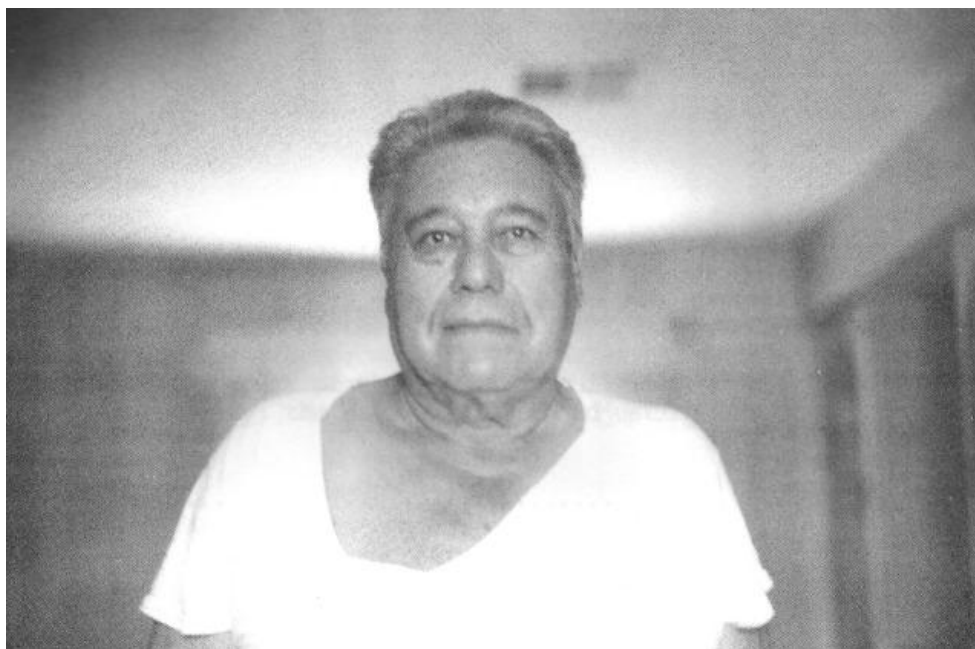


# An Interview with Andrea and Castulo Pallan

An Oral History conducted and edited by  
Robert D. McCracken

Nye County Town History Project  
Nye County, Nevada  
Tonopah  
1988

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89049



Castulo Pallan  
1988

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## PREFACE

The Nye County Town History Project (NCTHP) engages in interviewing people who can provide firsthand descriptions of the individuals, events, and places that give history its substance. The products of this research are the tapes of the interviews and their transcriptions.

In themselves, oral history interviews are not history. However, they often contain valuable primary source material, as useful in the process of historiography as the written sources to which historians have customarily turned. Verifying the accuracy of all of the statements made in the course of an interview would require more time and money than the NCTHP's operating budget permits. The program can vouch that the statements were made, but it cannot attest that they are free of error. Accordingly, oral histories should be read with the same prudence that the reader exercises when consulting government records, newspaper accounts, diaries, and other sources of historical information.

It is the policy of the NCTHP to produce transcripts that are as close to verbatim as possible, but some alteration of the text is generally both unavoidable and desirable. When human speech is captured in print the result can be a morass of tangled syntax, false starts, and incomplete sentences, sometimes verging on incoherency. The type font contains no symbols for the physical gestures and the diverse vocal modulations that are integral parts of communication through speech. Experience shows that totally verbatim transcripts are often largely readable and therefore a waste of the resources expended in their production. While keeping alterations to a minimum the NCTHP will, in preparing a text:

- a. generally delete false starts, redundancies and the uhs, ahs and other noises with which speech is often sprinkled;
- b. occasionally compress language that would be confusing to the reader in unaltered form;
- c. rarely shift a portion of a transcript to place it in its proper context;
- d. enclose in [brackets] explanatory information or words that were not uttered but have been added to render the text intelligible; and
- e. make every effort to correctly spell the names of all individuals and places, recognizing that an occasional word may be misspelled because no authoritative source on its correct spelling was found.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

As project director, I would like to express my deep appreciation to those who participated in the Nye County Mown History Project (NCTHP). It was an honor and a privilege to have the opportunity to obtain oral histories from so many-wonderful individuals. I was welcomed into many homes—in many cases as a stranger--and was allowed to share in the recollection of local history. In a number of cases I had the opportunity to interview Nye County residents whom I have known and admired since I was a teenager; these experiences were especially gratifying. I thank the residents throughout Nye County and southern Nevada--too numerous to mention by name who provided assistance, information, and photographs. They helped make the successful completion of this project possible.

Appreciation goes to Chairman Joe S. Garcia, Jr., Robert N. "Bobby" Revert, and Patricia S. Mankins, the Nye County commissioners who initiated this project. Mr. Garcia and Mr. Revert, in particular, showed deep interest and unyielding support for the project from its inception. Thanks also go to current commissioners Richard L. Carver and Barbara J. Raper, who have since joined Mr. Revert on the board and who have continued the project with enthusiastic support. Stephen T. Bradhurst, Jr., planning consultant for Nye County, gave unwavering support and advocacy of the project within Nye County and before the State of Nevada Nuclear Waste Project Office and the United States Department of Energy; Oc7.r. entities provided funds for this project. Thanks are also extended

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Jean Charney served as administrative assistant, editor, indexer, and typist throughout the project; her services have been indispensable. Louise Terrell provided considerable assistance in transcribing many of the oral histories; Barbara Douglass also transcribed a number of interviews. Transcribing, typing, editing, and indexing were provided at various times by Alice Levine, Jodie Hanson, Mike Green, and Cynthia Tremblay. Jared Charney contributed essential word processing skills. Maire Hayes, Michelle Starika, Anita Coryell, Michelle Welsh, Lindsay Schumacher, and Jodie Hanson shouldered the herculean task of proofreading the oral histories. Gretchen Loeffler and Bambi McCracken assisted in numerous secretarial and clerical duties. Phillip Earl of the Nevada Historical Society contributed valuable support and criticism throughout the project, and Tom King at the Oral History Program of the University of Nevada at Reno served as a consulting oral historian. Much deserved thanks are extended to all these persons.

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--Robert D. McCracken  
Tonopah, Nevada  
June 1990

## INTRODUCTION

Historians generally consider the year 1890 as the end of the American frontier. By then, most of the western United States had been settled, ranches and farms developed, communities established, and roads and railroads constructed. The mining boomtowns, based on the lure of overnight riches from newly developed lodes, were but a memory.

Although Nevada was granted statehood in 1864, examination of any map of the state from the late 1800s shows that while much of the state was mapped and its geographical features named, a vast region--stretching from Belmont south to the Las Vegas meadows, comprising most of Nye County-- remained largely unsettled and unmapped. In 1890 most of southcentral Nevada remained very much a frontier, and it continued to be for at least another twenty years.

The great mining booms at Tonopah (1900), Goldfield (1902), and Rhyolite (1904) represent the last major flowering of what might be called the Old West in the United States. Consequently, southcentral Nevada, notably Nye County, remains close to the American frontier; closer, perhaps, than any other region of the American West. In a real sense, a significant part of the frontier can still be found in southcentral Nevada. It exists in the attitudes, values, lifestyles, and memories of area residents. The frontier-like character of the area also is visible in the relatively undisturbed quality of the natural environment, most of it essentially untouched by human hands.

A survey of written sources on southcentral Nevada's history reveals some material from the boomtown period from 1900 to about 1915, but very little on the area after around 1920. The volume of available sources varies from town to town: A fair amount of literature, for instance, can be found covering Tonopah's first two decades of existence, and the town has had a newspaper continuously since its first year. In contrast, relatively little is known about the early days of Gabbs, Round Mountain, Manhattan, Beatty, Amargosa Valley, and Pahrump. Gabbs's only newspaper was published intermittently between 1974 and 1976. Round Mountain's only newspaper, the Round Mountain Nugget, was published between 1906 and 1910. Manhattan had newspaper coverage for most of the years between 1906 and 1922. Amargosa Valley has never had a newspaper; Beatty's independent paper folded in 1912. Pahrump's first newspaper did not appear until 1971. All six communities received only spotty coverage in the newspapers of other communities after their own papers folded, although Beatty was served by the Beatty Bulletin, which was published as a supplement to the Goldfield News between 1947 and 1956. Consequently, most information on the history of southcentral Nevada after 1920 is stored in the memories of individuals who are still living.

Aware of Nye County's close ties to our nation's frontier past, and recognizing that few written sources on local history are available, especially after about 1920, the Nye County Commissioners initiated the Nye County Town History Project (NCTHP). The NCTHP represents an effort to systematically collect and preserve information on the history of Nye County. The centerpiece of the NCTHP is a large set of interviews conducted with individuals who had knowledge of local history. Each interview was recorded, transcribed, and then edited lightly to preserve the language and speech patterns of those interviewed. All oral history interviews have been printed on acid-free paper and bound and archived in Nye County libraries, Special Collections in the James R. Dickinson Library at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, and at

other archival sites located throughout Nevada. The interviews vary in length and detail, but together they form a never-before-available composite picture of each community's life and development. The collection of interviews for each community can be compared to a bouquet: Each flower in the bouquet is unique--some are large, others are small--yet each adds to the total image. In sum, the interviews provide a composite view of community and county history, revealing the flow of life and events for a part of Nevada that has heretofore been largely neglected by historians.

Collection of the oral histories has been accompanied by the assembling of a set of photographs depicting each community's history. These pictures have been obtained from participants in the oral history interviews and other present and past Nye County residents. In all, more than 700 photos have been collected and carefully identified. Complete sets of the photographs have been archived along with the oral histories.

On the basis of the oral interviews as well as existing written sources, histories have been prepared for the major communities in Nye County. These histories also have been archived.

The town history project is one component of a Nye County program to determine the socioeconomic impacts of a federal proposal to build and operate a nuclear waste repository in southcentral Nye County. The repository, which would be located inside a mountain (Yucca Mountain), would be the nation's first, and possibly only, permanent disposal site for high-level radioactive waste. The Nye County Board of County Commissioners initiated the NCTHP in 1987 in order to collect information on the origin, history, traditions, and quality of life of Nye County communities that may be impacted by a repository. If the repository is constructed, it will remain a source of interest for hundreds, possibly thousands, of years to come, and future generations will likely want to know more about the people who once resided near the site. In the event that government policy changes and a high-level nuclear waste repository is not constructed in Nye County, material compiled by the NCTHP will remain for the use and enjoyment of all.

--R.D.M.



Robert McCracken interviewing Andrea and Castulo Pallan at their home in Pahrump Valley, Nevada - May 4, 1988

## CHAPTER ONE

RM: Andrea, could you state your name as it reads on your birth certificate?

AP: It's Andrea Marquez.

RM: And where and when were you born?

AP: I was born in Pecos, Texas, November 1, 1924.

RM: What was your father's name?

AP: Juan Marquez.

RM: Do you know where he was from?

AP: He was from Pecos.

RM: And what was your mother's name?

AP: Elia Subia. She was from Pecos, Texas, too.

RM: And where did you grow up?

AP: In Pecos.

RM: Did you go to school there?

AP: Yes.

RM: What was your father's occupation?

AP: He was a cement finisher.

RM: And how many were in your family?

AP: In my family there were 4, with me.

RM: Four children? Were you the youngest, or the oldest, or . . . ?

AP: I'm the middle one.

RM: Where do your brothers and sisters live now?

AP: I only have 2 brothers - one lives in Pecos and the other one in Houston, Texas.

RM: What did you do when you got out of school?

AP: I didn't finish school; I just went to grade school, and then I had to get out of school. Then I worked in the house.

RM: In your home?

AP: In my home; yes.

RM: How long did you do that?

AP: Until I got married.

RM: When did you get married?

AP: I got married in 1941.

RM: And you married Castulo?

AP: Yes.

RM: Castulo, could you state your name as it is on your birth certificate?

CP: Castulo Pallan.

RM: And when and where were you born?

CP: I was born in Pecos, too. March 26, 1922.

RM: What was your father's name?

CP: Benino Pallan.

RM: Where was he from?

CP: Fort Stockton, Texas.

RM: And what was your mother's name?

CP: Maurice Yanez.

RM: And where was she from?

CP: San. Angelo, Texas.

RM: What was your father's occupation?

CP: He worked on farms around Pecos and Barstow, Texas.

RM: Andrea, what did you do after you got married?

AP: Started a family. [chuckles]

RR: How many children did you have?

AP: Eleven.

RM: And what did you do, Castulo, before you came to Pahrump?

CP: I worked on farms. I stayed in Pecos and worked for 2 people, then I moved down here.

RM: In Pecos, did you work for Walt Williams?

CP: No.

RM: No? Did you come here with Walt?

CP: No. I came by myself.

RM: When was the first time you heard about Pahrump?

CP: About 1958, when my cousin came over here. When he went back he told me about Pahrump, and I came over and started working.

RM: Had he been working here?

CP: Yes; he'd been working for Walter Williams in the cotton. When we came over here, I worked for the Wilcoxes, at the other end of the valley - the last big ranch in the north. That was in 1960.

RM: What did your cousin tell you about Pahrump?

CP: Well, that it's pretty quiet and not too many people, and that's why I like it - because I have a lot of children. That's why we moved down here. And I raised all my kids here.

RM: Every one of them was raised here?

AP: Yes.

RM: You didn't come right away, did you, after he told you?

P: No, I waited 3 years.

RM: What made you wait and then decide to come here?

AP: Well, because the job was here.

CP: He talked to the guy, and he told me to come here.

AP: We came straight to the ranch and started working right away.

RM: Had you worked in cotton before?

CP: Oh, yes - all the time.

RM: Andrea, did you work in the fields, too, or you were taking care of the family?

AP: I used to chop cotton, too.

RM: How much did they pay in Texas for chopping cotton?

CP: At that time they paid 45 cents an hour for chopping cotton. And I moved down here and my kids were so happy, because they paid \$1 an hour.

RM: Then you went from 45 cents to \$1 an hour. No wonder you moved.

AP: Yes. [laughter]

CP: Yes. I moved because I worked in the same kind of farm down there in Pecos for \$250 a month. I moved down here and he paid me \$400 a month. It's the same work.

AP: Same job, and . .

RM: Why did they pay so much better here?

AP: Because they didn't have people to work. At the time we moved down here, we didn't have electricity.

AP: No electricity, no telephones, no anything.

RM: What is involved in chopping cotton? What exactly do you do?

AP: You take the weeds out of the cotton with a hoe.

RM: You just hoe it as it grows, then?

AP: Yes. As soon as my kids grew up I started working. I worked in Vegas, in the Memorial Hospital After a few years, I worked at the Test Site. I just retired from the Test Site a year ago.

RM: Did you live in Vegas, or did you drive back and forth?

AP: I drove back and forth for 10 years.

RM: Did you drive alone?

AP: No, we had a carpool - some of the girls drove with me out there.

RM: What kind of a job did you have at the hospital?

AP: Maid.

RM: When did you start at the hospital?

AP: When my little kids - my twins - started school. It was '69 or '70. I quit the job in the hospital in '76, I think, and I started working in '77 at the Test Site.

RM: And how long did you work there?

AP: Ten years.

RM: What did you do at the Test Site?

AP: The same thing - cleaner. Cleaning roans at the Test Site.

RM: Was that at Mercury or Area 12?

AP: Mercury. Area 12 is too far.

RM: And you drove there every day?

AP: Well, we had a carpool for a few years, till they put on the bus.

RM: And then you rode the bus?

AP: Yes; every day.

RM: What did you think of that?

AP: I liked it better [than driving].

RM: Did it pay good money?

AP: Oh, yes; very good money.

RM: And what were you doing at all these years, Castulo'

CP: I worked on farms, and then we moved down here with Tim [Hafen]. When we started down there with Hafen - she worked in the office for the company.

AP: At the gin.

RM: She worked at the gin?

CP: And then she met Tim. When we started working out here, she still kept making the checks. [laughter] For all this time, she's been very . . . [chuckles] All these years.

RM: Did you work for the gin?

CP: The gin company - it's the same company - Nevada Company's got a gin.

RM: Oh, Wilcox had a ranch and a gin?

CP: Yes.

RM: Where was their ranch located?

CP: It's the last ranch north in the valley.

RM: How long did you work for Wilcox?

CP: About 5 years, I think. I worked at Ted Blosser's place for 3 months, and then we had a steady job here at Tim's.

CP: We moved down here.

RM: So you went to work for Tim about 1965?

AP: Or, 1963?

CP: '63? That's 25 years ago.

AP: Yes. Rachel was born in 1962.

CP: OK. I worked 3 years for Wilcox and then we moved.

AP: Yes.

RM: And how long did you work for Tim Hafen?

CP: Twenty-three years.

RM: When you were doing farm work in the valley did you work all year, or did you just work part of the year?

AP: All year 'round.

RM: Tell me some of the work that you did when you worked for Tim Hafen.

CP: Well, down here with Tim we had cotton. I planted cotton and alfalfa and we planted some wheat, barley, some . .

RM: What did you do in the winter when the crops weren't growing?

CP: Oh, we had many more jobs. [chuckles] We'd prepare the land for the cotton again - cut sagebrush.

RM: Getting the land ready, huh?

CP: Yes; like discing . . . And before we started cotton we had to plant the wheat. In September and October we planted the wheat and then we started picking cotton. When we finished the cotton, we started discing the ground again to make it ready to begin next year. [We worked] all year long.

RM: When you first came to Pahrump, where did you live?

CP: Right there at Wilcoxes'.

RM: They had a place there?

AP: Yes; a real big house.

RM: Was it a better house than you were used to in Pecos?

AP: Oh, yes; [chuckles] it sure was.

CP: How many rooms were there? Five . .

AP: And no electricity, but we had a generator.

CP: Yes, we had a generator.

RM: How big was your house in Pecos?

CP: Three rooms.

RM: How many children did you have when you came here?

AP: Seven.

RM: And then you had 4 more?

CP: Four more.

AP: Yes, the last one was twins [laughs] - that's my babies.

RM: [laughs] Where did you live after you left Wilcoxes, then?

CP: We lived at Hafens'.

AP: This one is Tim's, too, but we lived on the ranch up there by Tim - in the back.

CP: And then a few years later we moved to the house over here.

RM: The house just west of your present home?

AP: Yes - there.

CP: And we had more family [chuckles] . . . Tim decided to buy this trailer; it was bigger than the house.

RM: Oh, Tim bought this trailer for you?



AP: Yes.

RM: When you came to work here in the valley, did you have to pay rent, or anything?

CP: Oh, no.

RM: And they've always done that? Is that the way it is in the valley?

AP: Yes.

CP: And Tim is one of the best ranchers and the best people, too.

AP: Yes; he's real nice.

CP: I worked here for so many years. We retired because I'm sick and we're still in the house. We pay no rent and he furnished me a house. worked for 20 years.

RM: What a wonderful thing.

AP: Yes.

RM: Were you were the first Mexican-,Americans in the valley?

AP: Yes; the ones who were here were illegals

RM:: Where were they from?

AP: From Mexico - Chihuahua, most of them.

CP: Some from Chihuahua, some from Sonora.

RM: Did they come with their families, or did they come alone?

CP: They came alone, first.

AP: Yes. Then pretty soon they'd bring families. They were all illegals.

RM: When did other legal families start moving in?

AP: I don't remember.

CP: Manuel Gardea was one of the guys we first knew when we came over here. He was by himself, but then he went back and married, and came back and brought his wife - he was legal.

CP: He got papers, too.

RM: Ted Blosser told me he helped him become a citizen.

CP: He worked for Ted Blosser for a long time.

RM: Were there many Mexican-Americans in the valley over the years?

AP: Oh, yes; a lot of them. Some of them were from Chihuahua, and . .

RM: Were they here on green cards?

AP: No; nothing.

RM: Oh, they were illegals.

CP: You just made your money and went back and got your wife.

RM: OK, illegals would come here and work and get some money and then bring their wives?

AP: Yes.

RM: Did they become citizens, then?

AP: Yes; a lot of them. All the people who live here are legals now. The people who work with Tim on the other ranch are legal.

RM: Did the ranchers help them become legal?

AP: Yes, they did.

CP: Oh, yes.

RM: Did the Mexican-Americans tend to socialize together?

AP: Oh, yes.

CP: Some of these guys are pretty nice people.

AP: Yes, they are real nice.

RM: What kinds of activities did you do together?

AP: Well, just visit each other and talk and everything. And we go to church and meet all the people there.

RM: There wasn't a church here when you got here, was there?

AP: Oh, no. We didn't have anything here; we had to go to Vegas.

RM: How did you get your own church here?

AP: We worked so hard to bring the church here.

CP: At first all the people came here and we made a big community building.

AP: Yes - in the community building. And started getting the priest.

CP: It was one of those traveling ministries that came over here and used the space. All the religions . . . the Father came over here.

RM: When did they build the community building?

CP: [chuckles] A long time ago!

AP: You leveled the ground - you have to know. [laughter]

CP: Yes, but it's a long . . . I worked for Wilcox when I did it. [I leveled it] once - for the grass and everything.

AP: For the grass and on the . .

RM: So that'd be early '60s.

CP: Yes. '62, I think, is when we leveled the ground for the road.

AP: NO, just the ground.

CP: I leveled the ground and we put gravel in there to make a road, and that's when we started mixing cement.

RM: So when they got the community building built, the Father could come over here for services?

AP: Yes.

RM: Was it mainly Mexican-Americans in the Catholic services, or were there other people?

AP: Oh, there were a lot of other people. White people and . .

RM: Were there a lot of Mexican-American people at the services?

AP: Oh, yes.

RM: How big was your Mexican-American congregation back then?

CP: There were not too many Mexicans - just a few.

AP: A few families and single men.

CP: Some of the wetbacks didn't come.

RM: They don't want to be seen?

CP: Yes; they were afraid. But we had a few families down there when The started.

RM: Were they all legals?

AP: Not all - some of them, and some of them, not.

RM: How big is the Mexican-American congregation in your church now?

AP: In the church it's not very big. I don't know why, but they don't go - they get involved with another religions. They go somewhere else.

RM: Why is that, do you think?

AP: I don't know. You know, they needed somebody to help them, and this other religion helped them - they tried to bring them in pinks.

CP: You know, some like that, and all the people go over there.

AP: Yes; that's why. We have a lot of Mexican families who go to that church every Sunday.

RM: When did you build your Catholic church?

AP: Oh, dear - what year did Rachel get married? [chuckles] About 6 years age

RM: About in 1982?

AP: Yes - something like that. One of my daughters was the first one to marry in this church. And one got married in the community center.

RM: Do you have your own priest, now?

AP: Yes; he lives here.

RM: Is the congregation mostly Mexican-Americans or are there a lot of other people?

AP: There are a lot of other people - white people.

CP: Most of them are white.

AP: They are really good people.

RM: When you first came to Pahrump it must have been a shock to you, because they didn't have electricity or anything.

AP: Not a thing. No school bus and no schools down here; only the elementary school.

CP: She was sick.

AP: I was sick for a little while.

RM: You mean, sick that you were here?

AP: Yes - I was so sad, you know.

CP: I needed to go to the store myself and buy groceries. She didn't want to go anywhere, she wouldn't . . .

AP: I didn't want to go anywhere. I just stayed in the house; I'd sleep and sleep and sleep.

RM: Did you like it here at first?

AP: At first I didn't like it.

RM.: What didn't you like?

AP: Because there was nobody to talk with, and no people around.

CP: Because you don't know anybody, did you?

AP: I didn't know anybody.

CP: She didn't know . . . and I [tried to make] my kids happy. All of my kids were happy. They liked to go to school. They tried go to school and make a lot of friends . . .

AP: Yes, a few kids. They're all good friends, now.

CP: The kids started go to school, and we had a big house. I started to have dances; nice parties for the kids, you know. And all the parents came over here and helped me, too. [laughs]

AP: They helped - you know - bring Kool-Aid, cookies for the kids, making the parties very nice.

## CHAPTER TWO

RM: Tell me some more about how you felt when you first came here?

AP: Well, I left all my friends in Pecos and I moved here and I didn't know anybody. A lot of people - white people - started to come over to visit me, and talk to me, and . . . We didn't have a TV or anything, so they brought me a whole bunch of magazines and said, "You like to read?"

"Yes, I like to read."

So they brought me magazines, and newspapers. [chuckles]

CP: She never went out of the house. When we lived in Pecos she used to go all over.

AP: Yes, I'd go and get groceries by myself. I'd just go in the car and

CP: Well, I was in the army before we moved here, and for me it was, "Any is the same." [chuckles] As long as I've got a good job.

RM: When were you in the army, Castulo?

AP: '44.

RM: That was after you got married?

AP: Oh, yes.

CP: We had 2 kids. We had one, and 3 months [before] I was to get out of the army . . .

AP: I had the second one.

RM: Tell me some more about the social life when you were here especially with the other Mexican-Americans?

AP: Well, I had more fun with the American people. We started getting together, and every weekend we all went to the bar and danced and had a good time, you know. Then I started to like them, because I went out and everything. Tim and Jackie went out, too. Every weekend we'd go and have a good time.

CP: There are a lot of people here that - Bill Turner - do you know Bill?

RM: Bill Turner - yes?

AP: Bill Turner and his wife Dutch . .

CP: They were the first friends we had when we moved out here - the first people we met when we came over.

AP: Yes; they're really nice.

CP: They had a cafe down on the corner where the bank is now.

RM: Yes; and she was the postmaster

AP: Oh, yes; for many years.

RM: What bar did you go to have the dances and so forth?

CP: Well, we went to the Cotton Picker, and sometimes I went to Jim's \_ Jim Cruse. It's close to the [state] line. There were only 2 bars here in the valley.

RM: What other kinds of activities did you do?

AP: That's all - raise the kids.

CP: And we went to Vegas every payday to buy groceries. [chuckles]

RM: Tell me about raising children in Pahrump - what was it like?

AP: it was wonderful. I raised my kids here, and they're all good kids; all of them. It's real quiet.

CP: And especially at that time, the only Mexican kids were our kids. Three or 4 years later there started being more and more Mexican kids.

RM: Did the kids get along OK with the other kids?

AP: Oh, yes.

CP: They and the Turners' kids and . .

AP: And Tim's kids . .

CP: And McGowans' . . .

RM: Where did your children go to school at first?

CP: They went to Vegas for the first year in high school.

AP: Yes; and the other ones had elementary school here.



RM: How did your child get to Vegas?

AP: They took them in a little bus.

CP: There were only 4 kids who went to Vegas. [chuckles] They took that station wagon - no bus.

AP: There was one of Ted Blosser's, one girl, and mine, and one from Lorraine Bowman . . . and McGowan.

CP: Yes. Oh, and one Indian girl - Paula

AP: Oh, yes - Paula. I forget her last name.

CP: I don't remember the last name Anyhow, that's all the kids they brought.

RM: That's all the kids that went to Vegas?

AP: Yes.

CP: The girl driving the station wagon was named Thelma Moorehead. She worked in the cafe in the school, and she'd take them in and at night she came back. Sometimes they'd break down on the road. We'd [knew how long the trip took and we'd look at our watches] . .

RM: In your hare, did you speak Spanish or English?

AP: Both of them.

RM: Then your children all know Spanish?

AP: Oh, yes. Some of the girls know how to speak Spanish, you know, but they won't. All of my kids - even my girls - talk English with me, and I talk Spanish. My oldest son . . .

CP: They understand everything, but they don't speak Spanish. [laughter]

RM: That must be an interesting conversation.

CP: [laughs] It sure is. Especially when I get mad with them, and I'm in the Spanish - "Oh, Mom! Oh, Mom!" [laughter]. My older sons all talk Spanish with me.

RM: How old are your children? What is their age range now?

AP: The youngest are 25 - my twins - and the older one is 44.

RM: Do they live in the valley?

AP: They live in Vegas.

RM: What kinds of work are they doing?

AP: The older one works with the county. And the second one is an electrician - he works in Tonopah at the Test Site. And then one of my daughters works in the bank; my older daughter And one is in sheet metals; he works on the Test Site. And one works with Southern Gas

RM: It sounds as if they have good jobs.

AP: Oh, yes; they do.

RM: The family has really done well here, hasn't it?

AP: Yes. Two of my sons went to college. One went to San Bernardino and the other one went to Victorville. The one who was in San Bernardino worked for awhile up there and went to college, and then wanted to go into the service. He went to the service and stayed for 4 years and then came to graduate school here in Vegas for 4 more years of school. Now he's an electrician, and . . .

RM: Have the other Mexican-Americans in the valley been as successful as you?

AP: Oh, yes - the Gardeas family. Their kids do real well.

RM: So the valley has provided Mexican-Americans with real opportunities to improve their lives?

AP: Yes; scholarships and all this.

RM: Tell me more about farming here, Castulo.

CP: Well, we farmed cotton, you know, and the price of cotton went down some years ago. We don't farm anymore cotton; just alfalfa and maybe wheat - that's what we plant now. With the prices going down all these farms are going down.

RM: Is it pretty good ground for growing here

CP: Yes. Everything you plant grows. We planted some watermelon.

AP: Yes. Everything can grow . . . vegetables and everything.

CP: When we were working on the farm we planted 5 acres of watermelons and everything. Some of the people from Vegas come over here and bought the melons and took them to town. Other guys came over from Vegas with trucks, selling them all in town. And Tim, my boss, sold them too. We didn't plant only watermelons; we planted some corn, too. But we can't plant it all the time because the weather down here is cold sometimes - it frosts early and sometimes [the cold] stays later.

A few years ago, he planted some lettuce down here. And one year a company from Arizona came over here and planted some lettuce. They rented some places and everybody had 20 to 30 acres. Oh, man, you should have seen that lettuce - beautiful. The next year they came over and planted some more, but that time [chuckles] the frost came and he never came back. [laughs]

RM: So they only planted lettuce for 2 years?

CP: Yes. The next year he just started it; no lettuce.

AP: It was beautiful lettuce - it was big.

RM: But then the next year it froze?

AP: Yes. It froze and everything. [laughs] They picked up the stuff and packed and, "Let's go."

RM: How would you compare the cotton grown here with the cotton in Pecos?

CP: The cotton here is better; the grade is better down here. Because down there we have a lot of rain, mostly. Every time, in September for sure, we have a rain. That rain makes the grade go down. Here we have no rain. Sometimes the whole year around, [chuckles] - no rain.

RM: What were some of the problems with growing cotton here?

CP: No price.

RM: Did you lose any cotton crops to the weather?

CP: Never - not in here. All the time I worked down here we never lost one. In Texas we lost the crop sometimes with hail, too much rain, or something like that. And here we didn't spray. And we had to spray the cotton in Texas about 4 or 5 times.

AP: Plaque.

CP: And down here sometimes it's only one time.

RM: How did you raise such a large family on a working person's salary?

AP: And in those years I didn't work - only he did.

RM: Yes. How did you raise a family on that?

AP: That's what they ask him now. [laughter]

CP: My kids say, "Daddy, what did you do?" Every one of them has 2 kids.

AP: Yes. And they complain.

CP: And they make a lot of money - live in Vegas and all that. I didn't make half as much money as he . . . and I had all my kids in school; every one of them . .

AP: My kids went to school clean and neat every day. But I didn't work, you know; I just took care of them.

RM: Did you find yourself working really hard all that time taking care of the family?

AP: Well, yes. But the big ones helped me with the little ones. I had one daughter who was in high school, and she helped me with the rest of them - to get them ready and send them to school and all this - before she went to school.

CP: The big ones helped, too.

AP: Yes, the boys too. They were a lot of help.

CP: They washed the dishes and all that.

AP: Yes, they helped me in the kitchen. I fixed dinner and all of them washed dishes.

CP: By the time the kids got out of school, I owed a lot of money. But they started work in the field, helping me to pay it back, and that's the way . . .

RM: Did they work in the fields in the summer?

CP: Yes.

RM: Boys and girls, or just boys?

CP: Boys and girls.

RM: How old would you start them in the fields?

CP: Well, my oldest boy started in chopping cotton in Texas.

RM: How old was he?

AP: Manuel was 9 years old.

CP: Fourteen.

AP: Nine years old.

CP: No; when they started working.

RM: Did they pay them an adult salary, or how did that work?

CP: Yes, they paid 45 cents an hour.

RM: Is that right - you mean, in Texas?

CP: Yes. You know, they had a lot of what they called Braceros at that time - Mexicans. He paid 40 cents an hour to them.

RM: Can a kid chop as much as an adult?

AP: Well, no; and there has to be an adult with them.

CP: When the kids were 12 years old or more, they were working here like . . . everybody helped; we went together all the time.

RM: Did they work a full day at 12?

CP: Yes; 10 hours a day.

RM: Then there was no playing around or anything in the summer?

AP: No.

CP: [chuckles] And they liked it, because they got some money. They liked to spend the money, and to work.

RM: Did the kids keep their money, or did they contribute it to the family?

AP: No, they gave us the money. And we gave them spending money.

CP: Especially when they went to school; they liked to do things.

RM: What kinds of things did they do with their money?

AP: They'd buy things in the school; a Coke or something. We gave them money every day.

RM: And you had boys and girls?

CP: Yes. Two boys at first, and then the girls and another 2 boys, and the other girls. We have 5 boys and 6 girls.

RM: And they all lived.

AP: They all lived.

RM: What did you do when the kids got sick?

AP: I put them in my car and took them to town to the doctor.

CP: She helped me by driving. I worked all the time and she took care of the family. She went to the doctor and everything, and I kept working; I never lost . . . Some other people needed to go

AP: They had to leave their job and take the kids to the doctor.

CP: And lose a day or 2, sometimes.

AP: And he never had to.

CP: And I smoked for a long time, but I didn't drink much . . . well, beer, sometimes, like when you go to bed. But I never used my money for drink, like some other people. What I have is for my family. And I didn't have money to drink. [chuckles] But 6 years ago I quit smoking.

AP: He got sick from asthma and he had to quit smoking.

CP: Emphysema; that's what a doctor said. The other doctor told me, "It's not the emphysema you have, just bronchial asthma."

RM: From smoking?

AP: Probably. [chuckles]

CP: No, not really. They said from the chemicals.

AP: From farm chemicals.

RM: Did they use as many chemicals here as in Texas?

CP: Well, no, not that much, but they still use some - sprays, fertilizers, all that kind of stuff together. When red dots were coming out of alfalfa it's bad. Especially alfalfa; you got too many.

RM: Are there a lot of chemicals on the alfalfa?

CP: Yes, you have to spray for the worms and all that type of stuff. When we cut them, you got a lot of dust and . . . Those chemicals make you sick. Some of the guys act like they catch cold. They have allergies and that stuff all the time pretty badly. Sometimes you need to go see a doctor.

RM: Were there many Mexican-American farm workers who came to the valley who didn't stay?

AP: Well, there used to be a lot of Mexicans here, and they had papers.

CP: Some of them stayed.

AP: Some of them went to Arizona.

CP: Arizona, California . . . They worked different places.

AP: They worked here for a few years and then they took off

CP: They didn't like it - they said you need to go someplace with more people. [chuckles]

AP: Yes.

CP: A long time ago there were not enough people down here.

AP: It was only a few families, then.

RM: Did most of them stay all year or did they come in the season?

AP: Most of them lived here.

CP: Yes; all year round. Same . . . But when we planted a lot of cotton around here, everybody planted cotton, and there were a lot of people who came over here just for the season. But right now, there's no cotton here - no jobs - just alfalfa; that's all. The guys come over here and find a job. One guy here comes from Mexicali; 2 of them.

AP: They already have papers with this amnesty thing.

CP: Two more down there are from some place - Mexicali or .

AP: All over Mexico. [chuckles]

CP: Well, Miguel and Ramon stayed in Durango, Mexico, and came over here. And all the family came over here - all legals. But one kid didn't go back. He didn't go to Durango - he moved to Mexicali, close to the border.

CP: And these 2 guys here have got papers.

AP: All the people that work with Tim have papers.

CP: Charlie's from Chihuahua. The other 3 families come from Sonora.

RM: When you got here, did Walt Williams at the Pahrump Ranch bring in a lot of farm labor?

AP: Yes.

RM: Where did his farm labor come from?

AP: From Texas.

CP: Some. He got . . . like, some came up from Chihuahua. He got them from Texas, too, but then . . . [chuckles] And Bob Ruud had a bunch, too. And Wilcox, as I was saying. Tim Hafen and

RM: Did Bowman?

CP: Yes, but he didn't have that many - 2 or 3 guys all the time.

RM: And Blosser?

CP: Blosser had a couple of guys all the time.

RM: What kind of food do the Mexican-American people eat?

AP: All kinds; not only Mexican food.

RM: Do you eat a lot of Mexican food, though?

AP: No, not us.

RM: How about the others?



AP: Yes.

CP: The people who come from Mexico like a lot of corn tortillas.

AP: Enchiladas, and tacos. We only make those every once in a while.

CP: Because I was born in Texas, she was born in Texas, and all our parents . . . We eat other kinds of foods. We like enchiladas, but just when we have parties or something like that.

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