

South Texas Hispanic Farm Labor Communities Oral History Project

Interview with Jacobo Reyes Arellano

Interviewee: Jacobo Reyes Arellano

Corpus Christi, TX, April 1, 2013

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Transcript

Jacobo Reyes Arellano

April 1, 2013

Interviewed by: Josue Izaguirre

My name is Josue Izaguirre and I am interviewing Jacobo Reyes Arellano on the topic of the Braceros. The time is 7:49 and the date is April 1st 2013.

Jl: Y como aprendió de el programa de los Braceros?

JR: Mande? (Leans in closer to hear better)

Jl: Como aprendio de el programa de los Braceros?

JR: Pues porque nos contratábamos de allá para acá, nos contrataban. Iban rancheros de aquí, de aquí de Estados Unidos para contratarnos. Yo me contrate en... en Empalme, Sonora, México y de allí nos llevaron a la frontera.

Jl: Y los examinaban? Su físico?

JR: Si! Nos examinaban, nos chequeaban, nos quitaban la ropa y nos echaban polvo de avión.

Jl: Porque?

JR: Pues sabe....pues porque son así.

Jl: Polvo de avión?

JR: Pa que no llevará uno piojos. Sabe.

Jl: Y luego quien le dijo de los Braceros?

JR: Que quien me dijo?

Jl: Uh-huh.

JR: Salia en todo México. No nomas yo andaba, venian muchos. Veníamos mas de cuatro mil a ver que se contrataba. Y abecés al que no se contrataba se mandaba al Empalme.

Jl: Empalme? Que es eso?

JR: Sonora, es un pueblo. Empalme, Sonora.

Jl: Y que tan lejos esta eso de donde estaba enn?

JR: Ewww pues está lejos. Se contrataba uno y ya lo llevaban a uno hasta la frontera de Juárez.

Jl: Y cuando lo contrataban de que tanto era el contrato?

JR: De cuarenta días?

Jl: Cuarenta días.

JR: Cuarenta días, pero duro yo dieciocho meses de contratado. En la lechuga. Anduve trabajando en muchas partes. La lechuga, la limpia de la lechuga, el corte de la lechuga, empaquar lechuga. Y cortar, mapear zanahoria de la tierra, y cargar. Yo todo eso anduve haciendo.

Jl: Y eso era en California? Donde había dicho?

JR: Eso fue en California. En...en, en la mapiadera de lechuga fue en el valle Imperial, California. Y...el, el tomate, y también el tomate en Rio Vista, California. Y la piscadera de melón de ese que venden mona en Bakersfield, California. Y la sandia fue en Lindale....Arizona. Cercitas de Phoenix, Arizona. Pero andaba con el nombre de Marcos Ibarra. Y yo tenia mi tarjeta pa venir pacá y pa ir.

Jl: No uso su nombre entonces?

JR: Mande?

Jl: No uso, no usaba su nombre?

JR: No..no..no, mi nombre no. Todo el tiempo lo use hasta que ya me pero..Pero fue hasta que ya paso la amnistía allá en chic...allá en Florida. *Yawns* Ya me, allá me cambiaron mi nombre....Me preguntaron que cuantos nombres había usado el de inmigración. Les dije "Cinco nombres eh usado."

Jl: Ellos sabían que ustedes cambiaban de nombre?

JR: "Y el tullo?" (Role playing as an immigration officer would ask them for their real name) No, pues ellos nos decían. A todos nos preguntaban: "Cuantos nombres as usado?" A todos. Unos si usaban y otros no. Yo si. Ya les decía el nombre de el..de quien. Dijo pues, "Y el tullo cual es?" (Immigration Officer Role Play) Dije, "Es Jacobo Reyes." Ese yo lo saque el 49 en Chicago. 1949.

Jl: Wow.

JR: Ese si ta a mi nombre. Pero andaba de mojado.

JJ: Y donde, donde trabajaban en los labores, donde se quedaban?

JR: Te..teníamos camp...nos tenían en campamentos..

JJ: Y se quedaban muchos hombres en uno..

JR: Si, habíamos a veces de dos mil, de a mil. Había baracas, le decían baracas. Oo..no había trailas, eran baracas, en apartamentos. Como allí en Lindale era el campo deee, el campo de los soldados..cuando andaban en en en la guerra. Allí asustaban. Allí llegaba la momia. Taba uno platicando y a con la luz así apagada y llegaban y se le reclinaban a uno así. (Puts left arm over right shoulder and starts leaning leftward) A mi nunca se me recargaban, nomas al Benito..al Benito Corrales, y a Pancho Espino, y a Ulserio Pérez.

JJ: La momia?

JR: La momia. Porque se acostaban..noooo había, si, allí habíamos como unos, muchos, no se cuantos. Pero éramos muchos. Habíamos los..los, los de dos camas con almueda.

JJ: De dos camas?

JR: Y hasta había de tres.

JJ: De tres?

JR: Uno arriba, uno en medio, y otro abajo. Y ya cuando que "La momia, que La Momia" no prendíamos un, un cordón cada quien. Cenábamos y ya nos íbamos acostar y "Ya apaguen la luz, ya apagaban la luz!" Que ya se hacia noche y madrugábamos a las tres, cuatro, cinco.

JJ: A las tres empezaba su día?

JR: Ya, cuando oíamos que estaban (makes simulating a person asleep coming in contact with "La Momia") era que ya estaba allí. Es la momia que llegaba con el. Y luego nos prendíamos la luz cada quien y ya que no, "Quién es?" todos nos fijábamos. Y ya Ulserio Pérez estaban platicando en la tarde en la meza del camarote, y eso, esos se recargaban allí les llegaba la Momia y se les recargaba. Era campo de los de guerra..

JJ: De guerra..

JR: Había montones de, de aviones.

JJ: Abandonados?

JR: Si, abandonados. Pero montonotes! Y de allí salían. Todos los días salían yo creo que de Phoenix, salían seis aviones de guerra. Pero hacer simulacra's. Salían así, (puts left hand showing how they were coordinated for take-off) unos con unas banderas aca, atrás haci.

Jl: Mmhm.

JR: Y se pasaban así, y como atrás tirándole con el papalote y el otro le tiraba..sass,sass,sass.
(Aviation plane shooting the target behind the other plane)

Jl: Como practicando?

JR: Ayeee. Practicando, si. Es que decían que simulaban. Y ya nos parábamos a ver y ya el mayordomo se enojaba. "Orale! Orale, pues que?" (Role Playing what the supervisor would yell.)

Jl: Y los los maltrataban los mayordomos?

JR: Pues abecés si. Si, si un, nos tocaba uno. A mi me tocaron todo el tiempo buenos porque me procuraban mucho. Y ese era Ramonnnnn...Ramonnnnn...Ramon Hernandez.

Jl: Y los, los mayordomos eran americanos o eran..

JR: Ese, ese era americano. No mas que hablaba español. El era chicano como los de aquí de, como ahora usted. Y a mi me llamaba marcos. El donde quiera me sacaba. (Roleplaying as his supervisor) "Quiubo Marcitos? Vamos a tal parte?" "Vamos!" Andaba el y la señora. Y, y el y la señora le daban su cuarto allí en, el, el cuarto bueno, y allí se quedaban. Y el me procuraba. (Roleplaying as Supervisor) "Oye Marcitos! Vamos a tal parte?" "Pues vamos!" Me llevaba a los, a Mexicali a las carreras de perros.

Jl: De perros de los..

JR: De perros, carreras de perros.

Jl: Y allí se pasaban el día.

JR: Y allí pasábamos.. Mmhmm.

Jl: Trabajaban siete días? O seis días?

JR: Trabajábamos hasta el Sábado. Y descansábamos el domingo. El Domingo era cuando las carreras. Le decían el "Salon El Caliente" Ayeee. Eran carreras como de aquí. Aquí ya no hay verdad? (Referring to the Corpus Christi Greyhound Racing)

Jl: No.

JR: Pero si había,

Jl: De los perros bien ligeros.

JR: Si, les ponían una libra eléctrica. Y los sueltan.

JJ: Y su día como era? ehh empezaba que, a las tres de la mañana su día? Cuando trabajaba..

JR: Cuando íbamos lejos al corte de la lechuga, o a la limpia eran las cuatro de la mañana cuando trabajábamos en Lindale salíamos en una trocota. Nos tenían una trocota como color gris. Bancas en medio, y bancas de rodillas, se llenaba y allí vámonos! Nos llevaban lejos.

JJ: So no estaba cerca el labor?

JR: No, no estaban cercitas. A veces si estaban cercitas. Pues andaban en muchas partes. Llegaban los rancheros (Roleplaying as a U.S. Farmer) "Queremos que nos vayan a limpiar a nosotros." Y hablaban con el patrón. Éramos de cuarenta, cincuenta trabajadores o mas. Nos sacaban y nos echaban los, los cocineros allí no se quedaban en el campo ese. Tenían miedo.

JJ: So tenían cocineros ustedes o cocinaban?

JR: Si, pues si cocineros. No nosotros no cocinábamos. Nos hablaban desde las tres de la mañana. Hacíamos fila, y ya los cocineros nos hacían sándwiches o dos. Y nos los daban y allí nos íbamos a la troca. Y el mayordomo (Roleplaying as Supervisor) "Pues ya están?" Ya, ya estamos! Y nos íbamos. Llegábamos allá, echábamos una vuelta, ir y venir en los surcos, y ya pues que al lonche.

JJ: A que hora se tomaban el lonche?

JR: Pues seria allí como a las nueve o diez.

JJ: De la mañana.

JR: De la mañana. Y luego ya seguíamos trabajando y ya serían las tres, tres y media. Y ya, "Pues ya es hora, vámonos." Y ya nos íbamos pero era lejos el camino. Llegábamos, no mas nos bañábamos allí. Allí tenía sus baños públicos pues allí, pero tenían baños pa todos. Nos bañábamos y ya hacíamos fila pa ir a cenar. Pero colota grande. Puras colas de marrano allí. Siii, nos daban malo. Y ya le digo. Y en muchas partes si nos atendían bien. Como en Lindale cuando se iba el, el el que cuidaba el campo me dejaba a mi allí el cuarto de el. Yo tenía suerte. (Roleplaying like his Supervisor) "Olle no te esta allí en mi cuartito, que no entren nadie los negros?" "No pues ándale." Pero allí había mucho trabajador piscando uva.

JJ: Uva?

JR: Uva de las parras, de las parras. Salíamos nosotros allí, como de aquí en la calle estaban los montones de uvas. Y los negros pues todo el tiempo son asi como los mexicanos y les robaban. A robar uvas. Y allí en el campo pues había mucho tambien mexicanos que iban a robar. Estaba uno comiendo allí y otros a jugar barajas, dados. Y llegaba la hora de dormir y a apaguen la luz. Y allí, en donde salía, yo me iba acostar. Pues a mi me iba bien porque yo me acostaba allá en el campo en el del muchacho ese. Ese me iba arreglar papeles. Pero luego ya nos cambiaron. Ya no hubo nada. Yo se me hacia que fuéramos socios. Porque el venia a llevar la comida de las

sobrantes, pa, tenía marranos. Yo no los mire a los marranos. No más me decía "Yo tengo muchos marranos" y traía la comida de muchos ranchos. De muchos campos, había muchos Braceros. Levantaba allí con nosotros y levantaba en otros. Muchos tambos así pa los marranos.

Jl: Para los marranos.

JR: Ayeee. Y a mi me decía "Mira, compramos otra trocita y tu llevas de tales ranchos, de tales campamentos y yo de estos." Y yo ya pa mi ranchito para los marranos. Que tenía muchos. Pero no les compraba comida. Era de los sobrantes de los Braceros. Ayeee. Pero hace muchos años.

Jl: Y que tanto le pagaban? O como era..?

JR: No, no, noo, nos pagaban poco porque abecés sacábamos de cuarenta, de a cincuenta por semana. Avecés cuando nos trabajábamos mucho, yo sacaba cien, cien quince.

Jl: Cien quince que?

JR: Dólares, dólares.

Jl: Y eran mas de cuarenta horas verdad?

JR: Siiiiii, noo no no si! Esos nos pagaban poco y luego de allí de donde, nos quitaban lo de el lonche. Nos cobraban veinticinco dólares cada semana. De comida. Y una vez yo fui para Mexico y me cobraron.

Jl: Por irse?

JR: Pues si. No, me cobraron el lonche y no estaba allí. Yo le dije al cocinero pues porque me cobras yo no lonchie esta semana. (Roleplaying as Cook) Y dijo, "Pues eso arréglatelo allá con el contratista." No, tú tienes la culpa, tu eres el que hace la lista. Pero si me cobraron de todos modos. Y yo tenía un cheque. Yo pensaba que era de nueve centavos. Hasta una vez que se lo ensene a José Arellano allá en Carbo..en Generosa. Y el me dijo "No, estos no son nueve centavos," dijo, "son noventa pesos, noventa dólares." "Mmmm," le dije, "eso hace muchos años." "No te acuerdas de la compañía?" Le dije "Nooo. Nomas me acuerdo que era los Chovera." Y dijo "Pues ya lo perdistes." Y dijo "Y ahora que vale mucho el dólar." Pues se perdió. Y yo no lo cambie porque pues noventa centavos para que? Pues no,

Jl: Pero noventa dólares.

JR: Noventa dólares. Y lo guarde muuuucho tiempo. Pues yo pensaba que eran noventa centavos. Pero de una semana porque siempre le quitaban a uno siempre mucho. Y avecés no trabajábamos porque allí llovía, ooo, o algo que no había preparado algo. No trabajábamos. Y allí no la pasábamos. Y después que no trabajábamos jugábamos dados o baraja. Ayeee. Mucha aventura eso.

Jl: Y cuando fue la primera vez que cruzo con, como Bracero?

JR: Noooo, pues ya no me acuerdo. No me acuerdo porque esa vez me contrate en Monterrey. Y nos trajeron hasta..(long pause trying to remember) pues decíamos que Arkansa. Seria el estado. Y de allí me deserte pa Chicago. De allí me deserte, del campo de allí, me deserte al Calabazal. Y el, yo no tenia dinero, yo tenia no mas seria unos diez pesos. Porque nos toco algodón. Esa vez era en la pisca del algodón. Y era zacate, bastante zacate y era muy chiquito.

Jl: Y como pisca el algodón usted, o como lo..

JR: Pues si, así, tiene el capullo de tres, de tres granidos. Con esta asi lo agarras el capullo y lo echas pa' tras. (Demonstrates with left and right hand how he did this.)

Jl: Y como le pagaban? Le pagaban por hora, por...

JR: Por libras.

Jl: Cuanto pagaban por la libra?

JR: Once centavos.

Jl: Y un costal cuantas libras seria?

JR: Nooo, pues yo piscaba seria, sesenta, setenta libras por día al principio. Después ya piscaba doscientas. Pero se mataba uno mucho. Asi taba la flor asi y agarraba uno la flor de capillitos. La algodona. Y ay pima que tiene el capullo de cuatro, agárralo con los cuatro dedos. El pima es como, como, fino, fino. Pesa mucho porque tiene mucha semilla. Es colorado, como de este color. (Points to a candy on the table. A bright orange color) Y la mata crese grandota. Y el algodón chapo, el blanco, no, esta chiquito así. Ayeee. Los primeros días me hinchaba de aquí bastante de aquí (grabs his wrist.) Y traia uno que agarraba mucho. Alejandro agarraba la, agarraba la motita y luego les hacia así. Y el otro dije no. Piscaban quince, veinte libras el y uno de Chihuahua.

Jl: Muy despacio.

JR: No pues no, pues no, una mariposa, piscar con las dos manos. Nosotros agarrábamos las dos matas y vámonos! Hay unos que hay, como hay en Torreón había unos que las manos les zumbaban bien recio. Ligeros. Y esos no más piscaron lo que acabalaron el pasaje y se fueron. Ese, ese era de allá, de La Joya. Le decía Alejandro. Dijo "No pues yo me voy, no saco aquí ni pa comer." Y a mi me toco uno no mas que no me recuerdo (Gets sidetracked with the other person in the room and begins to talk to them) Me toco uno de Antonio Maro pero no me acuerdo como se llamaba. Hacíamos la comida, los, los mismos rancheros nos daban una estufa pa dos. Y decía "Si quiere vamos a comprar" "Ándale." Llevábamos los dos llevábamos nuestra comprita. Papas, y manteca y frijoles.

Jl: Allí si cocinaba usted?

JR: Allí cocinábamos los dos. Pero no no mas yo, habíamos allí como cuarenta. Y cada vez tenían estufa de cuatro quemadores y eran cuatro los que se juntaban y cuatro que se acomodaban. Y yo no mas con otro una estufita chiquita porque ya de cuatro era mucho. Y ya le digo. Y eso de Alejandro pues no, ese Alejandrio no me toco junto con el y luego ya se fue y dijo Antonio Maro "Pues si quiere yo me voy a separar de esos." Pues eran cuatro. Y ya se fue aquel hombre pues si quiere, ándele. Y en la tarde ya cuando cada semana nos sacaban a comprar la comida, íbamos. Comprábamos frijol, manteca, lo que nos hacia falta. Jabón pa baño. Nos tenían baños. Pero ya le digo, era mucho mucho. En el monte, el monte allá en labores allá.

Jl: No iba a la ciudad?

JR: Pues no, si. Cuando estábamos, como le estoy platicando que andaba Alejandrio íbamos de allí fue en Antonio, en Anthony, Nuevo México, y cobraban treinta o cincuenta, no me acuerdo bien. Cincuenta centavos a El Paso. Y íbamos allí a El Paso. Y allí taba la carretera, hasta El Paso y luego de El Paso estaba el deste allí. Nos bajábamos y caminábamos a pie hasta donde estaba la casa. Porque no entraba el autobús pallá. Y pa pagar taxi, pues pa que? Veníamos tres, cuatro, cinco, los que íbamos a El Paso nos íbamos de allí a pie. Pero allí pasaba el autobús. Y yo fui, y los que fueron, unos fueron, unos compraron camisas, y yo compre una pistola. La apunte nomas. Treinta cinco dólares. Y cada, cada sábado, cada domingo yo daba los cinco dólares la abonaba. La acabe de pagar y ya me la lleve. Esa me la lleve a México.

Jl: Que tipo de pistola era?

JR: Treinta ocho especial. Y esa la vendí allá en seiscientos pesos. Pero ya de mucho tiempo a un tío de beba. Se llamaba Damian. Noooo, no, eso tiene mucha historia.

Jl: Una de sus memorias mas favoritas.

JR: Mande?

Jl: Cual es su memoria mas favorita o chistosa?

JR: No pues todas. Todas. Ya le digo.

Jl: Y todavía recibe beneficios de los Braceros?

JR: No, a mi me los dieron todos juntos. Ahora hasta el año antepasado.

Jl: Ya termino?

JR: Si, nos dieron el cheque. Treinta ocho mil pesos. Pero decían que eran diez mil dólares los que nos iban a dar por lo que nos quito el gobierno de los taxis. Y no, nos regresaron, sabe quien haría eso, me parece.... No fue Fox, creo que fue Salinas de Gortari. Eso. Hizo el gobierno de

aquí que diera, que pagara todo y lo pago. Lo pago el gobierno de aquí. Pero, como dijo el inmigrante de allí, el policía de aquí, ellos conocen el gobierno de allá. Se robo casi toda la mitad ese...a, a Santiago no le dieron, a muchos no les dieron. Y eran diez mil pesos y ellos allá dijeron que eran cuarenta mil pesos. Y después dijeron que eran treinta ocho.

Jl: Se seguían bajando..

JR: Ayee. Y eso me dieron a mi. Treinta ocho mil pesos. Y a Pancho mi hermano. Pero andaban mu...como Vittorino Carrillo, Maximiliano Carrillo, muchos, a esos no les dieron.

Jl: Nada?

JR: Nada. Y a mi, que pensaba que no me iban a dar porque tenia que comprobar que era el el el, trabajador. Y el dueño de el y era Jacobo. Y el dueño era Marcos Ibarra.

Jl: Entonces como le..

JR: Pues el presidente de allí de..no, una señora, se llama Sonia, ella me ayudo y le dijo a el presidente que yo era el trabajador, que no era Marcos. Y ya me dijo "Olle, y porque?" porque no tengo cartilla del army. Y ya le, ya le dije yo, yo anduve con esto. Dijo "Yo le voy a decir al Presidente a ver si puedo arreglarle." Y si, si me arreglo. Ya, ella me mando con el Presidente, que hiciera una carta, que el dueño, el nombre que estaba en la tarjeta que me dieron, era el de Marcos Ibarra. El dueño el de la cartilla. Pero que el que había trabajado era Jacobo Reyes. Y eso nos llevo hasta Zacatecas. Y si, si arregle. Si arreglaron. Y el de Panfilo también anda en eso todavía. El papa de Rosa, el anda en eso. Y otros allí, Marcelina verdad? (Asking my his wife Genoveva Reyes) Marcelina, y la de Ponchito, y Dona Lucia me parece también que tiene su treinta ocho mil pesos. A María de Cruzito, ese esta muerto ya. Cruzito esta muerto pero también les dan a las viudas. Nomas yo, que yo me de cuenta, a María le dieron.

Jl: Que es viuda?

JR: Mande?

Jl: Es viuda ella?

JR: Ya ella es viuda pero el esposo anduvo de Bracero y le dieron sus treinta ocho mil pesos también a esa. Y a los demás, a muchos no. (Interview ends here)

Transcript

Jacobo Reyes Arellano

April 1, 2013

Interviewed by: Josue Izaguirre

My name is Josue Izaguirre and I am interviewing Jacobo Reyes Arellano on the topic of the Braceros. The time is 7:49 and the date is April 1st 2013.

Ji: How did you learn of the bracero program?

JR: Mande? (Come again?) (Leans in closer to hear better)

Ji: How did you learn about the bracero program?

JR: Well, because they hired us from there to here, they hired us. U.S. farmers from here went to hire us. I was hired in ... in Empalme, Sonora, Mexico, and from there we were taken to the border.

Ji: And did they examine y'all? Y'all's body?

JR: Yes! They examined us, they checked us, we took off our clothes and they threw plane powder on us.

Ji: Why?

JR: Well, you know because they are like that.

Ji: Powder plane?

JR: So we wouldn't carry lice. I wonder.

Ji: And then who told you about the Braceros?

JR: That who told me?

Ji: Uh-huh.

JR: It was known throughout Mexico. No only I was there, many came. Over four thousand of us went to see what we could contract. And sometimes those who weren't hired were sent to Empalme.

Ji: Empalme? What's that?

JR: Sonora, is a village. Empalme, Sonora.

JJ: And how far is that from where you were?

JR: Ewww well it was far. They hired you and took you to the border of Juarez.

JJ: And when you were hired how long was the contract?

JR: In forty days?

JJ: Forty days.

JR: Forty days, but I lasted eighteen months. In lettuce. I worked in many places. Lettuce, cleaning lettuce, cutting lettuce, packing lettuce. And cutting carrot, and loading. I did it all.

JJ: And that was in California? Where was that?

JR: That was in California. In ... in, in picking lettuce was in the Imperial Valley, California. And ... the, tomato, and tomato in Rio Vista, California. And melon picking selling that mona in Bakersfield, California. And the watermelon was in Lindale Arizona. Close to Phoenix, Arizona. But I was working with the name of Marcos Ibarra. And I had my card to..to come here and go.

JJ: You didn't use your name then?

JR: Mande? (Come again?)

JJ: You didn't, you did not use your name?

JR: No.. No .. no, not my name. I used it all the time until it was me but .. But until they passed the amnesty back in Chic (Meaning to say Chicago).. back in Florida. * Yawns * Ther I, there I changed my name I was asked by immigration how many names I had used. I said " I've used five names."

JJ: They knew that you all changed your name?

JR: "And yours?" (Role playing as an immigration officer would ask them for their real name) No, well they told us. They asked us all: "How many names have you used?" All of us .Some did use different names and others didn't. I did. I already told you the name of the .. from who. Then he said, "And what is yours?" (Immigration Officer Role Play) I said, "It's Jacobo Reyes." I took it out back in '49 in Chicago. 1949.

JJ: Wow.

JR: That one is under my name. But I was here as a wetback. (Says it casually, not in an offensive manner)

JJ: And where, where did you work? In the fields? Where did you all stay?

JR: We .. we had camp ... we were in camp ..

Jl: And there were many men in one ..

JR: Yes, sometimes we had two thousand, a thousand. They were Baracas, they called them Baracas. Oo .. there were no trailers, we were in Baracas in apartments. There in Lindale, was a field, a field where soldiers were when they were at war. People were scared their. There was the mummy. There was one guy talking with the light off and the mummy would make itself present and leaned on you like this. (Puts left arm over right shoulder and starts leaning leftward) it never leaned against me, only on Benito..(Trying to remember last name) Benito .. Corrales, Pancho and Espino, and Ulserio Perez.

Jl: The Mummy?

JR: The Mummy. Because they slept .. noooo, there was a few, many, not few. But there were many. We had the .. the, the two beds with a pillow.

Jl: Two beds?

JR: And there were even of three.

Jl: Three?

JR: One above, one in the middle, and one below. And when we heard that "The Mummy, The MummyA" everyone would pull the string to their lamps to see who it was. We had dinner and bed and we were leaving "I turn off the liliight, and turned off the light!" That was already night and woke up early, at three, four, five.

Jl: Your day began at three?

JR: Yeah, when we heard they were (simulating a person asleep makes coming in contact with "The Mummy") meant that the mummy was already there. Mummy is coming with. And then we turned on our lights "Who is?" We all looked. And Ulserio Perez was talking in the afternoon in the rocking chair of the cabin, and their, on those, the Mummy came to them and leaned on them. It was a war field..

Jl: From war ..

JR: There were lots of aircraft.

Jl: Abandoned?

JR: Yes, abandoned. But bunches and bunches of them! And they left from there. Every day I think out of Phoenix, six warplanes would leave. But to do simulations. They'd leave like this, (puts left hand showing how They Were Coordinated for take-off) with a few flags here, behind.

Jl: Mmhm.

JR: And they passed like this, and as back swinging with the target and the other was shooting .. sass, sass, sass. (Aviation plane shooting the target behind the other plane)

Jl: Practicing?

JR: Ayeee. Practicing, yeah. It is saying that simulated. And we stopped to watch and the supervisor would get mad. "Orale! Orale, then?" (Role Playing what the supervisor would yell.)

Jl: Did the supervisors mistreat y'all?

JR: Well sometimes. Yes, if we were stuck with one. I was put with a good supervisor all the time because they valued me much more. And that was Ramonnnnn ... Ramonnnnn ... Ramon Hernandez.

Jl: And, the supervisors were American or were ..

JR: That guy, that guy was American. Except he spoke Spanish. He was Chicano like you all born here in the U.S., as you are now. And I was called Marcos. He took me everywhere with him. (As his supervisor Roleplaying) "Quiubo Marcitos? Come with me to this place?" "Come on!" It was him and his wife. And, and, and the lady gave him a room there, the, the room well, and there they stayed. And he valued me. (Roleplaying as Supervisor) "Hey Marcitos! Come to this party?" "Well, come on!" He'd take me to, to Mexicali to the dog races.

Jl: As in the dogs ..

JR: In dogs, as in racing dogs.

Jl: And there you all spent the day.

JR: And there we passed it .. Mmhmm.

Jl: Did y'all work seven days? Or six days?

JR: We worked until Saturday. And rested on Sunday. Sunday was when the dog racing went on. They called it "The Hot Salon" Ayeee. They were races like rom here. There is no more here right? (Referring to the Corpus Christi Greyhound Racing)

Jl: No.

JR: But there was,

Jl: Of the fast dogs? Yes.

JR: Yes, they'd put one pound electric on them. And then they'd release them.

Jl: And how was your day? Ehh, it began at what, at three in the morning? When you worked..

JR: When we went away to cut lettuce, or clean it was four in the morning when we left we would leave in a big work truck to Lindale. We had a gray truck. There were benches in the middle, and kneeling benches, we filled up and there we go! They took us away.

Jl: So it was not near the jobsite?

JR: No, they were not close. Sometimes we were close. We were in many areas. Farmers arrived (Roleplaying as U.S. Farmer) "We want y'all to clean for us." And spoke to our boss. There were forty, fifty or more workers. They would take us out and the, the cooks stayed there in that field. They were afraid.

Jl: So you cooked or had cooks?

JR: Yes, well yeah, we had cooks. No we did not cook. We would be called at three o'clock. We would form a line, and the cooks made us sandwiches, one or two. They gave them to us and from there we went to the truck. And the supervisor (Roleplaying as Supervisor) "Well, are y'all ready?" We are! And we were. We arrived there, we would go around the area. We'd go up and down the rows, and then off to lunch.

Jl: What time was lunch?

JR: Well, it would be about nine or ten.

Jl: In the morning?

JR: In the morning. And then we kept on working until it would be three, three and a half. And until we heard, "It's time, let's go." And we would leave, but the road was long. We would get there, we would only shower. They had public restrooms there, but all had restrooms there for everyone. We showered and would go to the line for dinner. But big tails. Pure pig tails there. Yeah, they gave us bad food. Well I tell you. And in many places that I attended. As in Lindale when he left, (referring to supervisor) he left me looking after his room. I was lucky. (Roleplaying like his Supervisor) "Hey, do you want to stay there in my little room, so nobody goes in, blacks?" "No, sounds good." But there was much work picking grapes.

Jl: Grapes?

JR: Grape vines, the vines. We would go outside, as here in the street were piles of grapes. And because blacks all the time are also like Mexicans and would steal. They would steal grapes. And there on the field were many Mexicans that would steal. One was eating there and other playing cards, dice and gambling. And it was time to sleep and to turn off the light. And there, where I was, I went to bed. Well I was wrong because I stay there at my supervisors camp. He said he would fix me some papers. But then he moved. Since then, there was nothing. It seemed to me that we were partners. Because he came to take the leftover food, for, the pigs. Not once did I see

the pigs. =HE would tell me, "I have many pigs" and took them food to many camps. In many fields, there were many Braceros. He picked up leftovers there with us and other camps. Many big tubs of food for the pigs.

Jl: For the pigs.

JR: Ayeee. And he'd say, "Look, we bought another truck and you pick up at these farms, and I'll do these." And I'll take it to my ranch for the pigs. He had many. But he didn't buy food for them. It was leftover from the Braceros. AYEEEE. But that was many years ago.

Jl: How much were you paid? Or how was ..?

JR: No, no, noo, we got paid little sometimes forty or fifty a week. Sometimes when we worked a lot, I would get one hundred, one hundred fifteen.

Jl: One hundred fifteen what?

JR: Dollars, Dollars.

Jl: And they were more than forty hours right?

JR: Yesssss, noo no no yes! They paid us little and then from that check, they took away for the lunch. We were charged twenty-five U.S. dollars each week. For food. And once I went to Mexico and still got charged.

Jl: To go?

JR: Well, yes. No, I was charged for the lunch and was not there. I told the cook to not charge me lunch this week. (Roleplaying as Cook) and said, "Well, fix that with the contractor." No, it's your fault; you're the one who makes the list. But I was charged anyway. And I had a check. I thought it was for nine cents. So once I showed it to Jose Arellano there in Carbo .. in Generosa. And he said "No, these are not nine cents," he said, "they are ninety dollars, ninety dollars." "Mmmm," I said, "So many years ago." "You do not remember the company?" I said "Nooo. I only remember it was the Chovera. "And he said" Well, you lost it. "And said" And now that the dollar is worth a lot." I lost the money. And I didn't change it because I thought it was ninety cents. All that for that? No.

Jl: But ninety dollars.

JR: Ninety dollars. And I saved it a loooong time. Well I thought they were ninety cents. But of a week because they'd always take away so much from the check. And sometimes we did not work because it was raining, ooo, or something had not been prepared. We wouldn't work. And we spent the day there. And when we wouldn't work, we would play cards or gamble. Ayeee. A lot of adventure.

JJ: And when was the first time you crossed the border as Bracero?

JR: Nooooo, well I do not remember. I do not remember because that time I was hired in Monterrey. And they brought us to .. (long pause trying to remember) they said that Arkansa. Would be the state. And from there, I took off to Chicago. From there I took off, from the camp there, I took off to Calabazal. And I had no money, I had no more than about ten pesos. That time we were picking cotton.. And it was grass, a bunch of grass and was quite small.

JJ: And how do you pick cotton, or how do you ..

JR: Well like this, like this, this is the cocoon of three, three little grains. With this you grab it and you grab the cocoon towards the back. (Demonstrates left and right hand with how I did this.)

JJ: And how were you paid? Were you paid by the hour, ...

JR: For pounds.

JJ: The pay per pound?

JR: Eleven cents.

JJ: And how many pounds per sack?

JR: Nooo, because I picked about, sixty, seventy pounds a day at first. After, I would pick around two hundred. But it was tough work. So, so the flower was big and I grabbed one of the grains of the flower. The cotton. And the pima having the cocoon of four grains, I grabbed it with four fingers. The Pima is like, like, fine, fine. It's heavy because it has a lot of seeds. It is red, as this color. (Points to a candy on the table. A bright orange color) and plant is a big one. And cotton chapo, white, no, this tiny well. Ayeee. The first few days there I swelled up here (grabs his wrist.) And there was one guy that picked a lot. Alejandro picked, grabbed the speck and then made did it like this. And the other said no. They'd pick fifteen, twenty pounds and one guy from Chihuahua.

JJ: Very slow.

JR: No, well no, then no, he was a butterfly, we picked with both hands. We would grab two plants at a time and let's go! There are a few out there, as there were some from Torreon whose hands buzzed from how fast they were. Quick. And then the slow ones only picked enough to pay their ticket to get back home and left. That, that was there, of La Joya. I said Alejandro. He said "No, I don't even make enough money to provide for my own food." And I remember having one but I do not remember (Gets Sidetracked With The other person in the room and begins to talk to them) I remember one named Antonio Maro but I forget what his name was. We made food,, they gave us a stove for two. And he said "If you're going to buy" "Come on." We had both brought our groceries. Potatoes, and butter and beans.

JJ: You cooked for yourself their?

JR: There we both cooked. But not only me, there was about forty guys there. And every time they had a four burner stove, there were four that paired up and it suited four guys well. And I paired up with one other guy because four burners wer too much. And as I say. And that Alejandro then no, that Alejandrio I was paired with him and then we went and Antonio Maro said "I'm going to want to separate these." Then there were four. And the man wanted to so I agreed. And in the afternoon when they took us out each week to buy groceries. We bought beans, butter, what we needed. Bath soap. We had showers. But as I say, it was much much. On the fields, the fields back where we worked.

JJ: Did y'all go to the city?

JR: Well, yeah. When we were, as I am talking to Alejandrio would walk in there, it was in Anthony in Anthony, New Mexico, and they charged thirty or fifty, I do not remember. Fifty cents to El Paso. And we'd head to El Paso. And there was the road to El Paso and El Paso was after the thing there. We got off and walked on foot to where the house was. The bus would not enter all the way there. And why pay taxi, why? We were three, four, five, who were going to El Paso we went from there on foot. But the bus was passing. And I went, and some guys bought some shirts, and I bought a gun. I separated it. Thirty five dollars. And every, every Saturday, every Sunday I was paying five dollars. I finished paying it off and took it to Mexico.

JJ: What kind of gun was it?

JR: Thirty eight special. And I sold it for six hundred pesos. But a long time ago to Beba's uncle. His name was Damian. Noooo, no, that has a lot of history.

JJ: One of your favorite memories.

JR: Mande? (Come again?)

JJ: What is your most favorite memory or funny?

JR: All of them. All.

JJ: And do you still get benefits from the Braceros?

JR: No, I received them all together. I go them last year.

JJ: No anymore?

JR: Yeah, we got the check. Thirty eight thousand pesos. But they said it was ten thousand dollars that we were getting because of what the government took off the taxes. And no, we got it back, you know who would do that, I think It was Fox, I think it was Salinas de Gortari. That mad the government from here give, and pay all charges. The government from here paid. But as

an immigrant from there said, the police here, they know the government there. They stole most of that ... a half, Santiago was not given, not many were given. And they were ten thousand pesos and they said they were forty thousand pesos. And then they said they were thirty eight.

Jl: They kept going down ..

JR: Ayee. And that gave me my part. Thirty eight thousand pesos. And my brother Pancho. But as they... Vittorino Carrillo, Carrillo Maximilian, many, were not given their share.

Jl: Nothing?

JR: Nothing. And I, I thought I was not going to get any because they had to verify that I was the worker. The owner of the card and I was Jacobo. And the owner was Marcos Ibarra.

Jl: So how did you ..

JR: Well, the president there .. no, a lady called Sonia, she helped me and told the president that I was the worker, who was not Marcos. And I said "Hey, why?" Because I have no army card. And you, as I said, I walked with this. She said "I'll tell the President to see if I can fix it." And yes, if I can manage. She sent me to the President, she made a letter, saying that the owner, the name that was on the card they gave me, was to Marcos Ibarra. The owner of the card. But who had worked was Jacobo Reyes. And that led us to Zacatecas. And yes, it got fixed. And Panfilo also is trying to fix it as well. Rosa's father, is in that. And others there, Marcelina right? (Asking his wife Genoveva Reyes) Marcelina, and Ponchito, Dona Lucia I think also got his thirty eight thousand pesos. A Cruzito Mary, he is dead already. Cruzito is dead but they also give it to the widows. Only person that I know they gave is to Mary.

Jl: Is she a widow?

JR: Mande? (Come again?)

Jl: Is she a widow?

JR: She is a widow but her husband was a Bracero and they gave her thirty eight thousand pesos also for that. And to others, not many. (Interview ends here)