

## **Tape 24: Interview with Garcia and Garcia**

**Interviewer: Helen Krische**

**Date of Interview: 2006**

**Length of Interview: 47:45**

**Location of Interview: St. John the Evangelist Catholic Church**

**Transcription Completion Date: 2021**

**Transcriptionist: Emily Raymond**

*NOTE: The conversation seems to indicate that a second female in room is also part of the interview, likely another family member; she is never addressed by name and is labeled in the transcript as F (female). Identity might be "Irene."*

Andrew Garcia (Interviewee): Raymond and Gladys and Val and them. And we had somebody else, I can't remember who else was there. They wanted two of them. So we had a whole gang. And then every payday we got together, and then, they paid us every payday, and then, uh, Raymond sure loved to cheat people. [HK laughs]

Bob Garcia (Interviewee): He was always tight with his money. Yeah, Raymond was real – real thrifty. Yeah.

AG: Every time you picked a sack of potatoes, they'd give you a token, you know, a chip, and, uh...when it came time, Raymond wouldn't count it. They'd pay Raymond, see, and then Raymond paid us.

BG: Oh, my gosh.

AG: So, everybody, after we payday, uh, everybody'd say:

“Andy, come check my stuff.”

“What do you mean check it?” he says, “I don't think he paid me right.”

I said: “How many did you have? So I says, “Well, let me count 'em before you do it.”

And they had Joe, and they had – another one was there too, you know, and they couldn't do nothing: “What's the matter with these guys?” I had to go through – after they paid us – well, I had to go through the – go through all their chips and see how many they had and then I'd tell Raymond:

“Hey. Hey, mi hermano,” I'd say, “You cheated people.”

He said: “No, I didn't!”

“Yes, you did.” I said: “You owe this lady so much money, and you owe this other lady so much money too.” I couldn't [murmurs] do that Raymond, my God.

Well, he says: “Look, I furnished the truck.” [Laughter]

“I know you did, you furnished the truck.” Oh, I tell you. We had an awful time. And then I don't know what he paid me, 'cause Dad made the deal with him, so I never did see no money–

F: Didn't see the money.

AG: He was supposed to pay Dad, so I don't know, I don't know how they worked it out. [Laughter] But, uh, I was interpreter for him and then I was in accounting too, so I got over there and, uh, there was a whole bunch of girls from Texas. [Laughter] So – so this girl comes over, said:

Helen Krische (Interviewer): [Unintelligible] girls.

AG: This girl comes over and says: “Are you the mechanic?” I says: “No, I'm not.”

BG: At that age, you know, what else is there? [Laughter] Make the world go 'round.

AG: And my sister wants to go with your boy – with your friend. It was Joey. He was the oldest one. He was the only one old enough to date. And my sister wanted to go with your friend.

I says: “I can fix that up for you. [Name?] I've got to have the prettiest girls around too.”

He says: “We're a team!”

And he said: “You are?”

He said: “Well, which one do you want?”

I said: “Well, I have to look around first. I'll let you know.” So the next day I says, uh: “I found one.”

He says: “You did?”

“Who,” I says, “I have to take you, you're the prettiest one around. We're gonna go Friday to –” They had a free movie outside in the park, you know; we all went every Friday [murmurs].

I said: “You girls go to the lake and take a bath and brush your teeth and use Scope if you can get some –” [Laughter] “And make sure you borrow some perfume from your mother so you smell good.”

And she says: “What's wrong with you guys? You guys don't go around with Mexican girls, do you?”

I says: “No, hon, where we come from, there's no Mexican girls. They're all white and they have showers and they have toothbrushes.” [Laughter]

Says: “Are you sure you don't want us to go to Mexico and get a clean bill of health?”

I says: “Well, that would help.” But then, when we went to the movies [murmurs].

She said: “Well, can you borrow the truck?”

I says: “No, the truck is not mine. The truck, it belongs to that guy.” I said: Tell your sister to borrow the car.”

So she got the car from her folks and went to the movies and then we went uptown. We bought some beer, and we had – we had a real good time. Brought some beer back home, and...everywhere I went we had fun. Anyway, we did – we did pretty good. After we got [man interrupts]. Everybody, we all bought a 100-pound pack of beans.

HK: Uh-huh.

AG: And a 100-pound bag of potatoes. So Mama was real happy when I got home. Yeah, 100 pounds of beans and 100 pounds of potatoes.

BG: And that's quite a lot, yeah.

AG: And we bought some onion, too – we bought, we were picking – we picked onions too. So we brought back some onions and some sweet potatoes. Anyway, when we came back I didn't think the truck was gonna make it home, 'cause we had it loaded so much – so heavy. I said: "Oh, my." It was a good thing it had dual wheels in the back, 'cause if it hadn't, we'd have – I'd have ever made it home. We really had that poor truck loaded down. It was pulling hard coming home, believe me, I'm glad it was downhill. It would have never made it uphill, I know that. But we brought a lot of groceries home, and that – that sure helped a lot.

HK: How many kids were in the family, at that time?

AG: I didn't have too many at that time. I mean, maybe I had five. Bob –

F: How many did Mom – how many did Mom [unintelligible] mother have? Together?

AG: We had, uh, Mercy and Tony. We had Mercy and Tony and Jenny.

BG: Jenny, yeah.

F: So it was about five?

AG: And Bob and – and Bob...

F: What about Sabina? Was she – ?

BG: I don't, maybe – maybe, I don't remember. I don't know. I really don't know. She –

AG: I don't know what year she was born.

BG: She was probably born in thirty – '38, '36? Well, '36, '37 probably.

F: She's about ten years older than I am.

BG: Yeah, her –

F: No, she's not 70 yet. She's 69, I think.

AG: Yeah.

F: It must have been five –

BG: In '37, yeah. She was born in '37. And what year was that in?

AG: I don't know, but – 'cause it was just me and, uh, my sister Mercy, and Tony, and Bob –

F: And Jenny.

BG: And Jenny. Yeah. Jenny was little.

HK: Mm-hmm.

AG: Yeah, because Jenny used to play jacks – jacks with Jenny, ‘cause when we played ball, I – I had to take care of Jenny, that was the one I took care of. And Mom says: “Don’t let her get dirty,” so...everybody wore skirts and – and little dresses, you know, you couldn’t – so I always tried to put her somewhere where it was clean. [Laughter] I’d tell the guys: “Don’t nobody run over my little sister!” [Laughter] “‘Cause I have to take care of her.” Everywhere I went, I’d take my little sister with me. Later on, I took Bob; after a while I took Bob?.

BG: I got dirty. [Laughter]

AG: Yeah, I let him go in the dirt.

HK: Didn’t care about you. [Laughter]

AG: He had a lot of fun, though, ‘cause I [overlapping voices] take him to the – buy him a bag of popcorn and a Coke, and he’d be happy. Be riding around all over –

BG: She’d send me to school clean, I’d come back dirty every day, she says... [Laughter]

AG: Don’t you guys ever say anything about that.

F: That’s why he doesn’t want you to –

[Overlapping voices, laughter]

F: Interesting, isn’t it?

HK: He’s full of stories.

F: Uh-huh. Yeah.

BG: Get, like, pretty good interviews so far?

HK: Yeah, so far.

BG: Got all the information?

HK: It’s been – been really interesting.

BG: Yeah.

HK: Yeah. So, what do you all think about the, uh, uh, immigration issue today?

AG: Everybody asks me about that, and I don't know. I really have no way of looking [overlapping voices].

BG: I think it's kind of late, if they could put a stop to it now, then people would [unintelligible].

AG: My wife says: "Make 'em stay in Mexico."

BG: Years, how you gonna stop 'em?

HK: Yeah.

BG: Tell Mexico to get their country built up and people get jobs and [murmurs]

AG: Yeah.

BG: There's no way to stop 'em.

AG: Well, you can't blame the people. They're making six dollars a week over there and they can come over here and make six dollars in two or three hours. I'm – I'm over there catching the bus on – on 31<sup>st</sup> Street, by Iowa Street there. There's two guys, and they're picking up trash around all the...shopping centers.

HK: Mm-hmm.

AG: And, uh, they're walking by where I was standing there, and the guy says: "I'm never gonna go back to Mexico." He said: "They pay us eight dollars and fifty cents an hour just for picking up trash. Can you beat that?" he says. "We can't make that in two weeks in Mexico." So they – they were picking up trash. Every day they'd go pick up trash. This guy takes 'em in a pickup truck and he – they load the pickup truck of trash –

HK: Uh-huh.

AG: And they'd go to another shopping center. That's all they'd do. [Overlapping voices]  
Shopping center.

BG: They pay 'em eight and a half dollars an hour for doing that. You know, you can't beat that in Mexico.

AG: No wonder They're not gonna stop, unless they do something different, a lot different.  
[Unintelligible]

BG: This morning, stop the van somewhere, it was in Kansas – it was in Kansas here somewhere, and there was, they, uh, sixteen people and the driver, another passenger. And they, uh, give two of them a ticket for something or other and then let 'em all go on their way. That's

what they tell you. You can come if you want to, you know. Government won't send you back. So they, you know, it's the government's fault. Let 'em come over and don't do anything about

F: Yeah, they never did anything about it.

BG: Kind of late now.

F: Now they want to do something, and...

AG: Mexicans –

F: [Unintelligible] I feel sorry for them.

AG: I know, you – you can't blame them for coming over –

F: I know, you can't.

AG: You can't blame –

BG: Half a million people here, they'd cost you a thousand dollars to send each one back, that's a lot of money to send 'em all back.

AG: You're right.

HK: Mm-hmm.

BG: It is. It's a lot of money.

HK: Yeah.

AG: It is. But yeah, I – I don't know. I don't think they're ever gonna stop. I told the guys how to do it, I says: "Let 'em all come over here, we could send them to war." [Laughter]. "Send 'em all to Iraq." Yeah, yeah. [Laughter continues] Send 'em all to Iraq. They – they'd – they'd pay cheaper. [Laughter]

BG: Yeah, [unintelligible], something like that. [Laughter]. They laugh. Yeah, but when I think about it, I says, that's what I'd do. [Overlapping voices] The other day I was watching TV [unintelligible?], and they were showing these, uh, people that, what do you call it, a minute [man?]

AG and F: Minute [men?]

BG: They were, they had [got together?] fence across the Texas border there.

HK: Uh-huh.

BG: And they got their poles and their wire and all that, and they had a barbecue and all that kind of stuff, and they got done [unintelligible] fence. Lousiest fence in the world. Wire sagging, they could have hired illegals [murmurs] to work and done a better job. [Laughter] Terrible!

AG: Saw that, yeah.

BG: Wire sagging? You don't build a fence that way, my gosh.

F: They should have got those [unintelligible] hired those illegals to do it – [overlapping voices]

BG: Half the price.

AG: That's the way the train is, Bob. [Overlapping voices]

BG: Lousy fence.

HK: Yeah, they could have stayed on the Mexico side and built it. [Voices in agreement]

BG: Right, yeah, my gosh. Guys –

F: It wouldn't have been illegal then, you know. Right there in their –

AG: That guy says: "If we have war with Mexico, which side are you gonna fight on?" I said: "I'm gonna fight on this side, one side, the other side, the next day." [Laughter] Oh, I got something funny to tell you. My grandson Cruz...

Interview Assistant: Just a second. Let me get a new tape.

HK: Okay. We have to stop for a while. [tape skips briefly]

AG: Yeah, Monday.

AG: Jobs? Now this boy, Cruz, he's not a little boy anymore, but he's older. He's working for, uh, Ace Hardware over in Mesquite, Nevada. And, uh, his boss says, uh: "Cruz, you're not gonna walk out on me, are you?" He says: "Well, tell you what," he says, "I'm only half – half-Mexican," he says, "so I'm gonna walk out for half a day." [Laughter] "Do you want me to walk out in the morning or the afternoon?"

F: Funny.

AG: And his boss says, uh: "Why don't you just walk out in the morning, 'cause we're busy in the afternoon." He said: "Okay." [Laughter] And my other, my oldest grandson, my older grandson in Mesquite, Nevada, he – he, uh, he manages four restaurants in two different casinos.

So he says: "Grandpa," he says, that day he says: "I had all my managers, cooks, and all my secretaries are waitresses. Because everybody walked out, we couldn't handle it. The waitress – the secretary were all mad, but I said, 'You have to do it. We don't have no other way

to do it.” And he said when he got home, he told his dad, he says: “Boy, Dad,” he says, “just about shut the whole – the whole works down.”

He says: “Well,” he said, “You’re supposed to walk out too.”

He said: “If I had walked out, this whole town – town would have shut down.” [Laughter] “There’d have been nobody to run the place.” Yeah. He’s 24 years old and he runs the four restaurants, manages four restaurants.

HK: Wow.

AG: But he says, “I have a good manager and a good crew [murmurs].”

HK: Uh-huh.

AG: “And one day a week, I go to this place, watch how they operate the, the next day I go over here,” he says, “I go around and around. I have my own – my own office and my own secretary. We run – run the place good.”

HK: Could you tell me a little bit about what it was like to live at the Santa Fe yards, the apartments there?

BG: I was pretty young at the time, but, uh, we had a lot of fun. Families just, uh, [unintelligible], how many rooms was it? How big was it? Eight on each side and different families [overlapping voices], it was always full. Kids, young kids and basketball and [unintelligible]. Ain’t gonna play basketball or football or whatever he’s – he broadcast at the time.

AG: You know, we had our baseball court, we had our baseball court – basketball court. [Overlapping voices] Only we didn’t have enough boys, so they had to get one of them girls to play. [Laughter] Basketball was alright [murmurs].

HK: Uh-huh.

AG: And we also had a tennis court. We had a tennis court, too. We played tennis. It was nothing but dirt [murmurs]. And we didn’t have racquets. We made some sticks out of wood. But we did play pretty good. And we played the – we played the black boys from town.

HK: Uh-huh.

AG: We played the white boys from town, too. They came down to play. And we always beat ‘em, we played baseball and softball. We had a fence way out [murmurs] the fence was the home run. They had, uh, Chino and Joe were pretty good baseball players.

F: Ball players.

AG: Yeah, they – they set the diamond out and everything, you know. And, uh, but we had togetherness.



F: Yeah.

AG: At noon, all the families get together and we'd all eat, like a picnic, you know.

HK: Mm-hmm.

AG: Everybody – some people would bring tortillas, and other people would bring a pot of beans, and everybody would make different things. So we all got under the shade tree there and we all ate.

AG: When we ate, the people going by on the train, you know. [Laughter, murmurs]

F: And a lot of you were related, that lived there in the –

AG: Yeah. Our cousins, yeah. The Romeros, yeah. Yeah, the Romeros.

BG: They had one, uh, one cold water faucet right outside in the, uh, in the premade house they had one faucet where everybody used water from there.

HK: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

BG: Go out, get a bucketful and take it back home.

AG: It was City water. too, believe it or not. It was City water, we had City water.

BG: Did it [murmurs] have electricity.

AG: We had a shooting, uh, we had a shootout one time, one night. Two men got out together and got drunk and tried to blow each other away, but they were so drunk they couldn't shoot straight. [Laughter] One of them finally hit another one's leg, you know. Had to get the cops down there and arrest 'em and all that. The next day they come and they're looking down, we're looking out for, come the cops, come down. They had a, they had kind of a fence around it. Cops came over, they wouldn't come in, they were scared to come in, so they stayed over by the gate and Mom said: "Go see what they want."

So I went over there and I says: "Policias, what you guys looking for?"

Says: "Pistola .45."

And, "Oh, we don't have no pistola, no. My uncle, he has a .22. He shoots rabbits and squirrels. No pistola."

I said: "What does a pistola look like? Like this?" He showed me his big gun.

"No, we don't have no pistola. What happened?"

He said: "Somebody shot somebody."

"Oh, they did? Shoot the head off?"

"No," he says, "shoot 'em in the leg."

I says: "Oh, my people blow head off, they don't shoot people in the leg." [Laughter] So – so first, they shot a black man – they – we had gardens out – out by the railroad track

[murmurs]. And the black guys come down and steal our – steal our stuff whenever we had, uh, whenever we had [murmurs].

F: Vegetables.

BG: Ripe and ready for harvest, you know.

AG: We had watermelons and cantaloupes and we had corn, and we had tomatoes and peppers. And they were too lazy to – to plant anything, so they'd come down and steal it. We had to have guards out there, guarding it all the time. So I guess some black guy come down at night, and somebody shot him in the leg. Knocked a hole in his leg. Anyway, they took him, he went, he limped away from there, and his friends took him to a hospital in Ottawa. And the cops came looking for him the next day, and I told 'em, we didn't have no, no .45. I said: "We just have a .22."

And he says: "Well, somebody has a .45."

So I said: "Well, you guys wanna come see it? Come on, I'll go with you and nobody'll shoot you." But they wouldn't go. [Laughter] So...so they went uptown and forgot about who shot who. But these Mexican guys,

BG: Well, uh, Romeros...Mathew Romero, Raymond Romero's father shot – shot that guy.

HK: Oh.

BG: Yeah. He shot Felix Bermudez.

F: He did? Oh, my goodness, you better not put that in there. [HK laughs] Don't put that in there.

BG: Yeah, well, can't do anything about it now, it's too late. They're both gone. [HK laughs] Shot him in the leg.

BG: Did they mention the city dump was next to the, uh, section houses? Somebody mention that? The city dump at the time was next to the section houses.

HK: No, uh-uh.

BG: You could – it was just right across the, uh, across the small field there.

HK: Uh-huh.

BG: Where everybody took – city trash went down there, you know, everyday.

HK: Uh-huh.

BG: After – we'd get in there, see if we could find bicycle pieces and pieces of this and pieces of that. That was kind of fun. [Laughter] Kind of smelled.

HK: Kind of like dumpster diving.

BG: Yeah, good stuff, you know, nowadays they, all good stuff. We'd go down every night and dig through whatever –

AG: That's what we did the last time.

BG: You could still smell that smoke, when they burn it, they burn it that time, they burned the trash one time, too.

HK: Uh-huh.

BG: And they'd set it on fire and we'd [murmurs] over there. Didn't smell very good, but, uh...

AG: We took home the bottles, and we used to get a nickel for – for, pick up a milk bottle. Nickel for a milk bottle. We used to pick up all the copper wire –

BG: Wire, iron –

AG: And then we'd take [unintelligible] to the junk yard. Iron and...yeah. [Overlapping voices] We'd pick up all that stuff.

F: How many rooms do you guys have?

BG: I think we had two or three; most of 'em had two or three.

AG: Two bedrooms and one kitchen.

F: Oh, is that right?

AG: What we had. Yeah, the way they made it, the – [unintelligible] in the side they had two rooms together, and then we – they divided, they didn't make 'em right. They divided the other, it was made in twos.

BG: You had to go out of one door, you had to go out your bedroom door to get into the kitchen. [Laughter]

BG: Outside, yeah. We had to go outside and – yeah.

AG: They should have made two bedrooms and a kitchen, but they didn't. They made two rooms here and two rooms

BG: They had to go outside, in twos.

AG: So everybody has two bedrooms and then they shared the – the other one, shared one room for a kitchen.

HK: Huh.

BG: They were concrete and they'd – every once in a while you'd take a hose and wash 'em out and, yeah. They [unintelligible] pretty regular.

AG: Well, they did have the walk in front of them,

BG: They had a cement walk. And they had a porch over the front of it.

HK: Uh-huh.

AG: And they had a roof over it. If you had a dog or a cat, you could put his house right under the – the roof and wouldn't get wet or something.

BG: But there was a lot of – at one time there was a lot of, we only had two rooms apiece at one time. It was pretty crowded at one time. '

AG: 'Cause we had, uh, Ramirez on one side and uncles on the other side and then we were in – in between there. [Overlapping voices]

BG: Who else was – who was next to us? We had [unintelligible].

BG: Hernandez on the corner, [murmurs]. I remember that.

AG: Hernandez was, yeah, they were on the corner.

AG: And then, uh, Josephine and, uh, Rosa, they had the other one. [Unintelligible] They had 'em together.

AG: Yeah, they had the other corner [murmurs]. Mm-hmm.

BG: And [Amado?] Contreras and his wife, they had [one or two?] Yeah, they went back to Mexico. They were there about three years.

BG: Mm-hmm.

HK: How did they do the laundry?

BG: Washed up with one of them boards that we call a corrugated –

HK: Uh-huh.

BG: What was it called? Washboard, yes. Yeah, lye soap and water. Hot water. They'd cook the water outside. Boil the water outside.

AG: Boil the water outside.

BG: Over a – over a fire.

AG: And they used that real strong soap that smelled –

BG: Yeah, lye soap, yeah.

AG: Oh, God, yeah.

HK: Oh.

AG: Yeah. And they boiled ‘em, and they had to stick ‘em, clothes out...took ‘em out of the darn thing.

BG: Rinse ‘em off, hang ‘em underneath the – the line somewhere, we had some clotheslines out there.

HK: Mm-hmm.

AG: Had a lot of clotheslines.

HK: Did you have any, um, livestock around there?

BG: They’d, yeah, they’d raise pigs most of all. Pigs and this and that.

HK: Uh-huh.

BG: Mostly pigs we raised.

AG: We had a lot of goats.

HK: Oh. So you had goat milk?

AG: Don’t taste good. [HK laughs] You don’t wanna try it.

BG: I remember when the men used to slaughter a pig once in a while, you know, you hear that pig squeal. Man, that was hard for the kids, you know, watch that. We all gathered around when they – when they did that, and...Now the Romeros – Valentin and Raymond – they were – they were a well-to-do family here. They had, uh, lot of pigs, lot of animals. Lived on the corner of Pennsylvania there.

HK: Oh.

BG: And they [murmurs].

HK: So they were well –

BG: Yeah, they were well-to-do...

HK: Huh. So what happened, uh, were you still living there in the '51 flood, or was that...?

BG: We was living on Penn – on New Jersey Street by then.

HK: Oh, okay.

BG: New York, New Jersey. Some people still living there, they got flooded out then, you know.  
[Overlapping voices]

F: The flood came a little ways...

[Overlapping voices]

BG: Yeah, you could see the water on the tracks.

F: I can remember, uh, I can remember being like that or something.

BG: Yeah, on the tracks, yeah.

AG: It was up – it was up pretty high, yeah.

HK: So did they, how long after the flood did they still use the Santa Fe apartments?

BG: Everybody then, I think that was probably – probably ended right there.

AG: Moved out.

BG: I think it was after that, everybody moved out.

AG: I think everybody moved out then.

BG: Yeah, [murmurs] right there.

AG: Yeah, I think everybody moved out. In '51 'cause Jenny [unintelligible] and, what's his name, Ralph. They lived there for a while [murmurs] I think they moved out [murmurs].

BG: I don't think they used them after the flood. [Murmurs] I think about the end of the year.

AG: By then, by that time everybody had already got better jobs –

BG: Got better jobs –

AG: And they all had jobs.

BG: Start moving to different parts of town and all that.

AG: They were starting to...get spread out all over town...

BG: Assimilate into society.

HK: Yeah. Did you both go to, uh, um, New York School? Did you both go to New York school?

BG: I did [murmurs]. I don't know if any did or not

AG: They had an old school and I went there for two years, when I went they had an old school. It wasn't – it wasn't the school they have now, they had a smaller building.

HK: But was it still called New York School?

AG: Yes. It was still called New York School.

HK: The old one –

AG: It was a small building. I think it was kind of a two-story deal, and...up toward the corner. Closer to the church over there.

HK: Uh-huh.

AG: They knocked it down and built the other one.

HK: Did you both, um, speak Spanish when you were growing up, or – ?

BG: At home, yeah, we did.

AG: We did at home.

HK: At home?

AG: Yeah, later on, later on, uh...we did away with it because, uh, the kids were having too much trouble switching over to English so after a while we quit. After Bob started getting, uh, two or three years we all spoke...Well, Dad, you had to speak to Dad in Spanish, 'cause he couldn't – he never did learn to speak English. My mom could though, she went to school in El Paso, so...she – she was my first teacher. She knew the – she knew the words and she...she knew [murmurs]. I remember when I first came here, the – it used to scare me, they had these toilets, you know, and they had the tank up there on top. Did you ever see them?

HK: Uh...

BG: Yeah, where you had a chain. Pull the chain.

HK: Pull the chain.

AG: You had to pull the chain.

HK: Yeah.

AG: I guess they thought that the water had to drop [unintelligible] before the flush, so, you know, they had – they didn't have like they do now, they had the tank up on top. The first time that I went – I went to school one day and then I wouldn't go to school anymore. I was scared of school, so...I told Mama I couldn't go to school no more. The girls come and drag me to school every day, so, and they – they told me to go with the boys to the bathroom, you know, and [murmurs] boys told me to pull the chain, I pulled the chain, water coming down and I thought I was gonna go down the hole, so I ran out and [HK laughs]. And the girls stopped me. "Come back here!" So...

BG: That saying, "Don't pull my chain," that's what that's from. [HK laughs]. Yeah, "Don't pull my chain," that saying's from.

AG: So they told the teachers I'm scared of that, so the teacher showed me she went to the board, you know.

"Andrew, come here," he says, "I'll show you." She'd make two lines, says, "Water, lots of water." I didn't know what water was. She said, she was telling me, the river, you know, I didn't know what a river was. Finally she says, uh, I said [murmurs] lot of water.

I says: "Oh, rio."

"Yes, of course, the Rio Grande. You know – you know that, Rio Grande."

"Okay, rio."

"Look, see, rio. Water." [Murmurs] I didn't know what a sewer was, you know.

Finally I says, "Canal."

She says: "Yeah, that's good, canal. Okay, canal. I got a pipe going up here, see, pull the chain, it goes down the pipe, down the canal, down to the river."

I said: "Okay." I got over there, told mom, "Hey, mom."

"What?"

"I found out how those things work."

She says: "What things?"

"You know, where you pull the chain and the water goes down the hole and goes down,"

I says. "And on the way home the girls showed me, they showed me the sewer."

"Andrew, listen, water goes down there and goes to, see, Santa Fe stations. That's where the river is. The water goes all the way there."

I says: "Okay."

So then, uh, Mom says, uh, "I could have told you that."

I said: "Well, why didn't you tell me?"

"Well, you didn't ask." [HK laughs]



I said: "I thought I was gonna go down the hole, pull the chain, all the water coming down!" [Laughter] You know, it's funny when you don't know what a thing is.

HK: Yeah. Yeah.

AG: But they did, they had the tank up on high.

HK: Uh-huh.

AG: The tank up on high –

BG: Gravity, yeah.

AG: I guess they thought that you had to [murmurs] be right down there. Works good. Had a lot of water pressure, yeah.

BG: Yeah. That's gravity.

HK: Yeah.

BG: All the way down.

Unknown Male, possibly Interview Assistant: Did you have to...fill the tank up on top, or how did it...?

BG: Well, the – that's the way they made 'em.

BG: It was made that way.

BG: They had water with real low pressure. It took forever to fill up the whole tank, then drop it all at once. Otherwise it never get flushed.

HK: Did they have a water pipe running into the tank part?

BG: Yeah.

AG: Yes, they did. They had to.

HK: Yeah.

AG: Where else would they get the water? Rain?

HK: Well, I don't know. [Laughter] Should've taken a bucket, fill it up or something.

AG: That'd be funny, wouldn't it?

AG: Yeah, they had to have it. You know, they had to have it. You gotta have a pipe to get water. Well, this guy did tell me, he said, he said the Aztecs had a way of making water run up the hill. Whether it's true or not, I – I have no idea. But, you know, they had gardens up the mountain.

HK: Uh-huh. Uh-huh.

AG: Terrace-like thing.

HK: Yeah.

AG: Okay, they had to irrigate those things some way.

HK: That's right.

AG: Over here, we carried the water. We had, uh, a yoke you put around your shoulders, you had a bucket on each side, you filled them with water and you run, take it down the railroad track about a mile and half, two miles, water all those plants Yeah. That's why I don't garden. [Laughter] . Bob does, Bob does.

F: Is that why you never had a garden, Andy?

AG: That's why I never had a garden [laughter]. And Dad worked us to death. Hauling all that water. You know how much water it takes to water [unintelligible].

F: And he had a big garden.

BG: Yeah. They all did, yeah.

AG: They didn't have little gardens. They had, they had, uh, they had about a half-mile garden. They had, one time we even planted peanuts.

HK: Did they grow?

BG: Yeah, they'll grow here.

AG: Yeah, they did grow.

HK: They will? They'll grow here?

AG: Well, it's just like potatoes, you turn 'em over, you know. And, uh, I told Mom, I says: "Mom," I says, "these peanuts, they're real good, you can't eat 'em." But, you know, you have to put the darn things in the oven and cook 'em and everything. You had to roast the darn things. So...goes to a lot of work to make the darn things, Mom. To plant 'em and water 'em and all that. I said: "We could just buy 'em a lot cheaper than that." Of course, we couldn't buy anything 'cause we didn't have any money.

HK: What kind of a cookstove did your mother have?

AG: What kind of a what?

HK: Cookstove. What did she cook on?

AG: Well, the first one we had was, uh, a woodstove.

BG: Yeah, a woodstove first. Wood – wood and coal. Then, uh, they went to kerosene and then they went to, uh, gas.

AG: But the – the little woodstove didn't have an oven though.

BG: Yeah.

AG: And Mama was good, she cooked bacon, made pies and cakes and everything.

HK: Yeah, those are hard to control.

AG: Yeah, but she could do it on those things.

F: Her mother would send her out, when she was little, to learn how to bake and make tortillas and everything.

HK: Hmm.

AG: She could make candy out of watermelon rinds and – and pumpkins. She was, she was really, I mean, she could – she could really –

AG: She could make and do a lot of things.

BG: Imagine cooking on a woodstove in the middle of August.

HK: Oooh, yeah.

BG: Oh, yeah. Good Lord, man.

AG: And those brick houses were hot.

BG: They – they, yeah.

AG: Yeah. Man, it was sweltering around there, they only had one window. Never had a – we never had a fan or anything.

BG: Nuh-uh. We slept outside.

HK: Uh-huh.

AG: 'Cause it was so hot on the inside, those darn things. We slept outside, we'd take our blankets. The mosquitoes would eat you up. And I sure was glad that Dad smoked all night long, 'cause he'd sit up every five minutes, he was sitting up smoking a cigarette, I said, "Good," get close to Dad so the mosquitoes wouldn't [murmurs]. [Laughter] I almost said: "Give me one of those things, Dad!"

F: Let's all light up.

AG: And he smoked Camels. He smoked strong cigarettes. He liked Camels.

BG: Camels, yeah.

AG: That kind of shooed the mosquitoes away. But I bet, I bet everybody remembers, ten minutes, he lit another cigarette. [Pause] And you had to roll your own, too, that's another thing.

HK: Yeah, yeah.

AG: You had to roll your own.

HK: Did your mom do any canning of the vegetables?

BG: Well, yeah. She canned all the time, yeah.

AG: First of all, we had such big gardens. [Overlapping voices] She would can mulberries. Made mulberry jam out of those darn things. We used to go down to the railroad, pick 'em up every Sunday, put 'em on the riverbank and pick mulberries. And there was wild grapes, too, we picked them, too.

HK: Mm-hmm.

AG: She could make jam and jelly out of anything. Very resourceful person, Mom [murmurs]. And how she fed so many people that, every [Sunday?] I had no idea. She fed –

F: She always had a lot of food, so whenever anybody showed up, it was always in the oven.

HK: What about during the years of the Depression? Did you...

AG: I don't know, I – I don't remember too much about that. Seemed like we always – we always had enough to eat.

BG: Yeah. [Murmurs]. I guess they used to [murmurs].

HK: Did you have very many of the...the homeless people come by?

AG: Used to have the hobos.

BG: Yeah, Mom used to feed ‘em. And they come by all the time. [I’d hate it?] She’d give ‘em something to eat all the time.

AG: We didn’t like that, ‘cause Mom fed every hobo that come by, Mom fed him. She – she had a real soft heart, yeah.

AG: She’d put ‘em outside, put a chair outside for ‘em, and give a plate of beans and tortillas –

BG: And something to drink. And water, yeah.

AG: Uh-huh. And water, yeah.

HK: Uh-huh.

AG: Every one of ‘em come by. Well, we lived by – up by the railroad track.

HK: Yeah.

AG: So there was always somebody getting off the train. She’d feed everybody. Mom didn’t care. She was, she was really good, she was.

[Pause, then overlapping voices]

F: Anything else? [Murmuring] Anything else, Helen?

HK: I think that’s about it. Um – well, have I asked you about healthcare? What kind of healthcare?

AG: What was that? What – what was it? [Laughter]

F: When was this? [Laughter]

BG: We didn’t, in those days, uh-uh.

AG: We couldn’t afford a doctor.

HK: Yeah.

AG: Mom did everything.

BG: If you got sick, you called a doctor. But other than that, you [murmurs] real serious, yeah.

HK: Yeah.

BG: If you couldn't get out of bed, you know, then – then it was serious, you called a doctor. They'd bring you a backpack and their black bag and come see what was wrong with you.

HK: Yeah.

BG: Give you some medication out of his bag and you got well.

F: Mother gave you the home remedies, right?

[Overlapping voices]

AG: She always had her home remedies. She had a lot of home –

BG: Herbs and stuff, this and that. Didn't taste very good, but I guess it worked. We're still here. She even had –

[Overlapping voices]

AG: She even had a – a thing for, uh...prostate.

F: Is that right?

BG: Yeah, yeah. Lot of cures.

AG: She had, yeah, I remember she, lot of people – lot of men would come down and their wives would tell Mom, you know, Mom would say: "Well you gotta take this for nine days, nine mornings, before you eat breakfast." I guess she cured 'em, 'cause they never – they were always, somebody was always, somebody's wife was always coming down and Mom would, took some a pot of something, I don't know what the heck it was. But I asked her one day, she said: "[One?] that's prostate trouble." But at that time, I didn't know what it was. Until later I found out. I said: "Darn I wish I'd kept some of this stuff Mom made." She had all kinds of little things wrapped up in, like, had an eye of a deer, and – I don't know, whatever she had. Oh, yeah...

F: She, uh, was her mother a curandera?

BG: Yeah. [Murmurs]

AG: Yeah.

F: Which was a, um –

AG: Healer or something.

F: Healer.

AG: Yeah, herb healer.

HK: Okay.

BG: But Daddy, when he was in Santa Fe, they did have, uh, they did have healthcare. 'Cause he – if he got sick he'd go to the hospital in Topeka.

HK: Uh-huh.

BG: The Santa Fe hospital. And – and, all the people from around the area come around down to that hospital.

HK: Uh-huh.

BG: And they'd [get?] treatment there or whatever.

AG: That was only for the workers.

BG: Yeah, the workers, I –

AG: It was only for the workers.

HK: It wasn't for the rest of the family.

AG: No. Only for the workers. If you worked for the railroad, you could go to that hospital.

BG: Yeah, yeah.

AG: 'Cause I used to take Dad 'cause I was an interpreter. Take him to the hospital in Topeka. We'd get on the train and we'd go to Topeka. It took us all day.

BG: By the time you got there, got to see the doctor, you got back home again, yeah, it was an all-day day.

AG: All day. All day.

BG: Dad liked it 'cause he got paid, so...

AG: He was off.

BG: Yeah.

AG: Go see the doctor. Dad had a hearing problem, so he used to go, I'd take him about once a month and they'd – they'd go through the routine of... They never did get him fixed up good, but at least it got him by until he retired.

HK: Mm-hmm. What about, um, like, eyeglasses and stuff like that, or...?

BG: I don't remember.

AG: I don't remember anything about eyes.

BG: They did have healthcare for Santa Fe, yeah.

HK: Mm-hmm. What about when, um, women had babies? Did they have the doctor come for that, or – or were there midwives, or...

AG: Well, at first they had midwives. Later on, later on, went to hospital.

BG: Later on, I was born in hospital myself. Later, yeah.

HK: Okay.

BG: Later on, they went to the hospital.

AG: Yeah.

HK: Of course there wasn't any dental care, either.

BG: No. We didn't even have toothbrushes in those days.

AG: No, we didn't. Couldn't afford to buy a toothbrush or toothpaste. We used to use, um, baking powder.

HK: Mm-hmm.

BG: Baking powder, salt

HK: Yeah.

AG: Yeah. Isn't that awful, you can't afford a toothbrush?

HK: Yeah.

AG: That's how poor we were.

F: They had lot of fun, right?

BG: Had a lot of fun, oh yeah.

AG: We sure had a lot of fun.



BG: Yeah, we didn't know – we didn't know we were poor.

AG: No, we didn't know. [Overlapping voices]

HK: Yeah.

AG: Like Vincent said, when he was going to school, his, uh – they were talking about, uh, what – what were they talking about?

F: Minorities?

AG: Yeah, minorities. And he says: “What – what's a minority?”

And the teacher said: “Well, you're a minority.”

He says: “I am not!” He got home and he asked his father, he says: “Am I a minority?”

He says: “No you're not, tell him you're a Mexican.” [Laughter] The next day he goes over there, he says: “Teacher, I have something to tell you. I'm not a minority, I'm a Mexican.” [Laughter] And this [unintelligible] That's like, uh –

HK: How funny.

AG: That's like my grandson, Cruz. He was...[murmurs, in Las Vegas?], but they moved to Mesquite 'cause he was getting in a lot of trouble at school. Well, he goes to school and they're talking about the Cinco de Mayo, you know. Have a celebration.

The teacher's telling 'em: “Does anybody else know anything about the Cinco de Mayo?”

So, Cruz is in kindergarten. He stands up: “Yes teacher, I do.”

“What do you know about Cinco de Mayo?”

He says: “Well, my grandpa always says he fought with Pancho Villa Zapata. And he helped win the war. That's why we have a Cinco de Mayo.” [Laughter]. He gets home and he tells his dad: “Dad, I'm famous at school. I'm the only one who has a grandpa who fought with Pancho Villa Zapata.” [Laughter]

So my son says: “How old do you think your grandpa is?”

“Well,” he says, “he was 100 the last time he came to see us.”

HK: Oh! [Laughter]

AG: “He must be 200 years old.” [More laughter]

AG: He said: “He must be at least 200 years old by now.”

F: Still going.

AG: Oh, gosh, that kid's something else.

HK: How funny.

AG: But, uh, he was in kindergarten about, uh, a month when Larry said the teacher called him and he says, uh, "Larry," he says, "[murmurs] take Cruz over to...to, uh, college in Las Vegas."

And he says "Why?" Run a bunch of tests on him. "Why?"

He said: "This kid's a genius," he said. [Laughter]

So Larry says: "Well, I'm, off – my days off are Monday and – are Sunday and Monday."

He says: "If you can arrange it for Monday," he says, "I can take him over 'cause I have to go [murmurs]." But he – he was already, he'd just started kindergarten. They took him over to the school and he said they were there all day long, you know. They had lunch and then he says:

"What are you guys doing, Cruz?"

"Oh," he says, "we're playing a bunch of games. These people are not too good, Dad."  
[Laughter] "I beat 'em at everything!"

F: Goodness!

AG: So when they got through with the day, they told him, he says: "Well, as I nearly can tell, he can't read or write...but, uh, "He's about two points below being a genius."

F: Oh, boy!

HK: Wow!

F: That's good.

AG: So...but, uh...but if you see him in school now, [murmurs] he must have lost it all some – [Laughter]. He did – he did –

F: He does well, though.

AG: He didn't hardly go to school. He missed a lot of school. He – he was never there on time. He won a scholarship.

F: Well, that's good.

HK: Great.

AG: To some, to some trade school. So Larry says: "I don't know, you must be doing something right."

HK: Mm-hmm.

AG: Because, he said, he missed a lot of school. I don't know.

HK: He must take after his grandfather.

AG: Won an award.

[Laughter]

F: Yep.

AG: Oh, and he has a lot of women too. He has a whole bunch of women. [Laughter]

F: Now there he's probably thinking –

AG: Yeah, I tell you. He has [murmurs] Burger King, Kentucky Fried Chicken. Anywhere we go. I was staying with him for a while, he says:

“Grandpa, when you get hungry, tell me where you wanna go eat. We can go eat steak or Burger King or McDonalds, or...we can go anywhere you wanna go, just let me know, and we can go.”

“Okay.”

We always go, some girl always comes over and waits on him, says: “What do you guys want?” [Laughter]

I says: “Cruz, we gotta at least give her a tip.”

“Ah, give her a quarter, Grandpa.” [Laughter] And then if he wants steak, we go with Christopher, he called Christopher: “Hey amigo, come on over.”

He says, “Okay, coming over.” He says: “How do you want your steak?” [Murmurs] You live over there, you eat good. Go anywhere you want to go. That guy has a racket. My son ran a casino – a hotel and casino.

HK: Oh, okay.

AG: [Murmurs]

HK: Yeah.

AG: So he's happy, he gets a different woman about every six months. [Laughter] He gets tired of that one, he kicks her out, gets another.

HK: Oo-kay.

[Laughter]

AG: Wonderful story, ain't it? [Laughter] Yeah. I won't tell you anything else. That's good.

HK: Well, this has been delightful.

[Overlapping voices]

AG: We just hit a, we just hit a –

HK: Thank you so much.

AG: Few high spots.

HK: And low spots. [Laughter]

AG: Oh, let me tell you one more thing.

HK: Uh-oh.

AG: [Murmurs] LA...over there, and some girl, you know, hit it off pretty good. She's got an apartment in LA.

Unknown: I bet she – [tape cuts off at 43:10]

**END OF TAPE 24**