Hispanic oral histories, 1984-1987

Overview of the Collection

Collector
Oral History Institute

Title
Hispanic oral histories

Dates
1984-1987 (inclusive)

Quantity
2 linear feet

Collection Number
Accn1369

Summary
The Hispanic oral histories (1984-1987) were conducted by the Oral History Institute of Salt Lake City, Utah, primarily by Leslie Kelen and Sandra Fuller. Transcripts of tapes of interviews with Hispanic Americans living in Utah. Those interviewed were either immigrants or children of immigrants. Principal topics are family life, work, and religion.

Repository
University of Utah Libraries, Special Collections.
Special Collections, J. Willard Marriott Library
University of Utah
295 South 1500 East
Salt Lake City, UT
84112-0860
Telephone: 801-581-8863
special@library.utah.edu

Access Restrictions
See individual release forms for restrictions.

Twenty-four hour advanced notice encouraged. Materials must be used on-site. Access to parts of this collection may be restricted under provisions of state or federal law.

Languages
English

Content Description

The Hispanic oral histories (1984-1987) were conducted by the Oral History Institute of Salt Lake City, Utah, primarily by Leslie Kelen and Sandra Fuller. The Oral History Institute, located in Salt Lake City, Utah, began a project in 1982 to document the interaction between the dominant culture and various minority cultures in Utah. Interviews were conducted with members of individual ethnic and cultural groups including members of the dominant white culture. The project was conducted under a grant from the Utah Endowment for the Humanities.

Use of the Collection

Restrictions on Use

It is the responsibility of the researcher to obtain any necessary copyright clearances.
permission to publish material from the Hispanic oral histories must be obtained from the Special Collections Manuscript Curator.

Preferred Citation

Initial Citation: Hispanic oral histories, Accn 1369, Box [ ]. Special Collections and Archives. University of Utah, J. Willard Marriott. Salt Lake City, Utah.

Following Citations: Accn 1369.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

Purchased from the Oral History Institute.

Processing Note


Detailed Description of the Collection

Interviews, Jess Agraz to Cruz Garcia

Box 1

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Jess Agraz (b. 1940) outlines his family genealogy and recalls growing up in Laredo, Texas. The family moved to Salt Lake City, where his father was attached to the Mexican consulate. He talks about going to school in Salt Lake and playing basketball before returning to Laredo to finish high school. He returned to Utah to attend the University of Utah and remained in Utah. He discusses his experiences at various places his father was assigned, contact with the Mormons, working at the Hotel Utah while going to college, and meeting his future wife. Other topics covered include the Catholic community in Salt Lake, being elected to the City Commission, and politics in Salt Lake City. Interviewed by Leslie Kelen, 78 pages.

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<th>Container(s)</th>
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| 2           | **Esperanza and Gavino Aguayo, No. 1**  
Esperanza Aguaya (b. 1932) recalls her parents and their stories about various revolutions in Mexico. She explains how her parents came here from Mexico intending to stay one year and never went back. She and her brother, Gavino, remember their childhood in Bingham, a small mining town in Utah. Topics discussed include the differences in what girls and boys were allowed to do, street games, Hispanic culture, school, neighbors and friends from various ethnic groups, living conditions in Bingham, and racial/ethnic discrimination. 102 pages. | 1985 |
| 3           | **Esperanza and Gavino Aguayo, No. 2**  
The interview continues with Gavino’s being drafted in 1943 at the age of eighteen and sent to New Zealand. He talks about combat in New Guinea and the Philippines, the behavior of conquered Japanese during occupation, and the condition of Japanese cities. Other topics covered include women working for Kennecott, postwar working conditions at the mine, unions and strikes, being evicted from company houses to make room for mine expansion, employment practices at Kennecott, Father Miersman, accidents and safety, family marriage customs, and Mormon religion and culture. 123 pages. | 1985 |
| 4           | **Rebecca Florez Alvera**  
Mrs. Alvera (b. 1925) explains why her parents left Mexico to come to the United States, and talks about the family returning to Mexico for a brief period in the early 1940s. She reminisces about her childhood, religious education, dropping out of high school, her mother’s work as a healer, and working for Purity Biscuit Company. Interviewed by Leslie Kelen, 28 pages. | 1984 |
| 5           | **Robert Archuleta**  
Archuleta (b. 1930) recalls his childhood in Colorado on the farm his father managed until the Depression, and then in a barrio in Grand Junction. He describes his mother’s work with the sick and the difficulty finding a white doctor who would treat Hispanics. He talks about moving to Idaho and compares the discrimination in Pocatello and Grand Junction. Other topics covered include schooling, becoming a teacher, learning white ways, and getting his first teaching job in Salt Lake City. Archuleta also discusses his involvement in civil rights, the Spanish-Speaking Organization for Community Integrity and Opportunity (SOCIO), living among the Mormons, and the Utah Council for Constitutional Freedom and Liberty. In the final interview Archuleta discusses being a member of the Communist Party. Interviewed by Leslie Kelen, 161 pages. | 1985; 1988 |
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| 6            | **Helen Salazar Benavidez**  
Benavidez (b. 1918) talks about her childhood in Colorado and Salt Lake City, where the family lived in an ethnically diverse neighborhood near the Denver and Rio Grand Railroad Station. She tells the story of her life as the child of LDS parents who did not agree about religion. Interviewed by Sandra Fuller, 43 pages. |       |
| 7            | **Carl Cordova**  
Cordova (b. 1925) recalls his childhood in Salt Lake City. Topics covered include the Depression, working in the family grocery store, religious training, service in the Navy, and the return to civilian life. Interviewed by Sandra Fuller, 28 pages. | 1985 |
| 8            | **Bobby Marguerita Valdez Florez**  
Florez (b. 1922) recalls her childhood in Bingham and on the West side of Salt Lake City. Topics covered include family life, neighbors, growing up Catholic, civilian life during World War II, marriage, raising children, labor unions, and the ethnic makeup of the West side. Interviewed by Sandra Fuller, 80 pages. | 1984 |
| 9            | **John Florez**  
Florez (b. 1932) talks about his father’s experience as an immigrant, arriving in 1917 and working as a railroad and farm laborer. He recalls his childhood in the Depression when the family lived in an abandoned railroad car. Other topics covered include his mother as a healer, Hispanic culture, education, social and political activism, the Spanish-Speaking Organization for Community Integrity and Opportunity (SOCIO), Jim Baldwin, the National Urban Coalition, affirmative action, Senator Orrin Hatch, and what he learned from a lifetime spent in the political arena. Interviewed by Leslie Kelen, 190 pages. | 1984 |
| 10           | **Cruz Campero Garcia**  
Garcia (b. 1919) repeats stories told in his family about the Mexican revolution and describes his work as a laborer in various business enterprises. Other topics covered include the Catholic Church, learning to cook in the army, growing celery, discrimination, the Paris store, and friends and family members. Interviewed by Leslie Kelen, 55 pages. | 1985 |

**Interviews, Manuel Garcia to William Gonzalez**

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<td><strong>Manuel Garcia</strong>&lt;br&gt;Garcia (b. 1909) talks about his birth in Mexico and recalls stories of family life there. The family came to the United States when Manuel was about five years old because his father got work on the railroad. Other topics include bandits, medical problems, divorce and custody, discrimination, being a musician, working for the railroad, the Depression, neighborhood disturbances, becoming an American citizen, troubles with women, and descriptions of various people in his life. Interviewed by Leslie Kelen, 108 pages.</td>
<td><strong>1985</strong></td>
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<td><strong>2</strong></td>
<td><strong>Clotilda &quot;Tilly&quot; Gomez</strong>&lt;br&gt;Gomez (b. 1918) tells about her father's experience in the Mexican revolution, immigration to the United States, and work as a farm laborer in Burley, Idaho. She recalls her childhood in Midvale, Utah, and describes the various ethnic groups in her neighborhood. Other topics covered include life during the Depression, discrimination, and modeling for ZCMI. Interviewed by Leslie Kelen, 34 pages.</td>
<td><strong>1984</strong></td>
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<td><strong>3</strong></td>
<td><strong>Rueben Rameros Gomez</strong>&lt;br&gt;Rueben Gomez (b. 1913) discusses his parents' immigration from Mexico, his childhood in Texas and Utah, ethnic neighborhoods in Salt Lake City, learning English, education, musicians, the death of his father, and his marriage. Interviewed by Leslie Kelen, 42 pages.</td>
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<td><strong>Reuben and Tilly Gomez</strong>&lt;br&gt;The couple describe their courtship, LDS roadshows, hopping freight trains, the United Mine Workers, and living in the town of Bingham, Utah. Other topics discussed include child rearing, folk remedies, holiday celebrations, Reuben's military service, Tilly's work for the Union Pacific Railroad, the civil rights movement, and LDS mission work. Interviewed by Leslie Kelen, 135 pages.</td>
<td><strong>1984</strong></td>
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<td><strong>5</strong></td>
<td><strong>Eppifanio &quot;Eppie&quot; Gonzales</strong>&lt;br&gt;Gonzales (b 1921) describes his childhood as a migrant farm worker and talks about the importance of education. Other topics covered include poverty, religion, forgiveness, military</td>
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| 6           | **Francisca "Pancha" Gomez Gonzales**  
Gonzales (b. 1918) describes how her parents left Mexico during the revolution, and reminisces about her childhood in Salt Lake City. The family worked as farm laborers in Idaho. Other topics covered include education, child rearing, discrimination, household chores, marriage and divorce, the Mexican civic center, and being Mexican in an Anglo environment. Interviewed by Leslie Kelen, 72 pages. | 1987  |
| 7           | **Nicolas Gonzalez, No. 1**  
Gonzalez talks about being orphaned at a young age, working as a shoeshine boy in Mexico, and coming to the United States with a party of strangers. He also talks about the history of Mexico, Pancho Villa, working on the railroad, being a farm laborer, and gambling. Interviewed by Leslie Kelen, 155 pages. | 1984  |
| 8           | **Nicolas Gonzalez, No. 2**  
Gonzalez continues with the information that he was in reform school in the United States, where he learned much English. He also talks about jail, working for the railroad, Greeks, playing pool and cards, con men, working for EIMCO, and Kennecott. Interviewed by Leslie Kelen, 127 pages. | 1984  |
| 9           | **William Herman Gonzalez**  
Gonzalez (b. 1935) recalls his family history and how they came to live in the Monticello, Utah, area. He also talks about Catholicism and compares Hispanic and Anglo cultures. Interviewed by Leslie Kelen, 38 pages. | 1987  |

**Interviews, Lucy and Juan Hernandez to Edith Melendez**

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Hispanic oral histories, 1984-1987  
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<td>1</td>
<td>Juan Hernandez (b. 1902) tells the interpreter that he came to this country in 1917 because he wanted to find a job. His father had been killed in the revolution and he was the sole support of his family. He describes being a farm laborer in California before going to work for the railroad. Lucy (b. 1910) describes being a child in Mexico during the revolution and coming to the United States with her parents. Other topics covered include traveling in the West, a strike, marriage and childbirth, the Depression, and life in Ogden, Utah. Interviewed by Leslie Kelen, 70 pages.</td>
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| 2           | **Juanita Salazar Jiminez**  
Jiminez (b. 1908) talks about her courtship and marriage, life in the mining towns of Eureka and Sunnyside, and moving to Salt Lake City. Other topics include the military service of her sons, learning English, living alone, and the lives of her children. Interviewed by S. T. Fuller, 59 pages.                                                                                      | 1985  |
| 3           | **Ruben Jose Jimenez**  
In these two interviews, Jimenez (b. 1931) details his genealogy and the lives of his parents. He talks about discrimination, life in Carbon County, the Catholic and LDS Churches, Hispanic culture, education, the move to Salt Lake City and the resulting cultural adjustments, his military service in the Air Force, Anglo culture and the business world, and his wishes for his children. Interviewed by Leslie Kelen, 30 pages and 42 pages. | 1985  |
| 4           | **Mr. and Mrs. Silas Lobato**  
The Lobatos recount stories of childhood, life in Colorado, the Catholic church and culture, becoming a Mormon, and Mr. Lobato’s (b. 1921) service in the U. S. Navy. Other topics include hispanic culture in Salt Lake City, Greek and Japanese neighbors, life on the road as a musician, discrimination, the transition from musician to barber, and the lives of their children. Interviewed by Leslie Kelen, 128 pages. | 1984  |
| 5           | **Maria Delores Garcia Lopez**  
Lopez (b. 1917) talks about family life, growing up in Salt Lake City, skin color and discrimination, marriage, divorce, and working at the Purity Biscuit Company. Other topics include single motherhood, the Sub for Santa program, LDS roadshows, Catholicism and Mormonism, and her children and grandchildren. Interviewed by Leslie Kelen, 128 pages. | 1984  |
| 6           | **Daniel Maldonado**  
Maldonado (b. 1929) details his genealogy and recalls stories of his parents in Mexico, and as migrant workers in Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado, and Montana. Topics covered include Union | 1985  |

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violence, growing up in Salt Lake City, school and social life in ethnically-diverse neighborhoods, troop trains in World War II, supporting his family as a shoemaker, education, dancing, the big-band era, ethnic tensions, Catholicism and the Guadalupe Mission, growing up Catholic in Mormon culture, and being a businessman. Interviewed by Leslie Kelen, 218 pages.

7
Norbert Martinez
Martinez (b. 1939) talks about his family background and childhood on a ranch in New Mexico. Topics covered include raising sheep; family history; life in Bingham, Utah; Catholicism; mining; railroading; courtship; gangs; and supporting a family. Interviewed by Sandra Fuller, 150 pages.

8
Maria Mayo
Mayo (b. 1924) was born in Santa Fe and recalls her childhood in Bingham and Salt Lake City, Utah. Other topics include the Guadalupe Mission, Judge School, Catholic education, Girl Scout camp, religious festivals, and marriage. Interviewed by Leslie Kelen, 49 pages.

9
Edith Melendez
Melendez (b. 1925) details her genealogy and family history, and recalls her childhood in Bingham, Utah. Topics covered include her pride in her Mexican heritage, her mother's boarding house, social life, education, the University of Utah, marriage and children, Dr. Paul Richards, SOCIO, affirmative action, labor unions, and discrimination. Interviewed by Sandra Taylor, 124 pages.

Interviews, Robert Nieves to Delores Silva Velasquez

Box4

Robert Nieves
Nieves (b. 1919) describes his early life in Puerto Rico, running a business near Monticello, Utah. He also talks about the Uranium industry, discrimination, and SOCIO. Other topics
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<td>include education, employment opportunities for minorities, various people active in SOCIO, and life as an activist. Interviewed by Leslie Kelen, 50 pages.</td>
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| 2          | **Rose Espinosa Ortiz**  
Ortiz (b. 1918) describes her childhood in rural Colorado, courtship and marriage, school, church, family relationships, working in the fields, turkey farming, and daily life. Interviewed by Sandra Fuller, 81 pages. | 1984    |
| 3          | **Tomas Perez**  
Perez (b. 1933) talks about his parents, his childhood in Mexico, picking cotton in California, the move to Salt Lake City, working for the Union Pacific Railroad, how he got a job working for John M. Wallace, and his involvement with the Mexican Civic Center. Interviewed by Leslie Kelen, 83 pages. | 1984    |
| 4          | **Orlando Rivera**  
Rivera (b. 1930) describes his childhood in Colorado and the activities involved in raising sheep. Other topics include family genealogy, the Chicano movement, problems of young men, getting an education, SOCIO, problems in the Hispanic community, and his career at the University of Utah. Interviewed by Leslie Kelen, 82 pages. | 1985    |
| 5          | **Phyllis Zuniga Rodriguez**  
Rodriguez (b. 1919) describes her childhood in Nevada and her marriage at age 13 when her father died. She also talks about life as a migrant worker, labor agents, life in Bingham, Utah, and raising her children. Interviewed by B. T. Fuller, 52 pages. | 1985    |
| 6          | **Father Reyes Rodriguez**  
Father Rodriguez (b. 1934) talks about his family roots in Mexico, the marriage of his parents and their life in Layton, Utah, and his childhood. Other topics include home remedies, cooking, traditional Hispanic family life, religion, his church service, entering the seminary at the age of 25, the psychological impact of his training, Catholicism, a memorable sermon, and life as a Catholic priest. Interviewed by Leslie Kelen, 117 pages. | 1985    |
| 7          | **Jose Salazar**  
Salazar talks about discrimination, affirmative action, policies of President Ronald Reagan, the intricacies of being a person hired due to affirmative action programs, and the importance of education. Interviewed by Leslie Kelen, 22 pages. | 1985    |

*Hispanic oral histories, 1984-1987*

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Rafael Torres  
Torres (b. 1901) talks about his hometown of Morelias, Mexico, and his childhood on the family farm. Other topics include personal memories of his parents, working for the railroad, opening a restaurant, his conversion to the Mormon church, family matters, and the Garfield Smelter. Interviewed by Leslie Kelen, 40 pages.

Delores Silva Velasquez  
Velasquez (b. 1936) was born in McPhee, Colorado. She is the director of the Utah State Office of Hispanic Affairs. She talks about the history and mission of her department, the culture of the Hispanics involved in mining in Utah and Colorado, education, her family and personal background, middle and upper-class Chicano culture, her divorce and the effect it had on her children, and life in Denver, Colorado. Other topics include affirmative action, substance abuse, SOCIO, and her future. Interviewed by Sandra Fuller, 65 pages.

Names and Subjects

Subject Terms:
Catholics--Utah--Interviews
Children of immigrants--Utah--Interviews
Hispanic Americans--Utah--Cultural assimilation
Hispanic Americans--Utah--Interviews
Immigrants--Utah--Interviews

Personal Names:
Kelen, Leslie G.
(contributor)

Geographical Names:
Utah--Emigration and immigration
Utah--Ethnic relations

Form or Genre Terms:
Oral histories

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