR: Yeah, yeah.

HK: You have any, um, memories of your dad, um, you know like, did he talk about his railroad work, or...?

FR: Uh, no, he – he, uh, he kind of drove a truck over there for a while. And, uh, we had a, [murmurs]. He loved to fish, loved to fish. It was [murmurs] go over there, it was always behind [murmurs] started biting in about 20 minutes [murmurs]. Used to go over there and they stay there four or five hours. But, uh, he constantly fished. Uh, [murmurs], catfish probably weighed sixty pounds.

HK: Wow.

FR: I don't know how he got it on there. He'd put it up on [murmurs, top to bottom?] pushing [murmurs]. Yeah. I remember, I remember, he never showed, I would say, showed too – too much affection. Uh, the only time he showed me affection was, uh, sick or something [murmurs]. [To himself?]

HK: Well, he did really good for providing for his big family.

FR: He did, he did. He did.

HK: Especially in difficult times.

FR: He must have did a good job. [laughs] 'Cause all the boys he had, and all the girls he had, they never got in trouble.

HK: How many did you say there were altogether?

FR: Thirteen.

HK: Thirteen. How many boys and how many girls?

FR: Uh, I think it's, uh, seven boys and uh, six boys and seven girls.

HK: Seven girls.

FR: Yeah, yeah. All of 'em done well, so [murmurs].

HK: Yeah. Definitely.

FR: [Murmurs, both laugh] But, uh, other than that [murmurs].

HK: Well –

FR: And, uh, if we did something wrong, Mother would say: “Just wait till your dad gets home and I tell him.” [HK laughs] And, you know, sometimes she would and sometimes she wouldn't, and sometimes when she did, we'd already forgotten about it. [Both laugh] And we still got it.

HK: Do you remember your parents helping any other people that, um, like other railroad workers that were just getting started?

FR: Well, the only time that, uh, that I remember them helping was uh, when these, uh, like I said, it was, uh, workers from Mexico would come, and they went [murmurs] it was on a kind of contract. Then, uh, they'd get there about November. They'd wear just, like, shirts or something. [Murmurs] Guys that lived there would get old coats [murmurs].

HK: Did they stay at your house at all?

FR: No, they had their own room. Uh, like I said, there were these things, these, uh, yards, they had sometimes, they rented rooms [murmurs].

HK: Oh, okay.

FR: That's where they lived.

HK: Okay. Did they fix their own food and all that?

FR: Yeah, yeah. A lot of good men [murmurs].

HK: Well, I guess with the outline of the yard is still there, I mean, the concrete slabs –

FR: The concrete slabs are still there.

HK: Yeah. I need to go down and take pictures of it, so...kind of see where, how the layout is.

FR: Like I say, that picture [murmurs, Charlie?] Like I say, they were, very, very close to –

HK: Well, if you bring it, we'll take a picture –

FR: Okay.

HK: So that way we can...

FR: Are you gonna be here this afternoon?

HK: Yes, I'm gonna be here. Are you gonna come back for the get-together thing at 1:30? Around 1:30 they're supposed to have a bunch of the people that I've already interviewed, are gonna come back and just kind of sit around and talk, so...

FR: Around 1:30?

HK: Uh-huh.

FR: Uh, I'll come back at 1:30.

HK: Okay. Well, pretty close. [Laughs]

FR: I'll bring, I'll bring – I'll bring it up.

HK: Okay. That sounds good.

FR: Everybody I know [murmurs].

HK: Okay. Alrighty.

FR: Like I say, we're pretty close. [Murmurs] Chavezes, like John [tape cuts off at 47:06]

END OF TAPE 19