

**The Sacramento Movimiento Chicano and Mexican American Education  
Oral History Project**

Name of Interviewee: Andy Porras

Name of Interviewers: Jeffrey Barrios and Kevin Barrios López

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Name of Transcriber: Marlen Salazar

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- 1 BEGIN TRASCRIPTION
- 2 [00:00:01]
- 3 Interviewer [unable to identify which interviewer is speaking]: Please state your full name.
- 4 Andy: My name is Andy Porras—Andy Porras.
- 5 Interviewer: When is your birthday?
- 6 Andy: I was born on September 26<sup>th</sup>, 1939 in—.
- 7 Interviewer: Are you married?
- 8 Andy: I am married, yes, been married for forty somewhat years. Forty-five years I believe.
- 9 Interviewer: Do you have any children?
- 10 Andy: Yes, I do.
- 11 Interviewer: How many?
- 12 Andy: I have, two boys: Dominic and José Heberto and two daughters: Josilyn and Andrea,
- 13 known as Yaya.
- 14 Interviewer: So, may you talk more, somewhat about where you were born and raised?

15 Andy: Okay, I was born on the border of Texas [SPAN pronunciation] in-- Coahuila, Mexico.  
16 Del Rio, Texas to be precise—Del Rio, Texas—which is across the border from the Ciudad  
17 Acuña, Coahuila, Mexico [SPAN pronunciation] in the border area.

18 Interviewer: How was your life there as you were being raised?

19 Andy: I—I--How was my life there? Okay, I was, I went through high school and my father was  
20 a business man after having worked at an air force base that is still—still there still functions—  
21 air force base. My mother was a housewife and she had a little mom and pops store and she was  
22 very active in—in—in, procuring money for drives like the March of Dimes for children. My  
23 father was very active in—in schools he became a schoolboard member.

24 [00:02:02]

25 Andy: My sister, Sylvia, and I attended those same schools, and were put to the task politically  
26 speaking early in—in our lives when we went to campaign for my dad. And when we got the  
27 doors slammed on us, because the householder was Anglo Saxon. And at that time, they did not  
28 consider a Chicano to be worth of holding a schoolboard position. I was very successful in my  
29 schooling by that I mean I was in sports, I played football, little league in—in the summer time,  
30 ran a little bit of track and played a lot of baseball both in outside of school in high school—but  
31 the thing I am most proud of beginning as a freshman in high school I was elected class  
32 president. And, I had used some of the campaign strategies my—my father used in becoming a—  
33 a schoolboard member. So, I utilized those, smarts if you will and adapted them to school. For  
34 example, he gave out like business cards to vote for him, so I made a piece of paper that said,  
35 “Vote for Andy,” and I passed them around. And it worked; I won as a president my freshman  
36 class. And I liked it. I liked the idea of—of standing up in front of my class and—and working  
37 with them to—to fundraise or to go on a fieldtrip somewhere.

38 [00:04:01]

39 Andy: So, I ran again as a sophomore and again I won. I said this is fun man [laughs]. Junior  
40 year, I ran and won. And for senior year, everybody was saying, “He’s the man. Three years,  
41 let’s go for four!” So, I won again. I was only the second Chicano there to be-- elected class  
42 officer four years, all of my high school career. Now, the schools that I attended were historically  
43 famous, because they--the school district was the first Chicano school district put together by  
44 Chicanos for Chicanos at the time. And this was way back in the thirties and my—one of my  
45 grandfathers was on the initial schoolboard and then of course my dad was later on in the fifties  
46 he was a—a board member also. It was considered to be a normal high school. We had no idea  
47 that we were different, that we were looked at by other people as—as unique...one of a kind, you  
48 know, area but it was. To this day, the school lasted until the seventies, from the thirties to the  
49 seventies. Then it became a part of the other school district, the—the Anglo at that time it was  
50 Anglo school district. Then it became, the—the town school district a *barrio* [neighborhood]  
51 separating one from the other and to this day we still have reunions and—and gather and talk  
52 about the old days were unique.

53 [00:06:05]

54 Andy: During that time my one of my grandmas moved to San Jose, California and we began to  
55 travel to California. Originally it was a leisure trip, you know, it was like a R & R [meaning rest  
56 and recreation] trip kind of and we would head to San Jose and—and I began to like the  
57 California way of life. Mainly, I would go to the park and see all shades of children dive into the  
58 same swimming pool. Back home not so, it was a no-no for Latinos, Chicanos, Blacks to mingle  
59 at a municipal pool. Now here’s a municipal pool that everybody at time was taxed some money  
60 for the pool, but many could use it. Illegal [laughs]. So—so was the golf course. We all paid for

61 the people to water the—the greens but when it came time to go in there no Chicanos were  
62 allowed “or dogs” as the sign read. So, a—all this time I’m-- assessing what was going on in my  
63 home state. That’s not right. My dad would, he and I would sit down and talk about these thing,  
64 “Well, maybe when you are old enough and you get an education you go out there and fight it  
65 your way, I’m fighting it my way at the level here that I can. It’s going to be people like you son  
66 to get an education to go out there and do something about this, but you’re right this is not proper  
67 for people.”

68 [00:08:06]

69 Andy: The town is divided by a river called the San Felipe Creek. And San Felipe is on one side  
70 and the Del Rio system is on the other side. So, we grew up having to deal with the-- fact that we  
71 had to cross the Creek to go to the other side. Where the, today we would say the one percent  
72 used to live, and we were on the-- wrong side of the track. However, the-- barrio prospered. It  
73 had everything that you could want, it had a hardware shop, it had beautician, it had barber  
74 shops, grocery stores clothing –apparel, goods the whole thing. We didn’t have to go the other  
75 side to get whatever hamburgers, snow cones, whatever. We could get it right there, in our own  
76 barrio. And that instilled a lot of pride in me, we could do something on our own. We are seeing  
77 it today on a—on a—large scale just Sunday we had the big race the Indy 500 race in—in  
78 Indianapolis. The roster had like a four or five Latino names on it and a Latino won. A guy  
79 named, Pablo—Juan Pablo I forgot his last name, car racer. And just re—recently the academy  
80 awards, a big *busto* [boost] de Latino, a bunch of Latino names, you know. So we’re getting  
81 there what—what—my dad envisioned and his crowd envisioned for us is happening and we’re  
82 still pushing—we’re still pushing—for more people like you guys to become involved and—and  
83 reach for the stars be successful in whatever field.

84 [00:10:02]

85 Andy: So, California always had a place in my heart it—it captured mine back in the fifties. So  
86 we'd come out here as often as we could to see our relatives and what not and then my mom's  
87 store went belly-up and my father had a—had a—little, bar a tavern and a lot of credit he—they  
88 gave a lot of credit to people they didn't—didn't pay back what they drank or what they ate. So,  
89 we kind of said “This isn't working and we gotta and find work to pay bills and keep on going.”  
90 So that's when we came back to California, but now we came as-- fruit pickers as migrants let's  
91 say. And we lived in [laughs] some conditions [laugh] that were not considered habitable today  
92 probably barns, for example, we would sleep in barn sometimes or in a tent to be with the crops  
93 were. So, it was an education for me. When my dad was about to pass on to—to another life, he  
94 told me “I'm sorry that I took you on that horrible trip for a few years and I made you work in,  
95 you know, in the sun and I made you do this and I needed help son.” And I said, “Dad look, you  
96 gave me a fantastic education in my hometown. Then you—then you sent me to college. And  
97 this other thing but the migrant trail it was another education for me. You opened my eyes to  
98 how other people live and this is given me a better idea of what life really is about.

99 [00:11:59]

100 Andy: I was sheltered and so was my sister, of course, in Del Rio, in San Felipe. In the barrio  
101 because we had everything close to us and then all of a sudden, we go where you're just another  
102 picker, or harvest person, a migrant. And my mom had to take a job, too, as—as a cook for  
103 braceros. And my dad was—because he was bilingual, he became a foreman of this fantastic  
104 ranch not close... not far from here, in Yuba City. And we harvested peaches, pears, tomatoes.  
105 My sister to this day cannot stand to see a peach. [laugh] I like them. Anyway, so that was  
106 another part of his contribution to my—to my welfare to my being a well-rounded person. I got

107 the writing bug from him, too. I would see him write things. And he-- would make speeches at  
108 Cinco de Mayo celebrations, September Sixteen celebrations and he would talk to the crowds  
109 about Mexican heroes and about America, what he knew about America. And I began to ask him  
110 how do you pronounce this particular name and how do you write this [indistinct].... So, I began  
111 to do some writing in-- high school.

112 [00:14:01]

113 Andy: I wrote—I—a column for my high school paper and I haven't stopped writing since. I'm  
114 on my 50<sup>th</sup> year of writing newspaper columns. And I began, officially or professionally, in my  
115 hometown. I became a columnist and a reporter for my hometown paper and then I was given a  
116 fellowship to the University of Texas in Journalism, by the Wall Street Journal that I'm also very  
117 proud of, and I got more smarts there. And then I began to write for a journalist [indistinct] for  
118 newspapers and I haven't stopped since then. This is my 50<sup>th</sup> year. Here in Sacramento, in 1974,  
119 I was working for the Office of Migrant Education out of the Santa Clara County Office of  
120 Education in San Jose. I was an Administrative Assistant to the—the Director of the Regional  
121 Program. There were eight regions of migrant education at that time in California and we were in  
122 charge of the—we ended up having over 17,000 children and more than twelve school districts.  
123 And we would provide assistance for them by a personnel and monies and programs [Clears his  
124 throat], excuse me, health and dental programs and of course reading materials. I developed a—a  
125 magazine for the region called La Golondrina [The swallow].

126 [00:16:06]

127 Andy: La Golondrina is a little swallow that goes and comes from--it returns to its place of  
128 origin, okay. La Golondrina became—we couldn't call it a magazine because it was against  
129 the—the rules and regulations of the—the federal grant we had. So I invented a word and I put

130 together the word man—manual and magazine and I would call it a “magnual”—a “magnual”—  
131 because we had instructional material in there as well as news about migrant children and their  
132 parents and teachers and what not. The idea was to go state-wide with it, but it-- didn't fly  
133 because of petti—pettiness amongst directors of each region...If you go state-wide you'd  
134 probably get more because it is from region one, so you take care of region one. It wasn't the  
135 point. You'd rather go state-wide. Then we would come to Sacramento often at that time we had  
136 a man, another Tejano, [SPAN pronunciation for Mexican from Texas] whose name was, he was  
137 the director of the HEW [Health Education Welfare] for the state. His name...I can't--Mario  
138 Obledo was his name—Mario Obledo—he was from San Antonio, but he worked under, at that  
139 time the first time around, Governor Jerry Brown and he was in charge of the Health Education  
140 Welfare for California, so he would help us develop material and—and for the migrant program,  
141 for the federal program. Then, I became involved in the establishment of the migrant parent  
142 advisory group.

143 [00:18:05]

144 Andy: That became the--the first of its kind was like putting together a Chicano PTA [Parent  
145 Teacher Association] if you will and they say, “How can you expect these migrant parents to  
146 function when they are moving all the time? What instruction are you going to give them that  
147 they can utilize in a school district if they're there today and gone tomorrow? There in their own  
148 district the next day after?—blah blah blah.” So, my group and I developed the format to begin  
149 teaching them when they were down in El Centro down, way down—in Southern California.  
150 Some aspects--like running a meeting, Roberts Rules of Orders. Okay, when they're there we  
151 said, they are going to learn this particular part. And when they move on to the Central Valley  
152 around maybe Bakersfield area, Shafter area, they're going to learn something else. When they

153 get to Fresno area, they're learn something else. And then to Sacramento Valley something else.  
154 Then all the way to the border and they will have something. Well, they said, "Well it's far fetch,  
155 but okay we will give it a shot." Well, it worked—it worked. We began to have a lot of input. I  
156 had meetings with parents in the middle of the fields. We had no—no classroom, no meeting  
157 place, so I'd meet them in the fields *alla en el monte* [in the fields] *es decir* [as to say].

158 [00:20:00]

159 Andy: We would schedule meetings with them and we'd talk about their children, their  
160 educational chances and they began to see what the state wanted to see in them: participation,  
161 involvement, and caring about the education of their children. The idea was, of course, to break  
162 the migrant cycle, and to settle down and—and enroll their children in a—a school..elementary,  
163 junior high, whatever. And we didn't discover but we—we highlighted the fact that the children  
164 are the ones that put the breaks on the migrancy efforts because they began to tell mom and dad,  
165 "Hey—hey I'm on the football team. Dad, I'm on the yearbook staff or I have friends here. I like  
166 this place. Let's stay here dad. Maybe you can find a job cleaning windows or—or work in a—  
167 your good on working on cars, you can be a mechanic instead of harvesting food left and right."  
168 So, they would put the breaks on the family and a lot of families who are here in California from  
169 Texas, from Arizona, from Mexico. Ask them how they got here. "Well we were picking fruit  
170 and we—ta..ra..ra " and the same story. So, we began realize that we were on to something very  
171 positive. That's how we—we filled in that particular vacuum for the migrancy. Because of my  
172 PR expertise in media, I was given to task on organizing, leading the group together, and having  
173 conferences for them. It'd be a local conference then we'd a district or area/regional conference.

174 [00:22:04]



175 Andy: So, we became good at this and then we were going to task of doing state conferences for  
176 the whole state for the whole program. Well, we had to be really good. Then they gave us the  
177 task of doing a national conference for the whole country for migrant education and we scored a  
178 couple of homeruns there. The first one we held was in San Diego a national conference on  
179 migrant education sponsored by California. And I was given the task of developing a—a logo, a  
180 slogan, posters, the whole slew of PR materials. And knowing how corp—corporate America  
181 works you know we borrowed some of their tricks of the trade and we developed them to fit our  
182 particular needs. Which was to attract attention and—and score with the parents in two  
183 languages or three or four and—and get people to attend these sessions and let them think out  
184 loud about their particular migrant program in—in each state, the cities, etcetera. The payoff  
185 came when we developed, we hired a graphic artist to work with us. His name was—can I get  
186 some water?—his name was Martin, Martin Perez from San Jose [Drinks water].

187 [00:23:57]

188 Andy: And we had to come up with a logo, a symbol representing migrant education. So, we—  
189 he and I would just sit and talk and—and doodle you know and throw out things at each other I  
190 mean not things but ideas [laughs]. So, one day I tell him, “You know, the other day we’re about  
191 to land in near Oxnard in a little airfield there they had. We took a little, rigidly planes from  
192 LAX into Oxnard and were about to land as the plane is coming down, I looked out the window  
193 and the sun is about to set. And you could see the furrows going towards—like a red ball. You  
194 could see the furrows of the land and it just—it just—came into my mind and just sat there for a  
195 while and it just clicked like a [camera] shutter” and I said “I’m thinking about...” and he said,  
196 “Hold it. What did you see?” So he started drawing and he drew like a half-half a sun like this  
197 and then all the *circus* [circles], the furrows you know, like this. “Is this what you saw?” “Yes,

198 kind of.” He worked on it and it came out beautifully done, graphically done and it became the  
199 official logo for migrant education. The sun setting the furrows coming out at you, but then the  
200 furrows were the land, of course the—the harvesting where the crops are. But then the furrows  
201 come down all of a sudden, and it is a book, an open book and the pages were the furrows and  
202 the sun is the—the-the—spine of the book. Just WOW, migrant...yes, but we need education  
203 too.

204 [00:26:09]

205 Andy: And then I was writing at that time a thesis on my masters at San Jose State. And I  
206 entitled it, “Migrant Education: Harvest of Hope” and that became the slogan for the-- Program:  
207 “Harvest of Hope.” Yeah. So, there were the brochures, posters, and the people just bought into  
208 it. The PR-angle worked—it worked—we were commended in DC for creating such a thing and  
209 were honored by the presentation there in the national office we became the national logo, the  
210 national program, the whole thing. We were proud of that—that particular. Then I came back and  
211 I developed a newspaper for the—for the—parent groups. And we called COMPA [friend]. C—  
212 O—M—P—A—which in Spanish it means pal—*amigo* [friend], compa. And COMPA stood—it  
213 was an acronym for Committees of Migrant Parent Adviseries, COMPA. And it was the official  
214 newspaper that I produced for the migrant advisory groups throughout the state.

215 [00:28:03]

216 Andy: And, again, it became a—a platform of sorts for the parents to—to speak up and to  
217 demand better—better things for their-- children, which was always the basis for our  
218 involvement. We—we need to help these kids, we gotta stop the migrant cycle. In—in California  
219 today the parent groups still meet in LA every year they’re still doing it—they’re still doing it.  
220 And it makes feel extremely proud when I see people come to me and “I remember you.

221 [Indistinctive]” It gives me a lot—a lot of pleasure to see those parents still active and there are  
222 many things happening in between, still, of course. There were scary moment when at one point  
223 some farmer pulled out a riffle and aimed at one of our bus drivers because the bus would go into  
224 the—the guy’s land to pick up migrant children for school and he didn’t want that. They  
225 belonged in the fields working [laughs] with their parents not going to school and so he pulled a  
226 riffle on our bus driver. And we had to get in and called Mario Obledo here in Sacramento and  
227 he assigned a special agent to go in the bus flash his badge and the guy said, “Okay you can  
228 come in.” But I had a meeting one time in Hollister, I had scheduled a meeting with the migrant  
229 parents at a bank because they had would loan us to groups to meet and I asked and they said,  
230 “sure come in it’s a school group, okay.”

231 [00:30:05]

232 Andy: So the day—the day—of the event we had publicized it, when I got there the gentleman  
233 at the bank says “I’m sorry but you cannot meet here.” And I asked, “Why not?” “Well, we have  
234 had a bomb threat, and we don’t want your people here because [indistinctive]..... “Uhuh”. So  
235 anyway, what I did the parents came, and I was out there at the door way of the bank and I said,  
236 “Listen, something happened. So we’re going to meet here. We are going to walk around the  
237 bank and we will be having thee meeting we would just keep on talking and asking and  
238 answering.” So when were half an hour just walk around the bank and had the meeting and  
239 walking and talking [laughs], but we got it done [laughs], it was done. So any obstacle they  
240 threw at us, we would circumvent, we could find ways to go around it—and beat them. I—I  
241 again because of my PR and media thing, I was able to—to get the real—big guys like NBC,  
242 CBS, ABC to listen to our plight and they would do stories and when the—the farmers would see  
243 these stories on the TV screen and that way made them look like, you know, like the bad guys

244 they gave in to a lot of our—a lot of our—of requests. Which were simply humanistic requests or  
245 for the betterment of the children to get an education. We had to go to extremes to make them  
246 see those things. And at first it wasn't very common for an educator to do those things, but I told  
247 them, "Well, we have to fight fire with fire and this was a way corporate America does it.

248 [00:32:02]

249 Andy: They shock the heck out of you sometimes with advertising or they make you cry. We  
250 can do the same thing." Crisscrossing the state, often, we ran into Cesar Chavez. He became our  
251 ally. We were having a meeting in Saticoy, near Ventura. And he told us, me and my bosses,  
252 "Hey you guys, you take care of the little guys and I take care of the big guys. We can do it as  
253 often. Si se puede [We can do it]! Of course, we could." So that way we banked on him a lot of  
254 times for cooperation, and he would bank on us for-- working together. Of course, they were  
255 known by the—the educational program here in—in Sacramento the—the office of education  
256 keep it quiet, you weren't supposed to mingle, a union person with a state paid educator but  
257 whatever, it was done—it was done—for the betterment again of—of the children. There were  
258 many—many—many instances where we would get calls in the middle of the night that  
259 something happened—took away migrant child and we would often go and discover that, yes,  
260 indeed something drastic had happen. It became kind of a normal or typical way of operating  
261 within the confines of the system but often very unhuman I might say.

262 [00:33:59]

263 Andy: Along those same lines we ran into like the Royal Chicano Air Force here in Sacramento  
264 which was doing fantastic work for Cesar, posters and what not, and we became friends. We  
265 knew what they—they were up to. They knew what we were up to, and what we were up against  
266 [laughs]. They had an idea and we developed friendship like with Montoya—Jose Montoya,

267 Favela, and Estevan. So we—we had a lot of people to—to be grateful for and thank for ideas  
268 that they gave us. Again, the emphasis of course was to better the children and to give them an  
269 opportunity to attend school as—as normal as they could. And—and for them to have a—a  
270 decent chance at—at becoming a graduate and then seeking to stop the family from migrating to  
271 put a halt and—make a stand in a little town, farm, or whatever and allow them to pursue their  
272 education. The bonus being that the momma and sometimes even the dad would become  
273 involved like—like a normal parent would and that took some educating and went to develop  
274 programs that would appeal to migrant parent which was not easy because it’s a different  
275 lifestyle.

276 [00:36:06]

277 Andy: So, there the fact that my dad said he was sorry for giving me the migrant experience, I  
278 went back and drew from those experiences. When I would call a meeting of migrant parents I  
279 would—you know—I would appear something like this, and then with a jacket. And they would  
280 say, “What does he know about us, man? He doesn’t know about migrant or about harvesting  
281 crops. UGH...” “Let him talk.” “Nah” So I began to you know welcome them into the meeting  
282 whatever and “ta..ra..ra..” We would start talking and then I could see their faces that they were  
283 just so I would throw a phrase like, “*los baldes esos estan muy pesados*” [The buckets are very  
284 heavy] you know the—the buckets are very heavy, or “*la—la cuadrilla*” [The group of people],  
285 the group of people and they would say, “How do you know those words?” “What words?”  
286 “*Balde, cuadrilla, and la pisca?*” “Where are you from?” “Does it matter where I am from?”  
287 “Yeah, where are you from” “From *Tejas* [Texas].” “How did you get here?” “The same way  
288 you got here.” “What? Have you done field work?” “Yes, I have.” “Oh, why didn’t you say so?  
289 You are one of us man, *orale* [right on]!” [laughs]. It was interesting to utilize those experiences

290 from my family and blend them in with the presentation for them, for the parents. Very  
291 interesting. Braceros, you know, and the whole aspect of... So it—it helped us achieve many of  
292 our successes that we had—we had—became a leader in that—that particular field and to this  
293 day they—they still utilize a lot of our—a lot of our—tricks of the trade we call them.

294 Interviewer: How did—did your participation of the Mexican American education project  
295 influenced your career or life story?

296 [00:38:07]

297 Andy: My participation in Mexican American—[Drinking water].

298 Interviewer: Fellowship Project.

299 Andy: Fellowship Project, [Drinking water] I don't think I'm aware of that Fellowship Project.

300 Interviewer: Were you aware of other fellowships?

301 Andy: Not—not, I have heard of the fellowship, but I was not involved in that particular one, I  
302 was not.

303 Interviewer: Okay, so how—it's okay [laughs].

304 Andy: It's okay, alright [laughs].

305 Interviewer: Did your knowledge of cultural of issues affect your involvement in participation in  
306 the Movimiento Chicano?

307 Andy: Did—did my—.

308 Interviewer: knowledge.

309 Andy: Knowledge of, yes—yes.

310 Interviewer: How?

311 Andy: The—the—the word—you know—the word Chicano, which comes from the same  
312 beginning, the same prefix as *chile* [chili] *chicote* [a whip] and the word *chingón* [badass]

313 sometimes rubs some people the wrong way, but the word Chicano I have always heard it from  
314 my-- [laughs] dad way back when I was a little kid. And I would—I would hear the word  
315 Chicano and they would have a funny one called *chicaspatas* [literally translates to small feet, a  
316 term of endearment for Chicanas/os] with a baseball player with a Hispanic or Mexican last  
317 name. They would say, “Hey ollites es chicano?” [hey did you hear that Chicano?], you know.  
318 And then you find out that the word Chicano is from the word Mexica [Aztec civilization],  
319 which in I mean years ago we hear the fantastic group of people in Mexico—in Mexico  
320 surviving in those early ages of mankind. The word Chicano and the—the—*movimiento*  
321 [movement].

322 [00:40:02]

323 Andy: It was in—in *entronque* [?] a—a clash of—of cultures that finally—finally people began  
324 to say we are different. We have—we have aspirations too. We have—we have the right more so  
325 than people realize to be here, and—and go for things that we believed were rightfully ours to  
326 choose from. When my daughter Yaya was being interviewed in a magazine a few years back in-  
327 - the LA the-- reporter asked her, “And Yaya when did you become a Chicana?” [laughs] and she  
328 says, “I laughed, and I said ‘When did I become a Chicana? I was born Chicana’” [laughs]. So  
329 that kind of tells you the story in a nutshell. We have been around forever as Chicanos and  
330 Chicanas that people hadn’t noticed that—that is not our problem. That was never something that  
331 we were afraid to confront. We took a step, a step farther we gave it a—a bigger push when the  
332 civil rights movement came along. We found a good avenue to utilize our situation and  
333 ducktailed into that *movimiento* and were part of it. And became a very strong ally. During the  
334 Poor—Poor People’s March in D.C. with Dr. Luther King.

335 [00:42:04]

336 Andy: We had people there ready to go. I had people like Reies López Tijerina, which I keep  
337 saying if there ever is a Chicano Mount Rushmore More his face belongs there alongside Cesar  
338 and Corky Gonzales from—. Again, I-- go back to my journalistic skills because of that fantastic  
339 part of my life I interviewed or I knew all these people. Jose Angel Gutierrez from Crystal  
340 City—I worked, he was the school board *presidente* [president] in Crystal City and I got to work  
341 under him, he was my boss I would say—Jose Angel. Then a met Corky in Denver. I interviewed  
342 Corky for a story and my daughter spent some time with his family during a dance conference  
343 there. Then we ran into him again in Chicano Park in Sand Diego. So, we had a—a—a fam—  
344 *familia* [family] knowledge of each other—Corky. Reies López Tijerina who died just a few  
345 months ago we—I also met way back in-- Texas. We were delivering a fantastic speech to a  
346 group of students. He was a fantastic orator. Beautiful guy, man—and [pause], uh—Corona, Bert  
347 Corona out of Los Angeles also and there were so many people there I was so lucky to have met  
348 and interviewed and we became *amigos* [friends].

349 [00:44:14]

350 Andy: Cesar, we worked with Cesar for many years until he passed away. My daughter bec—  
351 became one of his drivers one of his, his confidants if you will  
352 Feliciano [videographer]: quick break. Go ahead and continue.

353 Interviewer: So how did other Mexicans or Mexican Americans react to the term Chicano at the  
354 Movimiento Chicano and at that time did you hear about the Civil Rights Movement?

355 [00:44:32]

356 Andy: Yeah, like I was saying the *movimiento* Chicano was—was, uh, like the evolution of—of  
357 the activists doing their thing back in the *barrio* [neighborhood]. And they saw the Civil Rights  
358 Movement come about they began to say, “Well we’ve been doing that since a long time ago.” In



359 my case, I saw my father get people organized to fight City Hall as they would say and to this  
360 day the—the people when I go back to visit Texas I’m always confronted by an oldster, older  
361 than me, asking me about particular things that happened when I was youngster and my dad was  
362 still around. One of the most endearing memories of my father came after he passed away. We—  
363 we had buried him that particular day, and my mother and my family went to our old house in  
364 the *barrio*.

365 [00:46:03]

366 Andy: And it was about seven o’clock in the evening when there was a knock on the door and  
367 my mom says “go and see who it is.” It was a group of people about maybe eight or nine people,  
368 men and women. And I said, “Can I help you?” and they said, “Yes, where is Don Jose?” [Mr.  
369 Jose] my dad. “Esta aqui?” and I said, “No.” “Y eso? Va a regresar?” Is he gonna come back? I  
370 said, “I don’t think so, we buried him today” “What? He passed away?” “Yes, he did.” I said,  
371 “Can I help you with something?” “Yes, we were coming to thank him for helping us get  
372 organized and go take our *problema* [problem] to City Hall.” I said, “Come on in.” My mother  
373 sits, my mom [indistinct] says condolences [indistinct], “Tell me about it, what—what  
374 happened?” “We knew he was sick. We came any way sometime a few days ago. And we asked  
375 him, ‘what—what can we do about these people that keep dumping garbage at the end of our  
376 street? Where we live—we live—in the outskirts of town and it’s a little *barrio*. But people just  
377 drive by—drive by and throw garbage there and throw stuff, and just we kind of stop there  
378 because we are sick of it.’ So he told us to get a petition, get together, and take it to City Hall.  
379 And the demand some time in one of their meetings and explain the problem and so we did, and  
380 the city folks went and put a sign there “No more dumping, or you will be fined \$250 or  
381 whatever.” And I said, “Did it help?” “It stopped—it stopped it. So, we came today to thank

382 him.” And I said [pause], “The last day my father was doing his thing helping others that’s the  
383 same thing that Chavez would say ‘Service to mankind is what you should do. This is what’s the  
384 best form of an education or being a Christian is, is to be of—of service to mankind.’”

385 [00:48:12]

386 Andy: And that was very visible in my-- family. And from there I became aware and to this day  
387 my daughter Yaya continuous the tradition.

388 Interviewer: I know that you talk— you mentioned about your daughter like some of the  
389 traditions and how she got involved but um would you like to expand more on that like what role  
390 do you believe that Chicanas played in the Movimiento in coming to terms [indistinct]?

391 Andy: The idea of course stems, uh—uh like I said from being active being concerned being  
392 of—of service to your own little group of—of Chicanos, the *familias* [families] the—the elderly,  
393 the ones that don’t speak up, you speak up for them. And we took that from my father and uh my  
394 mother was always active in securing funding for somebody would pass away and had no way to  
395 be buried he—she would find somebody to help him and give funds for the person. And my—  
396 my daughter continuous this she—she was lucky enough to have met my—she remembers my  
397 dad. She was a little girl he, my dad, would tell her stories about the—the floods and the poor  
398 people that got ran over by a train and how they had to do this or that so she was aware that—  
399 you, uh, have to do something for other people that’s part of the dues you have to pay as—as  
400 person, and more so if those people themselves do not have the—the voice to be heard.

401 [00:50:03]

402 Andy: She has done, um, work in Mexico. She has been to Cuba. She’s been to Hong Kong,  
403 Hawaii, but always remembering where her roots are. And she applies many of the situations that  
404 she learned when she worked for the UFW and helped Cesar. She applies these smarts to

405 situations that are currently, they're still there and that's how she gets things done by utilizing  
406 her experiences that she heard from her grandfather from people like Cesar and myself. She has a  
407 little girl and we used to take her with us on trips to conferences of migrant parents. She would  
408 tag along and—and listen, and ask questions and “Daddy why was this lady crying when she was  
409 talking to you? What did you say to her?” “No, she was just angry and I was ta..ra..ra.” And she  
410 would pick up these instances maybe now she flashes back to those things and she knows what—  
411 what strings to pull. And that's, uh, Yaya and the—the oldest boy, Dominic right now does a lot  
412 of work with the—the, uh, Native Americans by filming situations and bringing it to light, he's  
413 done little movies and documentaries regarding the plight of the Native American that continues  
414 to this day. So, they're all involved in some way or another—yeah.

415 [00:52:07]

416 Interviewer: Did the Movimiento Chicano impact your personal relationships with family, peers  
417 and?

418 Andy: Did—did the what? Sorry.

419 Interviewer: Did your—the Movimiento Chicano impact your personal relationships with  
420 family, peers, and significant others?

421 Andy: Oh, okay. Did it make an impact? Yes, as people realize getting your own family to  
422 follow a particular way of life or a particular or a idea is sometimes harder than getting a group a  
423 other group of people that you have never met in your life [laugh] because they—they—they  
424 adhering to what they probably learned in school and that's another big part of my life I—I went  
425 through high school, well the elementary, high school college, university, whatever under the so  
426 called American education way of life. And then I realized one day *que era puro pedo* [that it  
427 was pure talk] that we belonged. It doesn't work that way. We're living in a lie [laughs]. The

428 American dream is a lie. We've been lied to. I told myself I got uh, and I did, I wou—practically  
429 had to reeducate myself because the system takes you [laughs] and molds you and then sends  
430 you out to become more like you because you were taught to be like them and once you hit the  
431 floor you realize that it didn't work that way man it's a different world.

432 [00:54: 05]

433 Andy: I went to Mexico City as an American one—one year I was mourning the loss of my  
434 president, John F. Kennedy. I really was. I believed in the man. And my cousins I had three  
435 cousins attending the University of Mexico, UNAM, they laughed at me. “What are you doing  
436 man?” “Hey, you know who killed this man?” I said, “Yeah, probably the communists, dirty  
437 Russians” “No—no—no—no your own people killed him.” “Oh..” “Your own people killed  
438 him.” “They wouldn't kill our president!” “They've done it all the time—all the time not only  
439 have they killed your own guy, but they've killed other presidents you know that from history.”  
440 Well, there began the re—education of Andy Porrás. I began to question everything and they  
441 gave me a good dunking in—in—in *historia* [history]—uh—*historia de la vida* [history of life]  
442 and *historia Americana* [American history]. We get only one side, and as a reporter I began to  
443 put it together and said that's right we only hear one side, what the corporate media throws out  
444 there for you to eat and swallow. And then you toss it back at your children or your students and  
445 they become like you because you become like them. When it's not the way it is. As many  
446 questions to this day—to this day—however, the idea like you are asking for the one person to  
447 get a family to agree with you especially in the *movimiento* is extremely hard. They think you are  
448 communist.

449 [00:56:09]

450 Andy: They think you *estas loco* [are crazy] or you're a *mal agradecido* [ungrateful], you lack of  
451 respect...wait a minute, wait a minute, wait...we are supposed to respect our flag and the Star  
452 Spangled Banner tan..ta...ran...to some degree but if you don't know why—why did you do it  
453 you ask a child. “Do you know what the flag stands for?” and “yeah the red if for the blood, the  
454 red.” “No! That's not true. It's not true. Do you know why our flag is white, read, and blue?”  
455 Most people don't know why. “Why is it red, white, and blue?” “Huh?” Good teaching point. So  
456 you tell your kids, “You see, my kids back in the day when the U.S. was fighting England for  
457 independence they had no time to run to their nearest fabric store and by a desirable or by a  
458 particular color or hue for the flag, no they were fighting a battle. They were at war. So the  
459 would look around they saw all this pieces of flags from their England which happens to be what  
460 colors? Red, white, and blue. So, the American flag is recycled British material. “How about the  
461 Star-Spangled Banner? You know what the tune for Star Spangled Banner is?” “I don't know.”  
462 It's a tavern...it's a song that the guys having a good time in England used to sing before they  
463 closed the bars. It's like having a mariachi song. That's the tune for Star-Spangled Banner and all  
464 these things that you realize I never knew those thigs. So, when I tell, when I lecture the students  
465 they tell me, “I didn't know that sir” I say, “I didn't neither” [laughs] “I didn't neither. I had  
466 looked it up on other books. Besides the one that you have here in the regular books store.” And  
467 stuff like that I began realize that we were not doing a good job in the public school system of  
468 educating our—our—our kids specially our minority children the Blacks, Chicanos, Asian kids,  
469 um, we are still lacking. We are not addressing them completely. We went ahead of the, you  
470 know, bypass them accidently strike the right cord but we are not really taking time to say look  
471 you belong because your group did this fantastic thing for our country so you are welcome here.  
472 That's why you're here with us. I would ask a student “Give me four names of Hispan—four

473 Hispanic names that were involved in the Revolutionary War?” “Revolutionary War?” “For  
474 England?” “Yeah.” “We weren’t there yet.” “Yes, we were.” “No.” “Give me Hispanic” “Ain’t  
475 nobody Hispanic!” “Yeah! There were many Hispanic names involved in the Revolutionary  
476 War!” And so on—and on—and on... Amazing.

477 [00:59:24]

478 Interviewer: So based on this can you describe how the *movimiento* Chicano impacted  
479 community the community like here in Sacramento or where you lived and also like your career  
480 of that?

481 Andy: How did it impact us? It woke us up. It was like a splash of iced water on many people  
482 and many-- Tejanos already had this --built like a DNA type of thing that we were unique. We  
483 spoke two languages, most of us, especially like I was born on the border so you had to survive  
484 in two languages. If you went to Mexico [SPAN pronunciation] you better speak Spanish or they  
485 they’ll take you man and if you came from Mexico [SPAN pronunciation] to U.S. you better  
486 know the amount, you could actually come here to the border cross into the U.S. with *pesos*  
487 [basic monetary unit in Mexico] and they would accept the *peso* and if you didn’t know the value  
488 of the *peso* vs. the dollar they’d take you as they would in Mexico [SPAN pronunciation]. You  
489 could actually negotiate in dollars, but you better know the system and the language too to get  
490 along you better know two languages along the border. So, we had that built in. So we figured  
491 out if I know two languages and you know only one, I think I am a little better than you, you  
492 know, just saying. And in jobs, in California, even at early at time you could probably get a little  
493 bit more credit if you spoke the language of the customer and not having to drag the janitor  
494 “Manuel, come talk to this Mexican here,” you know “María speaks two languages.” [Indistinct]  
495 “Oh María! Ah, María is our best seller, man, because she can hit two costumers.” So, the

496 language things was-- fantastic for us and the Tejano also knew that for a long time we had been  
497 very—very discriminated against, terribly. So, we had that within us, you know. We tried to get  
498 back at these guys. We had to find a way to overcome that obstacle and you discovered the  
499 education in one way being aware is another way.

500 [1:02:09]

501 Andy: [Talking to somebody else, it appears] What? Is that a sign? The system is getting  
502 us...[Continues to answer question...] So, the impact was tremendous...and some of us said, "*Ya*  
503 *era tiempo, man! Ya basta!*" [It's about time! Enough!] [snaps his fingers as he talks] "Let let's  
504 go with it lets do a *marcha* [march] lets do a demonstration and tell these guys that we know  
505 where you are coming from and we are coming." The-- philosophy that I picked up was simply  
506 the Anglo-Saxon community might be a little afraid of—of an educated Chicano. They might  
507 think that we are out to get revenge [clearing his throat], excuse me, excuse me, that we're are  
508 out to get revenge which is not so we are not that kind of people so there's...

509 Interviewer: So, based on what you were just saying do you feel they are still carrying our future  
510 challenges for the Chicano community and if so do you still see yourself being involved with  
511 these challenges?

512 Andy: Yes! [laughs] I'm still—I'm still fighting the good fight at seventy-five years and like I  
513 said I have been doing writing for fifty years and most of my writing has to do with—with  
514 injustices our people suffer. I've done work with the Native Americans, Afro Americans,  
515 Chicanos, women, oh my God, women a lot of things we gotta do for women to get them up to  
516 par. They're doing a great job on their own but they need our help. We owe to them! The—the  
517 challenges are still there, yes, and I nothing—nothing makes me feel good or proud when I'm  
518 asked for someone by a school to talk about a particular part of Chicano history or Sac State or

519 Davis wherever they ask me to go I'll go proudly and put in my two cents worth so people will  
520 get more, more information and know that it's still fight but even us old guys can give them a lot  
521 of ammunition so they can utilize in the fight. Anything else?

522 Interviewer: That's about it, uh, we would like to thank you for being here for taking your time  
523 with us. We really appreciate it all things you said. [The other interviewer speaks:] Yes, sir. We  
524 appreciate all the ways you got involved.

525 Andy: I really enjoyed this and Senon gracias for the opportunity to sound off to prove that the  
526 viejitos [the elderly] still care about you out there. Gracias.

527 [01:05:00]

528 END OF TRANSCRIPTION