

The Sacramento Movimiento Chicano and Mexican American Education Oral History Project

George Singh

Oral History Memoir

Interviewed by Juan Carrillo

Date of interview: July 25 2023

Unofficial transcript generated by Panopto captioning services; edited by Savannah Mitchell

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[00:00:17]

Carrillo George, thank you for being here. As you know, this interview is a video, audio recording of you. Part of the Sacramento Movimiento, Chicano and Mexican-American Education Project Oral History. Which will be archived at the Donald and Beverly Gerth, Special Collections and University Archives and CSU Sacramento. Do you agree to this recording?

[00:00:44]

George Singh Yes, I do.

[00:00:46]

Carrillo Today is July 25th and it's 2023. It is now 1:37 p.m. And the location of this interview is Sacramento, California. Would you please state your full name and spell it, please.

[00:01:03]

Singh And George Espinosa seen Espinosa with us as he and.

[00:01:11]

Carrillo Yes, engage. And would you provide us with your birth date, lunch date, and your

[00:01:16]

Singh March 13, 1944?

[00:01:24]

Carrillo Where were you born?

[00:01:26]

Singh I was born in El Centro, California. Imperial County.

[00:01:31]

Carrillo And where were you raised? I don't really remember things until I was three, and we moved annually as migrant farm workers. My father would Li couldn't own land because of his Asian status, so he would lease crops and we would move up the valley, starting out, I think, from

Bakersfield. I was too little to do the work. Then the older brothers, the sisters work, cotton fields and then. One year we were in Clovis, near Fresno. Another year we were in a campo near Lodi. Stockton. In those places, both of those places, my father had grapes, raisins and table grapes. And then we were in Clarksburg. And. Watsonville. We had apricots in Watsonville and then we went to Yuba City and got prunes. And then we ended up staying in Yuba City three years. So I actually started first grade in a school in Yuba City. The country school called Tierra when I elementary school. And I. I was the first one in my family. Of the ten children. Number one. Number eight. The first one in my family to go to the same school all the way through elementary and high school. Everybody else went here and there and different schools. And I was the second one, second to the fourth one to graduate from high school. So most all my life was Yuba City. Until I turn one more step.

[00:03:29]

Carrillo And what about your college? Were you for a second, third, fourth to go to college?

[00:03:35]

Singh I was a first. And after I graduated from University high school, I went to. You were college. You were junior college. They called it in Marysville across the Feather River from Yuba City. And I did two years there and I didn't actually have money to transfer to a four year school. So I didn't didn't transfer. And that was a year 1965 when the big draft happened. They were drafting people for.

[00:04:17]

[Unknown Speaker] Wonder if I just put it out here.

[00:04:19]

Singh Oh, no, go ahead. Robin Oakley.

[00:04:30]

Carrillo Know. Hmm. I'm going to ask the question again. And after. Graduating from elementary school and then graduating from high school. Did you go to college?

[00:05:10]

Singh Yeah, I did. Two years, which could have been transferable at community college. I was in UVA's Center area, was a Yuba Junior college. How many did? Two. Who? Three semesters. No, two semesters there. Then I got drafted.

[00:05:35]

Carrillo Now, was that when you were drafted?

[00:05:40]

Singh I was drafted in 1965. I think President Lyndon Johnson had just passed the. Whatever was the order, the bill, executive order authorizing the drafting of young men to go to Vietnam. And that

was March 1965. I got my notice immediately. April 1965. But I was still enrolled in courses. So I was given a three month deferment and I entered the U.S. Army in August 1965.

[00:06:13]

Carrillo Before we take that up, let me. Spend a little more time in your earlier years. You described the work of your family as seasonal workers or migrant workers. So did both of your parents do that work for a living?

[00:06:36]

Singh Yeah. My father pretty much arranged all the travels and the locations and is the one that scouted out places to go to work. But he would get. Labor camps and my mother would work as a cook in the labor camp. So I spent most of my young days so that I could remember from three until I was eight years old in the kitchen with her. That I guess, was the childcare the time. So they she put me to work when I was six. Oh, Molly Tillis, you know, cutting vegetables, scouring out pots and pans. So I did that until I was nine. And then my father had me start to work in the fields. When I was 11, I actually started working on my own in the irrigation in the orchards. So. Trapped in labor camps for a fifth. The first few years were braceros, and then in 54, think the Bracero program ended. 1954. But a lot of the men that had been there or braceros, came back calling themselves laborers. They weren't there legally, but the camp was still there. I know on one ranch in Yuba City. So there were always like 300 some guys living at the camp and. My sisters to my sisters help in the kitchen. But I think by the time I was nine, I was making a thousand tortillas per meal. I wasn't rolling them out. I wasn't good at that. But I would get they would throw the tortillas on a commercial was this huge of a restaurant grill in the kitchen. And it was my job to flip the tortillas until they were cooked. Oh. And with 300 guys, 7000 was barely enough for everybody. They all got three tortillas per meal.

[00:08:50]

Carrillo Your siblings, too. How many siblings did you have?

[00:08:54]

Singh There were ten children total. I'm the eighth of the ten, and number nine died right after birth. Undeveloped esophagus. There was no way to keep him alive, apparently. And he was born in what? Watsonville. And then number ten came along a year later. Also born in Watsonville, Maine, was the youngest two years younger than me. So, Turtle, how many boys, how many girls you know, were would've have been six for girls. And like, for all my sisters were older than me and six boys. Five that survived.

[00:06:36]

Carrillo And the primary language growing up.

[00:09:39]

Singh Everybody spoke Spanish, including my father. But my mother learned Punjabi. So they communicated in Punjabi and Spanish. And the older children, the firstborn, were also learned Punjabi. But everybody spoke Spanish. Enough. When I was five, I went to an intensive English

training program and my sisters conducted. They were not going to let me enter first grade speaking Spanish, so. Matter of fact, we weren't allowed to speak Spanish at school. And with the times in the 1950s when young men weren't allowed to speak Spanish on the school grounds.

[00:10:22]

Carrillo No. And you remember that?

[00:10:25]

Singh That's. Oh, yeah. Because most of my friends there, the school is pretty much Chicano, have Chicano and have poor white. And there was one black girl. And her brother, the only black family in Sumter County. Oh. Oh. My friends, the ones that you cannot let go of. My friends were put into what they called a. M. R classes. Mentally retarded classes. And really what it was was a speech class. They're being taught to change the kit and the [INAUDIBLE] kind of thing. We had trouble pronouncing certain combination letters and. And for most of them like that, I remember because I knew all their parents as well. Part of a close Catholic community. Her parents only spoke Spanish. Well, it's just a. They were all. Some of them were immigrant Mexicanos. But a lot of them had been born in Texas, so their children were second, some of them even third generation American. Oh, no. Of course, some of those people, I guess, had been there before the Mexican America U.S. war and that Tejanos anyway. So they had always been there. My mother's people were from Houma. Which became part of Arizona at one point after the United States won the US-Mexico War. Her people, which were Coco by Amanda York, Yaqui Indian. Were part of the Sonora desert. Time in Sonora was all one park know. And I think actually she might have been born in Sonora. But then it would have been Yuma, Sonora, not Yuma, Arizona. If I remember right, the land where she was born was bought by the United States so they could put the Southern sun, the Pacific Railroad into their. And. That added on to the land that the United States had taken from Mexico. Oh. I think.

[00:12:55]

Carrillo And so when you were growing up and Cuba, I don't know if it's true in Watsonville, you remember.

108

00:13:03,860 --> 00:13:08,050

Growing up in a neighborhood. You're the town or.

109

00:13:10,190 --> 00:13:15,140

Labor camps? No, it's pretty much all rural because my father would lease land.

110

00:13:15,860 --> 00:13:20,630

Our apricot orchard was out in the Horo Valley. Outside of town.

111

00:13:21,380 --> 00:13:26,210

But my mother would also have a vegetable garden. And she would.

112

00:13:27,670 --> 00:13:30,910

Take the vegetables into into Watsonville.

113

00:13:30,920 --> 00:13:34,540

They had farmer's markets, so she would take her vegetables in.

114

00:13:35,170 --> 00:13:43,630

It was also part of my job just helping to clean the civilian, cut vegetables and pack stuff up to take into the markets.

115

00:13:45,460 --> 00:13:48,550

So your neighborhood was really your home.

116

00:13:50,820 --> 00:13:54,010

And your neighbors are really your brothers and sisters.

117

00:13:54,610 --> 00:13:59,140

Yeah. Hung out with your families? Pretty much, yeah.

118

00:14:01,300 --> 00:14:10,180

In all those other places? Yeah. They were again, mostly Mexican, but some Filipino and Clarksburg.

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00:14:10,480 --> 00:14:19,810

The labor camp there? Yeah, actually, those, I guess, would be in the summertime, usually from about May until about in October.

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00:14:20,380 --> 00:14:26,680

It was the farm workers were there. We are about settled for the others that came back on their own.

121

00:14:27,280 --> 00:14:30,490

The settlers would not have come with children, correct?

122

00:14:31,210 --> 00:14:37,480

No. No, it was men only. Yeah, but yet the migrant workers often were families.

123

00:14:37,720 --> 00:14:42,300

Yeah. Yeah, we had. My mother was a wonderful partner.

124

00:14:42,790 --> 00:14:50,560

Remember that? The associate. I went to Obama. So there were always those types of activities and events that we would be part of.

125

00:14:51,460 --> 00:15:03,470

We also had. A radio DJ name was Max Oliver, and he had a radio program on the local radio station.

126

00:15:03,950 --> 00:15:07,729

Can I see? Hmm. In what town? Just.

127

00:15:07,730 --> 00:15:11,450

He was in Yuba City. The station was Yuba City.

128

00:15:11,840 --> 00:15:20,630

Can I see? Was Marysville? Yuba City. And he had a program on Sundays, but he would do during the summer season.

129

00:15:20,750 --> 00:15:28,710

Mm hmm. They were all a farm orchestra. And all the families that were migrants that would come in, there would be thousands of people.

130

00:15:29,180 --> 00:15:33,770

He would put on Saturday night dances at the Memorial Auditorium.

131

00:15:34,640 --> 00:15:39,020

So a lot of my upbringing was attending the dances.

132

00:15:39,090 --> 00:15:45,440

You know, it was a family affair. All the adults, all the children and grandchildren and all the kids.

133

00:15:45,860 --> 00:15:49,280

So all my schoolmates were there and kids that I grew up with.

134

00:15:51,500 --> 00:16:01,910

And if there were family gatherings or different types of events with the world upon us, then that's where I would be taken.

135

00:16:02,420 --> 00:16:05,450

And I'd be hanging out with the kids that I knew from school.

136

00:16:06,320 --> 00:16:10,610

So we were completely isolated. But I didn't have next door neighbors.

137

00:16:11,600 --> 00:16:16,370

Even in Yuba City, we were out on a ranch and kind of isolated.

138

00:16:17,120 --> 00:16:20,990

I had two families that were close neighbors.

139

00:16:21,440 --> 00:16:28,010

They had farmworker housing. All of us did at the ranch, or provided that they were Japanese.

140

00:16:29,160 --> 00:16:36,840

And one of them was not married. And the other one was married and had three children.

141

00:16:37,500 --> 00:16:41,790

They're a little bit younger than me. Oh, for playmates.

142

00:16:41,850 --> 00:16:46,500

That was it. Otherwise, it was just my brothers and my one sister.

143

00:16:46,830 --> 00:16:52,040

Everybody else was older, so they all had jobs. Your.

144

00:16:53,830 --> 00:16:57,190

How would you describe the economic level of your family?

145

00:16:59,510 --> 00:17:03,220

Hmm. Everybody always felt that we were not poor.

146

00:17:04,320 --> 00:17:09,790

Because we did have money. You got a family of eight.

147

00:17:09,810 --> 00:17:14,910

Nine children, I guess. Eight, actually. My youngest brother never really seemed to have to work.

148

00:17:15,310 --> 00:17:22,380

Little baby. With eight people working and bringing money in.

149

00:17:23,190 --> 00:17:25,980

I was picking prunes when I was five years old.

150

00:17:27,020 --> 00:17:36,680

We were in Watsonville before we went up to Yuba City for the season and I was given a beach bucket and a real shovel.

151

00:17:37,130 --> 00:17:40,700

We got to go to the beach there in Santa Cruz.

152

00:17:41,810 --> 00:17:46,580

And I took the bucket with me and we started picking prunes.

153

00:17:46,580 --> 00:17:50,360

That's what I used to fill up to pour into the lug boxes.

154

00:17:50,960 --> 00:17:55,190

So I didn't. Couldn't carry the big pails. Oh, my.

155

00:17:56,860 --> 00:17:59,920

Yeah, we were making, I guess, pretty good money.

156

00:17:59,950 --> 00:18:08,050

I don't know what who's \$0.10 a box, you know, family could buy, pick it up prunes to fill 50 boxes in a day.

157

00:18:09,060 --> 00:18:15,040

You know, that would have been. Whatever that came out, two, five, five bucks or something like that.

158

00:18:15,520 --> 00:18:24,160

I brothers were paid \$0.80 an hour when they were tractor drivers or truck drivers or farm equipment operators.

159

00:18:25,770 --> 00:18:30,060

And I didn't actually get a good paying job until I was 14.

160

00:18:31,120 --> 00:18:35,040

I got a job in a in the prune dehydrator.

161

00:18:35,400 --> 00:18:38,430

Pretty big ranch. And I got paid.

162

00:18:38,580 --> 00:18:42,330

I started out at a dollar ten an hour.

163

00:18:43,470 --> 00:18:49,830

The most money that I've ever made. And my brothers are doing about the same, maybe a little bit more.

164

00:18:50,790 --> 00:18:56,700

So the family was, you know, collectively, we're all still living pretty much still living together.

165

00:18:57,640 --> 00:19:04,280

Oh. I would guess that, you know, we were doing a lot better than the other Mexicanos in our community.

166

00:19:05,510 --> 00:19:14,280

Well, because you mentioned your father lease land, which is not the typical story of migrant workers.

167

00:19:14,330 --> 00:19:17,649

Yeah. Yeah.

168

00:19:17,650 --> 00:19:23,610

Another of my friends. Well, most of my friends were permanent residents there.

169

00:19:24,360 --> 00:19:28,110

Sutter County has some funny rules. In some parts of the county.

170

00:19:29,550 --> 00:19:32,880

Certain areas you could live in, in certain areas you couldn't live in.

171

00:19:33,750 --> 00:19:41,460

And people that worked in YOLO County just below us, people around Woodland couldn't stay there.

172

00:19:41,940 --> 00:19:46,650

They had what they called sunset laws. So you couldn't live in YOLO County.

173

00:19:47,100 --> 00:19:57,270

You could live up in Sutter County and work the fields in in YOLO County, around Woodland Sparrow, Winters, those other areas.

174

00:19:58,480 --> 00:20:03,400

I'm not wasn't sure what they did to people that lived in and around Davis.

175

00:20:04,090 --> 00:20:11,530

And Davis, for the most part, was a university town. So I don't know if they really had farm laborers anywhere around there.

176

00:20:13,590 --> 00:20:20,310

And on the other side of us from Yuba City was the city of Marysville in Marysville.

177

00:20:21,390 --> 00:20:23,820

And you can't he didn't really have a lot of farmland.

178

00:20:24,480 --> 00:20:34,740

They did have peaches and nut crops, but the rest of the counties go up into the hills, you know, towards Grass Valley and Rome, Nevada City.

179

00:20:35,430 --> 00:20:39,810

That was kind of in my day, you know, 1950s and 1960s.

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00:20:40,380 --> 00:20:46,020

All the towns were small. I think you were sitting might have had 8000 people at the time.

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00:20:47,220 --> 00:20:52,380

I did have a big graduating class in high school. 300 and some.

182

00:20:53,500 --> 00:20:57,330

In my senior class, there were seven of us.

183

00:20:57,340 --> 00:21:00,770

The. Well, we called ourselves make honors in those days.

184

00:21:01,400 --> 00:21:07,970

Nobody had ever told us we were Chicano well, or that we weren't even make no, you know, not till a few years later.

185

00:21:08,210 --> 00:21:15,200

I got corrected about that. No sense year in me or, you know, soon Mexicanos.

186

00:21:16,160 --> 00:21:20,420

That's what some of the farm laborers with the braceros would say to that.

187

00:21:20,450 --> 00:21:30,200

You know, not for me. I'm not very funny if I use the word You grew up with a a blissful atmosphere.

188

00:21:31,760 --> 00:21:37,190

Um. Yeah, they were with me. Uh, yeah.

189

00:21:37,670 --> 00:21:41,980

It seems like we were not harassed too much.

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00:21:41,990 --> 00:21:46,310

They were just. People knew the limits. You didn't do it the way people did.

191

00:21:46,700 --> 00:21:53,870

Right. So in that sense, I wouldn't, you know, definitely not Emmett Till, you know, with no lynchings and that kind of thing.

192

00:21:54,470 --> 00:21:59,620

The one black family that lived about two miles from us, you know, they lived out in the country.

193

00:21:59,640 --> 00:22:04,040

They weren't allowed to live in Yuba City, and most of us were.

194

00:22:05,690 --> 00:22:11,060

I guess I would call colored kids. Most of us were out in the countryside, not in town.

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00:22:11,690 --> 00:22:18,140

Do you recall the first time you experienced racial discrimination or racial prejudice?

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00:22:19,060 --> 00:22:25,630

I didn't date white girls, that's for sure. So I guess that in a sense, was one aspect of it.

197

00:22:28,210 --> 00:22:33,840

And we really weren't rich enough to hang out in any of the better places.

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00:22:33,910 --> 00:22:41,770

On the question of dating, I mean, did you not date white girls because you were told you couldn't?

199

00:22:41,770 --> 00:22:45,430

Or because they said, Well, that's kind of understood.

200

00:22:45,920 --> 00:22:51,970

Yeah. Yeah. I mean, what what was it that all of my girlfriends.

201

00:22:53,650 --> 00:23:01,350

How did you learn that? How did you know that? It's almost like osmosis, and I can't quite.

202

00:23:02,340 --> 00:23:10,110

Remember, if I was ever told by any of my older brothers or sisters, I might have been told something by my older sisters.

203

00:23:10,110 --> 00:23:18,190

Don't. Don't take those girls out. So I was active in high school in the.

204

00:23:19,750 --> 00:23:25,570

Catholic Youth Organization. But again, most of the Catholic kids were Dominicans.

205

00:23:26,170 --> 00:23:35,200

There were a lot of white Catholics, and we would get together for the Catholic youth activities, going the roundups and stuff like that.

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00:23:35,590 --> 00:23:43,620

But it was never. Never a practice of wanting to socialize that much with the white people.

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00:23:44,760 --> 00:23:46,170

The question that was.

208

00:23:47,510 --> 00:23:59,150

As it's written, as did you or your family experienced any discrimination growing up with a year that, from what I understand from my older sisters,

209

00:24:00,380 --> 00:24:06,080

the years that we lived in the Imperial Valley was everybody was born there except for the youngest one.

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00:24:07,910 --> 00:24:11,200

El Centro Brawley was small in color.

211

00:24:11,240 --> 00:24:18,560

Patria and again out in the countryside, all the older ones in the family went to segregated schools.

212

00:24:19,600 --> 00:24:23,140

There was a colored school, and then there was the white school.

213

00:24:24,010 --> 00:24:30,340

And the white school had a bus that picked the children up, the not the colored kids.

214

00:24:31,370 --> 00:24:37,520

Well, and early populations were pretty small, scattered in Imperial County.

215

00:24:39,960 --> 00:24:46,530

It might have been, I think a little bit of a difference would have been in Riverside County, the Palm Springs area.

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00:24:48,330 --> 00:24:55,070

I think we live near thermal, just above the Salton Sea, and they didn't seem to have the same kinds of rules.

217

00:24:56,580 --> 00:25:02,460

Mainly because the population wasn't that large. They could have they couldn't afford to have separate schools.

218

00:25:05,310 --> 00:25:07,110

And we weren't anywhere near San Diego.

219

00:25:07,530 --> 00:25:16,140

I don't remember anything about problems at the family head in San Diego because one of my oldest sister was one of the Rosie the Riveter.

220

00:25:16,830 --> 00:25:29,280

She left the Imperial Valley and went over to San Diego and got a job in an assembly plant putting together parts for airplanes and things like that.

221

00:25:30,090 --> 00:25:39,360

She's the only one that ever broke away from the family like that. And then my oldest brother was drafted during World War Two, so he.

222

00:25:40,440 --> 00:25:43,829

He was gone for. Oh. Eight years.

223

00:25:43,830 --> 00:25:50,460

I think after the war, he went to Panama and stayed there for some other terms.

224

00:25:51,060 --> 00:25:54,460

But I never heard them talk about fights.

225

00:25:55,380 --> 00:26:00,420

They socialized in certain places, went to certain restaurants, certain bars.

226

00:26:02,980 --> 00:26:06,130

And then there was a situation that I was in.

227

00:26:06,610 --> 00:26:12,750

I just knew that you didn't. Associate that with girls anyway.

228

00:26:13,080 --> 00:26:21,450

Two of my best friends were white guys, and I went all the way through grade school, first grade, all the way to Yuba College.

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00:26:22,350 --> 00:26:29,600

Two of them were you aware of? Of the larger civil rights movement in this country.

230

00:26:31,680 --> 00:26:40,440

Going up years. Oh, yeah. I think first time I heard the word racism was in my senior year in 1962.

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00:26:42,450 --> 00:26:50,980

And I did hang out with. The black family, the Crawfords, because one of the girls was in my class.

232

00:26:52,140 --> 00:26:58,410

So I wouldn't really go to see Gilda. I was going to hang out with her brother, but her father was, you know,

233

00:26:58,410 --> 00:27:04,860

pretty open about bringing all the kids in and talking to them about different kinds of situations.

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00:27:04,860 --> 00:27:12,240

And we heard about the idea of lynching and are black people's experiences in the South.

235

00:27:13,980 --> 00:27:17,560

And in those days we call them Negroes. That was pretty much.

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00:27:18,050 --> 00:27:25,470

It wasn't Negroes and it was colored people. I think the 1962.

237

00:27:27,820 --> 00:27:35,500

You know, it's 1962. My senior year in high school was the beginning of the farmworkers movement.

238

00:27:37,650 --> 00:27:43,830

That had been a bunch of turmoil of sort of country ranchers were pretty opposed to any type of organizing.

239

00:27:44,810 --> 00:27:48,049

You know, kind of gave you an idea what my salary range was.

240

00:27:48,050 --> 00:27:54,440

You know, farm workers pretty oppressed or not. And this is about the time that you are entering adulthood.

241

00:27:55,390 --> 00:28:01,600

Right? Yeah, I would have been. My senior year, You know, six months later, I was going to be 18.

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00:28:02,520 --> 00:28:10,080

So. So that's that's the political thing that you were touched by.

243

00:28:11,520 --> 00:28:15,120

Farm worker. Yeah, the United Farm Workers.

244

00:28:15,120 --> 00:28:21,660

And I guess there was talk. I didn't get to meet Cesar Chavez in those days.

245

00:28:22,020 --> 00:28:31,580

Huh. Matter of fact, the UFW was kind of, like, banned from Sutter County, Although I did know some people in in our community.

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00:28:32,040 --> 00:28:39,390

I mean, kind of a couple of people that tried to organize through the UFW, but there just wasn't going to be allowed.

247

00:28:39,840 --> 00:28:44,550

If you did something like that, you weren't ever going to have a job in any of the ranchers.

248

00:28:45,060 --> 00:28:48,150

When when did the civil rights movement touch you?

249

00:28:50,390 --> 00:28:54,470

Directly or personally or. Let's see.

250

00:28:55,680 --> 00:29:06,170

What did you learn about and when did you. About what was going on in the larger well, that that year I heard about Martin Luther King.

251

00:29:06,980 --> 00:29:11,209

I had heard about Rosa Parks. That had been a big deal.

252

00:29:11,210 --> 00:29:14,960

And Brown versus Board of Education.

253

00:29:17,230 --> 00:29:22,690

I might have been kind of unique in that regard that I paid attention to those kinds of things.

254

00:29:24,010 --> 00:29:27,220

A lot of my friends didn't really see what difference it made for them.

255

00:29:28,230 --> 00:29:34,680

But I thought it was really significant that all of a sudden there were not going to be segregated schools anymore.

256

00:29:35,810 --> 00:29:39,460

But I wasn't going to a segregated school. Same thing.

257

00:29:39,470 --> 00:29:42,980

Yuba City High School was the only high school in Sutter County.

258

00:29:44,140 --> 00:29:51,260

Oh, everybody had to go there if they went to high school. Your your relationship to the term Chicano.

259

00:29:51,830 --> 00:30:00,010

Chicano. Do you recall how that sort of came into your life during it?

260

00:30:00,310 --> 00:30:05,020

Yeah. It wasn't. I came back from Vietnam, came back and.

261

00:30:06,970 --> 00:30:11,480

Went back to school. I had I now had money to go to school, which was when?

262

00:30:11,740 --> 00:30:16,680

In 19. When I came back in 67.

263

00:30:16,690 --> 00:30:19,720

So I didn't actually go back to school till 1969.

264

00:30:20,060 --> 00:30:24,400

Okay. So at that point now the term Chicano enters your life.

265

00:30:24,550 --> 00:30:27,670

Yeah, La Raza was probably the first big name.

266

00:30:30,160 --> 00:30:34,570

And it was kind of like an off and on thing in my family.

267

00:30:35,260 --> 00:30:41,230

We had cousins in L.A. and one cousin that called himself Chicano Martinez.

268

00:30:42,300 --> 00:30:48,990

And in the 1930s, you know, But Chicano was like a not even a pachuco or cholo kind of a term.

269

00:30:49,260 --> 00:30:52,800

It was just something really bad. But we weren't allowed to use that.

270

00:30:53,100 --> 00:31:04,380

We called ourselves Mexicanos and or for the rest of us, when we were around some of the friends, we were a half and half, half Mexican, half Punjabi.

271

00:31:05,130 --> 00:31:08,550

And were there was a group, a group of us in Yuba City.

272

00:31:10,890 --> 00:31:18,210

A lot of the Punjabi immigrants had come in and started buying land and were marrying

273

00:31:18,420 --> 00:31:23,250

Canas because they weren't allowed to bring wives over at the time or men only.

274

00:31:23,910 --> 00:31:33,960

But marrying them in Ghana if they had citizenship status, allowed the farmers, the Punjabi farmer, to buy land.

275

00:31:34,820 --> 00:31:41,120

So. A lot of the Punjabis in there are buying some of the biggest peach orchards in town.

276

00:31:41,840 --> 00:31:48,490

They really got moved into it. I guess that that distinction has always been there.

277

00:31:48,880 --> 00:31:54,880

Sometimes the Mohicans didn't like the Punjabis and Good Jobs, never really liked the Mexican McDonalds,

278

00:31:55,120 --> 00:31:59,520

or they mistreated them as farm workers because they owned the land, you know.

279

00:32:00,460 --> 00:32:09,670

But that was the first kind of like direct or distinction of racial separation.

280

00:32:10,790 --> 00:32:14,330

Not that an ethnic animosity or prejudice.

281

00:32:15,270 --> 00:32:20,220

When I came back. I spent a couple of years working in a factory.

282

00:32:21,200 --> 00:32:24,860

Yeah, I got married and decided to go back to school.

283

00:32:25,460 --> 00:32:31,670

My wife was a student at San Jose State and had been part of the.

284

00:32:33,700 --> 00:32:43,000

Mask, I think they call it. Mexican-American Student Confederation, which changed its name in 1969 and became Metro.

285

00:32:44,500 --> 00:32:50,560

When I was at Merritt College that first year in 1969, we were let as a student union.

286

00:32:52,050 --> 00:32:58,020

And there were a few. I guess, South Americans.

287

00:33:00,730 --> 00:33:06,580

Who weren't Mexican origin. And at the time, I guess people were making a distinction.

288

00:33:07,210 --> 00:33:11,050

In order to be Chicano, you had to have Mexican heritage.

289

00:33:12,240 --> 00:33:20,130

But a lot of the people there, the Latinos, the South Americans, were considering themselves Chicano.

290

00:33:21,430 --> 00:33:27,260

But we had them. People from Venezuela, El Salvador.

291

00:33:27,290 --> 00:33:36,260

I remember that Colombia. There were students at the time same age as me Claressa kind of got.

292

00:33:37,490 --> 00:33:44,210

Thrown out in favor of the. The Chicano Youth Conference that came out of Denver.

293

00:33:45,140 --> 00:33:49,020

So I hit going back to college.

294

00:33:49,040 --> 00:33:59,210

I hit right into the movement. I knew as a factory worker about the high school walkouts in 1968.

295

00:34:00,350 --> 00:34:10,400

Things were really boiling up. I was in Vietnam in 1966 when United Farm Workers did the big march from Delano into Sacramento.

296

00:34:11,270 --> 00:34:16,460

But I had heard about it. I got letters from home telling me about all this movement that was happening.

297

00:34:17,600 --> 00:34:21,140

So I was aware of those things. I wasn't an actual participant.

298

00:34:21,170 --> 00:34:28,160

Then when I did come back, though, I did start getting involved with the support activities for UFW.

299

00:34:29,400 --> 00:34:32,100

And I was living in Berkeley. And.

300

00:34:32,970 --> 00:34:42,850

And then in Oakland for a lot of support work was, you know, picketing Safeway stores, picketing the Safeway headquarters in Oakland.

301

00:34:45,260 --> 00:34:50,450

And then wherever we could back up in city, try to get people not to buy grapes.

302

00:34:51,830 --> 00:35:02,080

Family members, that is. So I would guess I went from almost no consciousness of a monumental social issue,

303

00:35:02,080 --> 00:35:09,820

civil rights issues, or even overt discrimination and racism in high school.

304

00:35:10,270 --> 00:35:19,960

It just didn't seem to have been there. But I ran into some real ugly things in Vietnam amongst U.S. military.

305

00:35:20,930 --> 00:35:26,340

Two black guys didn't get along with the white guys. We had a lot of Southerners that were in the U.S. Army.

306

00:35:26,720 --> 00:35:31,130

White Southerners and a lot of urban blacks.

307

00:35:32,090 --> 00:35:40,940

The Detroit, Philadelphia and New York. Those guys hated the Southerners who were against what it would be called now rednecks.

308

00:35:41,870 --> 00:35:47,600

They lived for the cause. They were from the South, and that's what they had always known.

309

00:35:49,050 --> 00:35:56,750

And when I started asking some questions about it, turned out it was because that vision I was with First Infantry Division,

310

00:35:56,750 --> 00:36:01,490

the Big Red one, had been stationed in Fort Riley, Kansas.

311

00:36:02,930 --> 00:36:13,550

And it was always a permanent base after World War Two. The big Red one had pretty famous reputation from World War Two and the battles over there.

312

00:36:14,450 --> 00:36:18,860

So their permanent home in Fort Riley, Kansas, put them directly in the South.

313

00:36:19,790 --> 00:36:26,000

So if you wanted to have an army job or military job, be a soldier and stay home.

314

00:36:26,720 --> 00:36:37,480

You went to First Infantry Division. You went to Fort Riley. So the guys that I got to meet were from Alabama, Mississippi, Missouri, Kansas.

315

00:36:37,490 --> 00:36:45,530

Yeah. And they had certain attitudes about they were pretty upset when they started integrating the company that I was in.

316

00:36:46,810 --> 00:36:52,120

But you guys are getting killed. You had to keep replacing a lot of the losses.

317

00:36:52,690 --> 00:36:58,450

And it didn't seem to make any difference at that point what color your skin was or what your ethnicity was.

318

00:36:59,830 --> 00:37:03,760

And people had to start getting adjusted to that ugly incident.

319

00:37:04,300 --> 00:37:09,940

People shooting other people in the back of I van trying to put it off as a.

320

00:37:11,430 --> 00:37:14,910

War casualty. It was just flat out racism.

321

00:37:16,280 --> 00:37:21,380

So I was ready when I came back in 1967 and ready to get doing something.

322

00:37:22,330 --> 00:37:25,600

But I started working first instead of going to school.

323

00:37:26,200 --> 00:37:29,710

What do you mean by you came back ready to do something?

324

00:37:30,630 --> 00:37:36,690

Well, I wanted to be part of what was happening or I saw a change, a significant change.

325

00:37:37,650 --> 00:37:42,660

I think what I when I look back on it, I think what my.

326

00:37:44,060 --> 00:37:48,080

Younger years were kind of like a blissful situation.

327

00:37:48,810 --> 00:37:57,170

It was pretty much of a protected, you know, community, you know, pretty protected by the Catholic connection.

328

00:37:57,710 --> 00:38:01,470

You know, there. We were just all together in one community.

329

00:38:02,890 --> 00:38:11,320

Small town, but. Then I began to realize that that wasn't really what was happening in the rest of the country,

330

00:38:11,320 --> 00:38:14,780

and it wasn't what was happening in the rest of the world. So.

331

00:38:16,460 --> 00:38:25,050

Vietnamese were, I guess, pretty angry with the U.S. military being there.

332

00:38:26,490 --> 00:38:33,090

We rounded them up from the countryside, stuck them into a strategic village right where our base camp was.

333

00:38:33,870 --> 00:38:38,790

And I had one woman come up to me and point to my arm.

334

00:38:39,270 --> 00:38:43,560

She says, You mean same thing. Why are you here?

335

00:38:44,920 --> 00:38:48,549

And it's like you kind of realize it.

336

00:38:48,550 --> 00:38:52,480

You know, there's an alliance that you have with other people of color.

337

00:38:53,670 --> 00:39:00,300

Yeah, I knew I was there to protect U.S. interests in Vietnam and anti-communism and.

338

00:39:01,530 --> 00:39:07,890

Catholic Church had said, if you're a Catholic, then you need to go to Vietnam to protect Vietnamese Catholics.

339

00:39:08,160 --> 00:39:11,970

So your duty as a Catholic to fight communism.

340

00:39:13,280 --> 00:39:16,800

Things start to get kind of like. Tumbled in my head.

341

00:39:17,880 --> 00:39:24,660

I came back and there was a lot of stuff going on. My wife was at Berkeley at the time.

342

00:39:25,320 --> 00:39:29,070

That's when I first met some of the students that were there.

343

00:39:30,600 --> 00:39:35,880

There were part of. They call you Frontier.

344

00:39:35,890 --> 00:39:41,450

And there was another group they might have been. Mexican-American youth male.

345

00:39:43,610 --> 00:39:52,490

But then everybody switched over. In 1969, after the Chicano Youth Conference in Denver, everybody became machista as well,

346

00:39:52,520 --> 00:39:59,270

became part of the Movimiento except for the strange people in San Francisco.

347

00:40:00,490 --> 00:40:05,880

Now. Did you become a manchester? Yeah, I was part of La Raza Student Union at Merritt.

348

00:40:06,460 --> 00:40:12,720

And then we. We voted to change the name. We had sent a delegation to Denver to represent us.

349

00:40:12,730 --> 00:40:18,730

And when they came back with all this news about the plan, they asked Ian, um.

350

00:40:20,470 --> 00:40:24,880

And demand for everyone to join into one organization.

351

00:40:25,510 --> 00:40:32,000

The Movimiento Estudiante. Chicano. The Catalan. So that's that's pretty much what we did.

352

00:40:33,830 --> 00:40:39,530

And then there were other things that were starting to happen besides Cesar Chavez.

353

00:40:39,530 --> 00:40:45,380

And you have w there was Corky Gonzales and Denver with the.

354

00:40:47,200 --> 00:40:51,040

Oh, okay. Just slip my head right now.

355

00:40:51,250 --> 00:40:54,610

I spent a lot of time in Denver after I had met those people.

356

00:40:56,640 --> 00:41:03,840

I can't think right now. What? But Corky's organization was T and I actually ended up getting to travel down to Texas.

357

00:41:03,840 --> 00:41:09,600

I got to meet. Don't do this to me.

358

00:41:10,710 --> 00:41:14,610

I get to meet Ray as the hearing. After he got released from prison.

359

00:41:15,180 --> 00:41:20,880

And Jose Gutierrez, of course. I'm here, was part of the La Raza Anita party.

360

00:41:21,240 --> 00:41:26,490

And they had taken over Crystal City, South Texas, Nevada.

361

00:41:27,390 --> 00:41:34,350

So there were things that were really happening were real significant leading toward change.

362

00:41:35,330 --> 00:41:42,500

And I became part of an organization in Oakland in 1970 called A Committed Amigo Islam.

363

00:41:43,250 --> 00:41:47,000

And we were going to begin doing research work of students.

364

00:41:48,250 --> 00:42:01,420

To begin looking at ways to create a bond between Mexico and the territories that have been lost to the United States after the U.S. Mexico war.

365

00:42:02,320 --> 00:42:06,490

That's why the mainly is London.

366

00:42:06,820 --> 00:42:11,390

We thought that we were going to have a revolution. We'd be able to be rejoined to Mexico.

367

00:42:11,470 --> 00:42:15,230

The time. What was. I'm just going to leave.

368

00:42:17,070 --> 00:42:20,460

But this is the question that. We're asking.

369

00:42:21,150 --> 00:42:27,470

Interviews. The role. The role of guns.

370

00:42:28,510 --> 00:42:33,280

In the meantime. But what what can you say about the role of.

371

00:42:35,360 --> 00:42:48,560

Well, my my work with Don, with my House Committee alum equally as long was set up where we had a whole lot of us to begin with.

372

00:42:49,070 --> 00:42:54,049

Chicano students. In those days, enrollments weren't that great colleges.

373

00:42:54,050 --> 00:43:03,290

So anyone that was willing to join in the organization or do part of the organization work was welcomed in, including women.

374

00:43:04,250 --> 00:43:09,040

So we had quite a few very strong, very determined Chicanos.

375

00:43:11,240 --> 00:43:15,860

And my wife and I at the time she was Chicana from Sacramento.

376

00:43:16,760 --> 00:43:21,340

Her. She was an activist up there at Berkeley.

377

00:43:22,060 --> 00:43:31,630

So we spent part of our time in support of the thermal student strike, and we were in support of the concept of Third World.

378

00:43:32,670 --> 00:43:40,230

And not just cultural nationalism, not just Chicano only, not just black only, not just Native American only.

379

00:43:40,860 --> 00:43:45,540

Although we associated with all of those different groups and those people.

380

00:43:46,410 --> 00:43:53,210

But, you know, take the women that I got to meet. We're all pretty strong willed.

381

00:43:53,870 --> 00:43:59,450

They were determined to be just as much as the revolution, but that didn't mean that they were just as accepted.

382

00:43:59,900 --> 00:44:03,650

They were battles at UC Berkeley. Glad I wasn't there.

383

00:44:04,970 --> 00:44:11,360

I ended up leaving Merritt and going to Cal State Hayward to finish up my degree work.

384

00:44:11,990 --> 00:44:16,040

And there we ran into some pretty strong will.

385

00:44:16,580 --> 00:44:25,310

What it had been farmworker girls from Southern Alameda County Union City, below Hayward.

386

00:44:25,880 --> 00:44:30,560

Those are all used to be farmers farm workers in their caught up.

387

00:44:32,550 --> 00:44:37,890

And they were not shy about saying they needed to be included.

388

00:44:39,940 --> 00:44:44,380

I'm going to leapfrog and maybe I ask the question. But she comes too early.

389

00:44:45,220 --> 00:44:49,100

But. Include your experience.

390

00:44:49,930 --> 00:44:54,480

In the movimiento. In the Sacramento Valley.

391

00:44:56,400 --> 00:45:01,320

Huh? Okay. Well, what?

392

00:45:01,500 --> 00:45:08,010

And well, I was going back. One of the things that Comus did is we set up a news monitoring service.

393

00:45:08,490 --> 00:45:20,250

We took clippings from papers throughout the Southwest, throughout Aztlan, what we call it Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, California.

394

00:45:20,850 --> 00:45:26,940

We put the clippings together in a booklet, and every month we would mail that out.

395

00:45:27,360 --> 00:45:32,010

We got subscriptions and talked a lot of libraries into buying it.

396

00:45:32,950 --> 00:45:41,140

And one library that did buy into it here was state tax.

397

00:45:41,220 --> 00:45:44,930

State library. And then we gave a free copy to.

398

00:45:47,470 --> 00:45:57,220

Studies here at sexting. And we gave a free copy to Chicano Studies, Chicano Studies Program at UC Davis.

399

00:45:58,610 --> 00:46:04,570

And that I think are real for Sara, the book La Raza Bookstore and the Gallery.

400

00:46:04,580 --> 00:46:14,890

Plus I also got a free copy. So that was my my introduction to Sacramento was bringing copies of that and keeping in touch with with people with the.

401

00:46:16,230 --> 00:46:19,920

Ha Dang bike has lost the name again.

402

00:46:25,060 --> 00:46:30,430

And I think this should be about what year this should be about when.

403

00:46:32,560 --> 00:46:44,170

We started that in 1970 and that that news monitoring service went all the way to 1979 for there was a loss of interest in the cost.

404

00:46:44,170 --> 00:46:45,640

Too much for us to keep doing that,

405

00:46:47,530 --> 00:47:01,240

although we had all of the UC libraries statewide and most of the Cal State libraries were also subscribers and we had some in.

406

00:47:04,640 --> 00:47:08,570

San Antonio and Albuquerque, New Mexico.

407

00:47:09,770 --> 00:47:21,500

And we had people in Phenix University in Arizona who are producing about maybe 100 copies a month that were sold for 80 bucks.

408

00:47:22,530 --> 00:47:28,990

That's what kind of kept their organization going. All right.

409

00:47:30,360 --> 00:47:34,860

I was also involved in another organization called events that Almost Brigade.

410

00:47:35,950 --> 00:47:48,080

And we were organizing young people, mostly students, but any young people, workers to union people to go to Cuba for volunteer work and like.

411

00:47:50,100 --> 00:47:53,470

Uh, yeah. Cuba.

412

00:47:53,770 --> 00:47:59,560

See, that was one of our groups my organization had developed relations with.

413

00:48:00,960 --> 00:48:07,980

People that supported the Cuban Revolution and people that supported the Irish rebellion.

414

00:48:11,430 --> 00:48:15,030

Well, we we hosted Bernardine Dohrn from IRA.

415

00:48:15,650 --> 00:48:18,690

Yeah. It was the idea of bringing together all those things.

416

00:48:19,410 --> 00:48:23,980

And Ireland was an example for us.

417

00:48:24,000 --> 00:48:31,380

It was a colonized territory, like we thought Iceland was a colonized territory and.

418

00:48:33,640 --> 00:48:37,180

Cuba was being battered by the United States after the revolution.

419

00:48:38,110 --> 00:48:45,670

The blockade had started. So part of the effort with the brigade was to keep on keep on opening.

420

00:48:46,790 --> 00:48:50,090

And try to circumvent the blockade.

421

00:48:52,210 --> 00:49:01,980

It's part of my job and part of my role in in that organization and in my heart was to reach out to different areas.

422

00:49:01,980 --> 00:49:07,120

So trying to get as many people involved. I went into Fresno State.

423

00:49:07,540 --> 00:49:12,580

Not much luck there. People were afraid. It was funny and there were activists here.

424

00:49:12,700 --> 00:49:19,060

Every part of Fresno State match up more support of younger farm workers.

425

00:49:20,130 --> 00:49:25,680

And didn't see a reason for going to Cuba or doing anything at all aligned with that.

426

00:49:26,660 --> 00:49:31,490

And my conversations with Caesar was pretty much the same thing.

427

00:49:32,540 --> 00:49:36,800

Can't get involved in that. Our fight is here. This is our struggle here.

428

00:49:38,840 --> 00:49:46,100

But it was the idea of trying to unite a front in the United States to begin making some significant changes.

429

00:49:47,060 --> 00:49:52,700

When I found three women here in Sacramento that were willing to do that.

430

00:49:54,560 --> 00:49:58,590

Celia Rodriguez. She was an artist, I think.

431

00:50:00,760 --> 00:50:08,700

Itamar Lerman Barboza. I'm trying to remember, and I know she's an artist too, but I can't remember what she was doing there.

432

00:50:08,750 --> 00:50:12,100

I think they were at Sex State and Mariano Rivera.

433

00:50:13,140 --> 00:50:20,370

Yeah, they were all students that separated good times in 1970, 1970 or 1971.

434

00:50:20,820 --> 00:50:25,080

I think they went on to brigade 19th summer of 1970.

435

00:50:26,450 --> 00:50:31,580

The third contingent was a third group of people that went and.

436

00:50:32,680 --> 00:50:37,150

I'd have to say they were all very strong willed women.

437

00:50:37,900 --> 00:50:44,950

Yeah, that was the most success that I had had in terms of organizing people for the fire brigade here.

438

00:50:45,430 --> 00:50:53,770

Most of the Chicanos that I met here and then I went into Los Angeles to help out people that were doing the organizing down there,

439

00:50:54,330 --> 00:51:06,310

having some problems that other political groups of the Chicanos in those initial years were afraid of being involved in anything that that could be,

440

00:51:07,060 --> 00:51:14,650

I guess, defined or labeled as communist or Marxist or pro Cuba.

441

00:51:16,000 --> 00:51:22,900

Oh, and I had some run ins with the brown beret groups in two different cities.

442

00:51:23,410 --> 00:51:28,630

You know, they weren't too, too happy with me about wanting to push the boundaries.

443

00:51:29,590 --> 00:51:39,420

It was bad enough I had been part of support for the terrible student strike at Berkeley, but then we had also been called La Raza Another.

444

00:51:40,440 --> 00:51:43,800

Yeah. Some of the metro conferences statewide that I went to.

445

00:51:43,860 --> 00:51:50,310

It was always this battle with San Francisco City College and San Francisco State College.

446

00:51:50,910 --> 00:51:54,319

And we're. It continued.

447

00:51:54,320 --> 00:51:58,940

I think they still continue to this day to be La Raza student Union.

448

00:51:59,810 --> 00:52:06,020

They just won't ascribe to anything else. But you see, the makeup of those organizations are.

449

00:52:07,140 --> 00:52:12,010

You can kind of see that's not. Pretty much any gun owner, not even Chicano in that sense.

450

00:52:14,470 --> 00:52:24,400

Well, you know what? Well, all of this, the differences and debates were because people believed in the Chicanos and believed that

451

00:52:24,400 --> 00:52:30,370

the Chicano movement was strong enough and powerful enough to make the changes that people,

452

00:52:30,820 --> 00:52:40,540

everyone agreed needed to be made. We needed to stop the discrimination, exclusion and the lack of civil rights, the lack of social mobility.

453

00:52:41,660 --> 00:52:45,830

Lack of education or access to education.

454

00:52:46,780 --> 00:52:50,820

And a lack of access to jobs, all those things.

455

00:52:53,080 --> 00:52:59,560

I think all the way up until 1968, that might have been the same time, 68 to 70.

456

00:53:00,070 --> 00:53:04,300

There were redlining activities that happened. You couldn't buy a house.

457

00:53:04,840 --> 00:53:09,430

All right. And in some cases, you could live in a neighborhood if you weren't quite.

458

00:53:10,410 --> 00:53:13,620

Or of a certain class or wealth.

459

00:53:15,500 --> 00:53:19,760

You had videos all over. Pretty much all the Americana.

460

00:53:19,970 --> 00:53:25,220

I never thought of it as that way in any other city, but there was a lot of you know,

461

00:53:25,490 --> 00:53:31,070

it was one little community in town, the predominantly Mexicanos Chicanos.

462

00:53:31,580 --> 00:53:35,330

What brought you to Sacramento area? Sacramento.

463

00:53:36,650 --> 00:53:40,220

Well. Things are kind of like blowing up.

464

00:53:40,230 --> 00:53:46,920

Not literally, but. All of the Fruitvale Project Organization has lost money.

465

00:53:48,000 --> 00:53:51,930

With Proposition 13, came in, had to do with property taxes.

466

00:53:52,680 --> 00:53:54,030

And when that happened,

467

00:53:54,870 --> 00:54:05,700

a lot of counties and cities that had depended on property taxes to support community organizations and community support activities,

468

00:54:06,330 --> 00:54:13,680

all that dried up. So where I was working at Central, Legal and along with the other organizations,

469

00:54:14,190 --> 00:54:19,620

we all pretty much agreed that the Central Salud Mental Health clinic on that Raza.

470

00:54:20,810 --> 00:54:23,990

And last later, we're going to remain.

471

00:54:24,380 --> 00:54:30,410

And we would. Push to have the county continue funding those activities.

472

00:54:30,860 --> 00:54:33,080

The rest of us are going to have to find some other way.

473

00:54:33,890 --> 00:54:40,550

I was already doing fundraising, writing grants and going to foundations, trying to keep activities going.

474

00:54:41,420 --> 00:54:45,560

So that money just it dried up immediately.

475

00:54:46,280 --> 00:54:53,150

And it took a while to rebuild a lot of that. But that was also part of my success in getting a job at UC Davis.

476

00:54:53,180 --> 00:54:59,060

They wanted someone that could write grant applications for student services and.

477

00:55:00,340 --> 00:55:04,780

So I got home, got a job at UC Davis, moved to Woodland.

478

00:55:05,560 --> 00:55:10,000

And what year was this? That was 1978.

479

00:55:11,120 --> 00:55:16,490

And almost immediately, one of the I hadn't realized that that was what was going to happen.

480

00:55:17,240 --> 00:55:20,780

But I was asked to take on the role of advisor.

481

00:55:21,700 --> 00:55:25,930

The administrative advisor to the Davis measure.

482

00:55:26,920 --> 00:55:32,290

Of course, the Metro wasn't too happy with that either. Oh, it was kind of like a delicate balance.

483

00:55:32,920 --> 00:55:40,840

I tried to do as much as I could to help Demetria. Part of it was getting money and student body money for them to put on activities.

484

00:55:41,630 --> 00:55:48,610

I was having a hard time selling tamales on the on the university quad to raise money to do anything.

485

00:55:49,630 --> 00:55:55,750

And so I kind of pushed there. The Metro began to do support work.

486

00:55:55,780 --> 00:56:01,690

We had a ballet Folklorico Don Sanchez at UC Davis, and we.

487

00:56:03,510 --> 00:56:09,270

The organizations agreed to start doing fundraising to support the United Farm Workers.

488

00:56:12,780 --> 00:56:16,830

Plus, they had a radio program called La Chicano.

489

00:56:18,030 --> 00:56:27,570

Pretty much a Sunday morning. There was a time that wasn't the least favorite time for students to want to do anything, any radio broadcasting.

490

00:56:28,290 --> 00:56:32,700

So it was a three hour program. They had a big allotment.

491

00:56:33,510 --> 00:56:36,810

A lot of the shows were only one hour long. If they were even that one.

492

00:56:37,810 --> 00:56:44,500

And found that Chicano broadcast throughout Sacramento, he had about maybe a 50 mile radius.

493

00:56:45,570 --> 00:56:50,430

It was pretty local as a local radio station and was a student radio station.

494

00:56:50,730 --> 00:56:56,100

They didn't lose their status the way 60 state student radio last year became.

495

00:56:57,000 --> 00:57:06,660

Kicks PR. Yeah. Um, so we were pretty much the only ones feeding Mexican music.

496

00:57:09,390 --> 00:57:15,750

Throughout the area develop a pretty big following amongst a lot of young people and a lot of other students.

497

00:57:21,470 --> 00:57:27,820

We are the. Person who eventually replaced the student affairs.

498

00:57:28,390 --> 00:57:37,300

Chicano Studies Student Affairs Coordinator Chuey Leyva was also on the board of directors of La Raza Bookstore.

499

00:57:39,450 --> 00:57:51,420

Grant. I would have been early years. I had already developed my relationship with Jose Montoya in Colombia through the news monitoring service.

500

00:57:52,020 --> 00:57:57,360

So I was coming over here regularly to visit and just hang out.

501

00:57:57,600 --> 00:58:01,280

Some of. There were a couple of us that would come over.

502

00:58:02,030 --> 00:58:07,190

One of my colleagues played guitar, so he and.

503

00:58:07,640 --> 00:58:10,780

And. Estaban with a jam.

504

00:58:11,880 --> 00:58:17,160

We're doing all these. No.

505

00:58:19,330 --> 00:58:25,690

I think. There's a question about.

506

00:58:27,610 --> 00:58:33,550

Those who have passed on. You mentioned the stolen.

507

00:58:35,810 --> 00:58:41,420

But are there others that they have an impact without God?

508

00:58:41,720 --> 00:58:46,140

Hmm. I'm. Well.

509

00:58:46,880 --> 00:58:54,140

Yeah. Yeah, I was. Yeah. There were some fairly significant people here in Sacramento.

510

00:58:56,240 --> 00:59:01,940

I don't know if you had a chance to interview any of those people or have them be part of the project over the years.

511

00:59:03,590 --> 00:59:14,450

My wife was a student at Hiram Johnson High School and earned a scholarship to go to University Pacific,

512

00:59:14,900 --> 00:59:23,540

and it was through the Mexican-American Education Society. Lucy and Frank Lemos were really instrumental in that.

513

00:59:24,020 --> 00:59:27,080

Lucy Lemos Pardon? Where were they based?

514

00:59:27,770 --> 00:59:36,740

Well, Frank was a carpenter here in town, and Lucy worked for the Department of Education, State Department of Education.

515

00:59:38,210 --> 00:59:42,590

So they were they were based here in Sacramento. Lucy Lemos was real.

516

00:59:44,810 --> 00:59:50,240

Really active with high school kids, trying to get them to go on to college,

517

00:59:50,870 --> 00:59:57,260

and that this whole scholarship fund was her way of trying to get more people involved.

518

00:59:57,530 --> 01:00:05,360

There were a lot of other people who are part of that organization, and that was my first contact with them in 19.

519

01:00:07,030 --> 01:00:10,210

1965. Hmm.

520

01:00:11,290 --> 01:00:17,220

1967. Yeah. Lucy and Frank both dead.

521

01:00:17,350 --> 01:00:22,940

Yeah. Frank's last name was one Leamas.

522

01:00:23,240 --> 01:00:30,670

Oh, yeah. Um, I did mention Hazel Montoya.

523

01:00:32,020 --> 01:00:43,090

I had met Joe Serna as a result of a connection between a faculty member at UC Davis, a refugee or teen who was in the.

524

01:00:44,760 --> 01:00:48,330

College of Agriculture in economics apartment.

525

01:00:48,990 --> 01:00:54,390

And he had been in a he had been a Berkeley student, but he had been in the Peace Corps.

526

01:00:55,250 --> 01:00:58,400

And he and Joe were both Peace Corps members.

527

01:00:59,270 --> 01:01:05,030

Both of them ended up being advisers, I guess supervisors.

528

01:01:06,950 --> 01:01:12,320

After their first two years, they stayed on and Refugio ended up staying in Bolivia.

529

01:01:13,070 --> 01:01:20,080

And I guess Joe stayed in, what, the mala I think it was. So there were those discussions as.

530

01:01:22,080 --> 01:01:26,460

Jose Isabel Hernandez was had a similar job that I ended up having.

531

01:01:27,030 --> 01:01:34,200

I ended up with a job as the director of Student Affirmative Action in the Office of Admissions at UC Davis.

532

01:01:35,070 --> 01:01:38,810

So a lot of my work was with the high schools.

533

01:01:41,120 --> 01:01:56,420

I went ahead and expanded my my outreach to schools as far as Stockton as a regular contact with high school kids would be once a week,

534

01:01:56,960 --> 01:02:01,860

and I put most of my money into staffing. So couple of nice.

535

01:02:01,860 --> 01:02:10,170

The staff ended up working in a summer program called a Chicano Youth Leadership Conference,

536

01:02:11,070 --> 01:02:15,030

Chicano Latino Youth Leadership Conference with Manuel Ruelas.

537

01:02:15,630 --> 01:02:24,300

He ended up being program director for a number of years. And then Francisco Rodriguez, who had come to Davis as a student from San Francisco.

538

01:02:25,270 --> 01:02:28,330

And I ended up hiring him to be one of my outreach officers.

539

01:02:28,990 --> 01:02:33,700

So he worked summers there were given. The release time.

540

01:02:34,760 --> 01:02:39,160

Well, they worked for Davis, but they were working with the summer youth program there.

541

01:02:40,070 --> 01:02:46,990

Well, Manuel was the director for the summer program. Francisco was one of the Proctor councilors.

542

01:02:47,700 --> 01:02:53,110

The residential part of it. And this time both of them are still living.

543

01:02:54,300 --> 01:02:58,230

Yes, they are just trying to point that out because the question.

544

01:02:58,680 --> 01:03:08,250

Yeah. Of the past. I'm trying to think of the original director of the Chicano Youth Leadership Conference, and I can't think of his name.

545

01:03:09,420 --> 01:03:16,409

Passed on. Yeah, he's passed on. He ah, he was a state worker.

546

01:03:16,410 --> 01:03:25,220

I forgot what agency you worked for. That was his primary occupation, but he volunteered for.

547

01:03:28,440 --> 01:03:32,940

To be a part of the Chicano Youth, Chicano Latino Youth Leadership Conference.

548

01:03:34,140 --> 01:03:40,590

And then Joey Leyva, I think he has been gone for at least a dozen years now.

549

01:03:46,430 --> 01:03:50,510

Yeah, right now, I just. I know that there are other people.

550

01:03:53,040 --> 01:03:56,160

At Sex State and in the community.

551

01:03:57,110 --> 01:04:02,900

I'm drawing a blank right now in terms of names. Can you can you say something about.

552

01:04:04,540 --> 01:04:08,530

Organizations here in Sacramento that you played a part in.

553

01:04:12,570 --> 01:04:16,050

Yeah. Can you. Can you speak to that question?

554

01:04:16,060 --> 01:04:29,170

Were you a part of any organization in Sacramento? No, I think most of my work was through UC Davis, so if it was anything contact,

555

01:04:30,340 --> 01:04:36,130

I provided some of the funding to that organic to the Chicano Latino Youth Leadership Conference.

556

01:04:36,520 --> 01:04:40,150

Part of the funding came out of my budget or my outreach programs.

557

01:04:40,420 --> 01:04:45,640

I had. I had thought that you were part of that rationality.

558

01:04:46,530 --> 01:04:56,020

Oh, he has? Yeah. Okay. After he retired from work, I was asked by board members at the time to step in.

559

01:04:56,450 --> 01:04:59,590

Hmm. I want to speak to that. Oh, no.

560

01:04:59,680 --> 01:05:02,950

It's just a part of the more recent part of it.

561

01:05:02,980 --> 01:05:10,840

Yeah. I was wondering, other people that I knew that was really, I thought, really powerful in Sacramento was Rosemary Russell,

562

01:05:11,470 --> 01:05:15,730

and she was with the Unity Council, like one Spanish speaking Unity Council.

563

01:05:17,320 --> 01:05:24,290

I didn't really have a lot of direct contact with that organization other than to know her.

564

01:05:25,570 --> 01:05:29,580

But I think she had a reputation in the community as a as an activist, a.

565

01:05:30,910 --> 01:05:43,170

Oh, in 1990. 1997, I believe it was the current director of the Talk of La Raza bookstore, Galeria Posada.

566

01:05:43,950 --> 01:05:48,330

Luis Chavarria had gotten a position in the.

567

01:05:50,120 --> 01:05:55,700

An organization in San Jose. It was also an art gallery Mexican-American.

568

01:05:58,250 --> 01:06:04,160

Hmm. Mexican community organizations like I remember it, it were fairly large group.

569

01:06:06,140 --> 01:06:17,600

Luis left and I stepped in as acting director of Gregorio Posada with the charge of our.

570

01:06:19,970 --> 01:06:25,430

Writing out grant applications because they were all due that summer and.

571

01:06:27,960 --> 01:06:33,910

Oh. Had to recruit some a couple of new board members and.

572

01:06:35,750 --> 01:06:42,350

I was only supposed to be temporary. I'm going to be advertising the position of our director.

573

01:06:42,350 --> 01:06:45,380

And so I. I did that.

574

01:06:45,800 --> 01:06:48,980

I was given 90 days to try to refill the position.

575

01:06:50,240 --> 01:06:54,050

And it didn't quite work out that there wasn't very much money.

576

01:06:57,160 --> 01:07:02,620

I went through the budgets to try to set up what I could, went through the grant application process,

577

01:07:03,520 --> 01:07:10,960

the Sacramento Metropolitan Arts Council Commission and California Arts Council.

578

01:07:11,740 --> 01:07:16,690

There were a couple other grants that I helped write one for the.

579

01:07:19,330 --> 01:07:27,280

NEA National Endowment now. So that summer was pretty much kept busy.

580

01:07:27,290 --> 01:07:31,700

I would have kept busy writing up the grant applications and.

581

01:07:34,310 --> 01:07:38,840

We were able to hire a local Marissa Gutierrez.

582

01:07:39,530 --> 01:07:47,150

Her father had been. I guess, a fairly well-known doctor, Dr. Nick Gutierrez.

583

01:07:49,930 --> 01:07:54,370

Optometrist, I think. Yes. Who had been a supporter.

584

01:07:55,990 --> 01:08:03,040

Marissa was a graduate of Dominican College in art, so she seemed to fit in.

585

01:08:03,070 --> 01:08:06,880

The problem was that we didn't have very many applications.

586

01:08:07,910 --> 01:08:18,120

I had to repost the position twice. So she was one of three people that got interviewed by the board on that September.

587

01:08:19,010 --> 01:08:27,470

And I didn't actually get to leave until October when I was asked to stay on as a board member for a few year.

588

01:08:27,860 --> 01:08:32,390

But while I was there, I reconnected with Maskell Mattress,

589

01:08:32,930 --> 01:08:41,839

a bunch of women artists here in Sacramento, and I got mentored by Joseph Montoya in terms of,

590

01:08:41,840 --> 01:08:47,450

you know, how things should have been, how should have been run, and what the legality of what others stood for.

591

01:08:49,490 --> 01:08:56,480

And then, of course. A lot of the RCAF folks coming in as Kevin made sure to touch base.

592

01:08:57,550 --> 01:09:03,070

And and pushed me to do certain kinds of things. So we did agree.

593

01:09:03,070 --> 01:09:07,300

Everybody did agree to have us be one of the first groups that summer.

594

01:09:09,220 --> 01:09:15,910

So I had them start to showed end of June and then I decided to try to run for week exhibits.

595

01:09:16,810 --> 01:09:26,590

We had a Sony affair because local at the time we had what they called young artists and Jack Alvarez was one.

596

01:09:27,130 --> 01:09:30,640

Craig Martinez was probably called guys that were maybe.

597

01:09:31,880 --> 01:09:38,180

Late thirties, early forties. We're trying to find that group of artists come in.

598

01:09:40,400 --> 01:09:52,340

And it kind of gave that as a mandate to Marissa that we want to continue to try to redevelop a group of of new artists, young artists.

599

01:09:52,940 --> 01:10:02,420

And there are a lot of young RCAF kids that were coming up hadn't really had a chance to be exhibited that time.

600

01:10:02,430 --> 01:10:07,670

And I think at that time, Chicano art really wasn't that popular.

601

01:10:08,300 --> 01:10:12,950

It wasn't popular enough to be in all the existing galleries.

602

01:10:13,460 --> 01:10:22,690

Never would have been a way for them to get into the quarter. And so there were ever constant negotiations that I ended up leaving at one point.

603

01:10:23,110 --> 01:10:29,380

And Marissa was running into brick walls, too, trying to establish some type of a relationship with the Crocker.

604

01:10:30,190 --> 01:10:33,550

And they were just just not like our kind of art.

605

01:10:34,420 --> 01:10:37,960

And of course, we weren't giving them money either, so.

606

01:10:39,080 --> 01:10:41,750

And in fact, we were battling with them about local funding.

607

01:10:43,850 --> 01:10:54,830

The Crocker seem to get large amounts of money from local Sacramento and state funds as they had a real strong fundraising arm and endowment arm.

608

01:10:57,420 --> 01:11:05,579

There wasn't any way we were going to be able to fit fit in. It's going to take a few was going to take a few more years before there was

609

01:11:05,580 --> 01:11:12,149

even any recognition of any of the really established artists in Marrakech.

610

01:11:12,150 --> 01:11:22,500

Montoya had become an internationally known muralist and silkscreen artist who was being exhibited in Europe.

611

01:11:23,830 --> 01:11:27,850

And been popular in the Bay Area. And as a muralist, you.

612

01:11:28,760 --> 01:11:33,890

Pretty popular at UC Davis. Although we did have our own battles here, too.

613

01:11:34,440 --> 01:11:39,590

An art department was kind of like. Wow.

614

01:11:40,070 --> 01:11:44,750

Lithography would have been more legitimate. Silkscreen didn't quite fit.

615

01:11:44,750 --> 01:11:50,850

It was considered. Uh, too plebeian, I guess.

616

01:11:50,850 --> 01:11:56,420

Too common can be a. My hiring height for high art.

617

01:11:57,500 --> 01:11:58,850

But that all changed.

618

01:11:59,360 --> 01:12:11,270

You know, before Maliki was retired, he was given an opportunity to be part of your department there at U.C. Davis, his son, Marcel Montoya.

619

01:12:13,930 --> 01:12:17,060

Took his position. I mean, he was hired in Chicano studies.

620

01:12:17,770 --> 01:12:21,310

And he was given a 50% position in the art department.

621

01:12:21,850 --> 01:12:30,040

So they had radically changed over the years, 50 years since the Third World student strike.

622

01:12:30,730 --> 01:12:42,790

The demands for greater inclusion, a greater hiring of faculty and staff, larger enrollments.

623

01:12:43,900 --> 01:12:46,690

You got a lot of things that we'd struggled for.

624

01:12:49,300 --> 01:12:55,690

I guess in the early years and in the first few years in the 1970s when the movimiento was at its strongest,

625

01:12:56,890 --> 01:12:58,810

there are a lot of changes are being happening.

626

01:12:59,650 --> 01:13:07,180

I began to seeing that principals were being hired, teachers were being hired in schools, grade school and high school,

627

01:13:07,780 --> 01:13:17,770

and there began to be more opportunities for students that we were dragging in to the universities and colleges to get them into positions.

628

01:13:18,280 --> 01:13:28,020

And we started to have a. A role of providing trained professionals in a lot of professions.

629

01:13:29,030 --> 01:13:38,719

Yeah, you're touching on the point, which is the last two questions that are part of the same question.

630

01:13:38,720 --> 01:13:42,420

But it's. The challenges still exist.

631

01:13:44,040 --> 01:13:50,870

The movement, the changes that have occurred and what is what is left unresolved is that the left.

632

01:13:51,940 --> 01:13:56,420

To do what we've not. Complete.

633

01:13:56,470 --> 01:14:02,710

What did we not address? So the question is, what do you see as the future?

634

01:14:03,690 --> 01:14:10,500

Challenges for the Chicano family. What's what is left.

635

01:14:11,480 --> 01:14:18,900

To do what is. Well, a real significant systemic change need still needs to occur.

636

01:14:21,540 --> 01:14:33,060

At one time in the early days of the Movimiento, it was a lot of things about stopgap Band-Aid, temporary kind of resolutions.

637

01:14:33,690 --> 01:14:39,450

So, okay, well, let you bring 25 more students in for this year.

638

01:14:39,870 --> 01:14:44,550

We'll let you bring in 16 students to med school.

639

01:14:45,070 --> 01:14:48,720

There were those types of restrictions that that existed at one time.

640

01:14:49,140 --> 01:15:03,990

A lot of that began to get changed. Oh, I think a real significant change and some way to address the lack of legacy changes.

641

01:15:05,020 --> 01:15:13,690

We still have incredible dropout rates, push out rates, and the high school kids just don't seem to be getting through the high school.

642

01:15:13,720 --> 01:15:21,220

Even with programs like Meza, the math and engineering and science achievement programs.

643

01:15:23,630 --> 01:15:26,750

We've been restricted quite a bit in terms of affirmative action.

644

01:15:27,230 --> 01:15:36,260

You can't really identify recruitment and enrollments admissions based on ethnicity or race.

645

01:15:37,170 --> 01:15:43,190

And the courts have come in and stopped that. So we still have to find ways to.

646

01:15:45,410 --> 01:15:53,960

Provide for inclusion of some type of a permanent inclusion and I think overall addressed the question of racism.

647

01:15:56,320 --> 01:16:01,450

And white supremacy, which is a real major problem, I think, in this whole country.

648

01:16:03,130 --> 01:16:15,910

And here in California, in certain areas of the state where people believe that they're privileged and others are not, that continues to exist.

649

01:16:16,600 --> 01:16:21,160

So we need to address that in terms of what the movimiento is all about.

650

01:16:21,910 --> 01:16:29,300

Know. Back in the 1950s, 1965, do the things that were being done.

651

01:16:30,620 --> 01:16:38,990

High school blowouts in 1968, you know, and the kids were thousands of kids were boycotting schools to make a change.

652

01:16:39,620 --> 01:16:42,740

And it seems like to a certain extent there.

653

01:16:44,300 --> 01:16:45,530

That need is still there.

654

01:16:46,310 --> 01:16:56,450

Where I see a lack of is young people willing to march, young people willing to organize, young people willing to make demands.

655

01:16:56,450 --> 01:17:01,100

A change in the school. Even some kind of a curriculum change.

656

01:17:02,180 --> 01:17:12,320

There seem to be this general young generation. I call them post millennials, but there's a Gen Z, I think is what they're called.

657

01:17:12,890 --> 01:17:17,879

The ones that came in after 2001,

658

01:17:17,880 --> 01:17:27,500

ones born after two girls who don't seem to have a real strong interest in that concept of social change or community.

659

01:17:28,960 --> 01:17:34,210

Um, responsibility or commitment to some kind of change.

660

01:17:34,780 --> 01:17:41,630

Do you see yourself as staying involved? Well, those changes.

661

01:17:45,650 --> 01:17:54,230

You know, it's it's strange because I was so involved in so many events, so many organizations went on so many marches.

662

01:17:54,780 --> 01:17:58,790

Antiwar, you have to cover. You support work.

663

01:17:59,830 --> 01:18:06,220

All kinds of things that I didn't seem to have any kind of reluctance about being caught up in.

664

01:18:09,010 --> 01:18:13,180

Right now, it's kind of hard to think of what I would do.

665

01:18:13,660 --> 01:18:19,090

I even have let go a lot of said bookstore and gallery Posada kind of slide.

666

01:18:20,100 --> 01:18:27,240

I didn't become as strong a proponent as Jose Montoya was.

667

01:18:27,960 --> 01:18:35,130

I'm a father and rallying community support to continue to defend that that organization.

668

01:18:36,030 --> 01:18:39,750

They went through a lot of different struggles, different directors.

669

01:18:42,430 --> 01:18:54,249

I was there when we sold the mansion. And my wife, you know, Patricia Geary, was the person that received the keys from Hozier, from Joe.

670

01:18:54,250 --> 01:18:59,580

Sarah. So, I mean, we we've been through a lot of that.

671

01:19:00,360 --> 01:19:04,500

Well, we're at a loss as to how to how to pull that together.

672

01:19:05,100 --> 01:19:09,090

We've been thinking about reconnecting with young people that we've met.

673

01:19:10,020 --> 01:19:13,590

And this, I think, to be developed through younger people.

674

01:19:14,190 --> 01:19:18,660

I think it's elders. We need to find a different kind of role for ourselves.

675

01:19:19,610 --> 01:19:26,840

But I do feel a need to do something. I can't imagine being 80 years old.

676

01:19:28,060 --> 01:19:32,440

And washing and watching everything just get swept away.

677

01:19:34,380 --> 01:19:38,820

Which isn't an absolute because there are significant changes.

678

01:19:39,330 --> 01:19:42,480

I can see that, you know, and I think that's.

679

01:19:43,760 --> 01:19:49,040

Well, probably one of the most important things when I first came to Davis.

680

01:19:49,460 --> 01:19:57,650

My big support was Peter Jackson in the legislature, and I knew all of the seven members of the Chicano Caucus.

681

01:19:58,190 --> 01:20:03,500

That time, all seven of them. I'm in our legislature now in California.

682

01:20:04,520 --> 01:20:07,730

40% now. We're taking over everywhere.

683

01:20:08,870 --> 01:20:12,860

Finally, people are speaking Spanish above the Tehachapi.

684

01:20:13,520 --> 01:20:19,640

You know, it's swept through Bakersfield, up through Fresno, and it's getting to be all the way up here to Sacramento.

685

01:20:20,300 --> 01:20:27,560

The concept of us L.A. returning. In reality, you know, partly because of population change.

686

01:20:28,550 --> 01:20:33,200

We're where 40% of enrollments and a lot of places.

687

01:20:35,130 --> 01:20:42,450

It's there. The groundwork is there. Well, it's a matter of getting involved and talking people into doing that.

688

01:20:46,340 --> 01:20:46,690

I know.