

Robert Gonzales: Today is **July 20, 2000**. I am at the home of Mr. Ernest Medina in Riverside, California. This is Robert Gonzales conducting the interview.

Mr. Medina, we were talking about several things earlier, and we are going to get to some of that a little later in the interview, but first can you please tell me your full name, and spell your last name.

Ernesto Medina: Okay, my name is **Ernest James Medina, M-E-D-I-N-A**; I also had a nickname when I was younger, called Jimmy. That's what my dad always called me, Jimmy.

Robert Gonzales: Tell me, where you were born and when you were born.

Ernesto Medina: Okay, I was born in Loma Linda Hospital, Loma Linda, California, in 1949, May 27, 1949. We lived in Bryn Mawr at the time.

Robert Gonzales: Tell me a little bit about some of your first memories about where you grew up.

Ernesto Medina: Okay, I was brought up in Bryn Mawr. We lived there, at least I lived there, 'til about '55, I believe that's when we moved to Loma Linda. But, what I remember, is that we lived on Juanita Street, which is one of the main streets there, and it was, you know, a typical barrio, all...mostly of Mexican descent and a lot of them worked in agriculture and of course citrus. A lot of my relatives worked there, but as my dad did, and most of the people there did work some how, even if they weren't picking, some of them worked in the irrigation. And we had someone up the street, named Ortiz, they worked like a work hand on the fields, irrigating and spraying the trees. The.....could you stop it.....

Robert Gonzales: Okay, we were talking a little bit about your neighborhood in Bryn Mawr.

Ernesto Medina: Okay, in Bryn Mawr we lived in my grandparents house. There...was 27...the address was 27 Juanita Street and we..there was..at the time we had five of us kids were born, we had two more later...my parents had two more later. And we, also my uncle lived there too, he..but he lived in a..he had like a little house in the back, which was a workshop. He was a real handyman...his name was Uncle Fernie..and at the time, when I was smaller, my grandfather, I think Florenzo was his name, he was..he lived with his...my grandmother Oranima, but he died in '52, so I don't remember too much about him. So it was just our family, my mom and dad and five kids, with grandmother and uncle...that's who lived there during this period. At least when I was young..from '49 when I was born to '55 at least. We all slept in one room..it was only two rooms in the house and the parents slept in the other one and there was bunk beds, so the girls slept

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three together and my brother and I slept in the other one topside. That's pretty much...we were pretty much used to sleeping like that when we were younger...it really didn't bother us that much. The thing that we used to do a lot and..in Bryn Mawr..was playing near the railroad tracks. There was the railroad tracks..we used the store across the street on Barton Road...I think it was Bell's Market..and we used to go there, you know, to buy stuff, you know, groceries whatever, or sweets. And we used to have..a lot of time we used to put rocks on the tracks, which wasn't a nice thing to do, but usually the trains .. it would just brush it off, they had..a fender would just knock it away..or whatever you call that. But, also, one of the things that I remember that really wasn't too good was that we used to have a rock fight...we used to..I don't know who the kids were we were throwing rocks at..but they were from others down the street. And we never knew why, you know, why we were doing it, but we just started throwing rocks at each other and it was one of the..like a right of passage for us, you know, you have to get out or you have to throw rocks at these guys. I don't remember ever getting hit, but the fact that we had rock fights, it really lets you wonder....when I got bit by a dog one time, I wanted to go to the store, but there was a rock fight, so I went around, up Juanita Street to the store, the long way, and this German Shepherd at the end of the corner came out and bit me. And, I don't know how back I would have got bitten, but there was this guy drinking, like wine in the car, and he threw something at the dog and the dog ran away. Some of the neighbors were looking out of the windows, but no one came out to help me, so I just went home and hid because I wasn't supposed to be going that way because of the dog. But, also I would also like to say that my ma had told me previously, she didn't want me to go to the...you know...store, I had like a nickel or something and I wanted to go to the store...she said not to that particular day, but I did. Another thing that happened, I was obsessed with trains, you know the boxcars. There was sidings there for the packing house. They would load up the oranges, we had like a siding. There was one...it was a Bray Packing House, they had these boxcars there. My parents told me not to go there, you know, but I went up there and started climbing...you know, up on the trains..and my brother caught me and told my mom and then she punished me for that. But this is one thing I will always remember about Bryn Mawr, was that the trains went by and I always wanted to play on the boxcars.

Robert Gonzales: Tell me a bit about your parents, about

(unclear).

Ernesto Medina: Okay, my dad, Augustín Negrete Medina, in Spanish it is Augustín, but somehow over the time it became "Anglicized", so it was August with an "e" at the end...Auguste. My mother was Helen Patricia Barone..she was Barone originally...she was born there in Bryn Mawr. Her parents were early settlers there, back in the early 1900s and they settled...when they lived in another area of Bryn Mawr..but I think in the late '20s they opened up Juanita Street to homes...that the workers built homes there. So this is my understanding is when they started building homes in that area in Bryn Mawr. I had some other relatives in the older section, that was First street, off of Whittier, I had my aunts, uncles...Aunt Phyllis and her husband Manuel and Pete Barone..they lived on

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the other side. My dad....should I talk about when he first came....okay.....my dad came during the Bracero Program.. in 1942. He was from Guanajuato.....I mean León, Guanajuato. He was born in this ranch...Rancho Lopez...like Lopez Ranch...outside of the outskirts of León...but he always said "I'm from León, Guanajuato" so that's for the record. He came..he was...my understanding is that he was recruited...he went to Mexico City, where the growers and representatives from different states..and he ended up going to North Dakota was his first stop, he said. He picked beets. Oh, I should also mention his parents then didn't want him to go, but he went anyway. He was only 16 and he was, I think, you are supposed to be 18, but he went anyway, told them he was 18. He ended up...my mom also said..that he also ended up picking potatoes in Idaho and he ended up of course in California, where he picked you know different crops up and down the state before he ended up at the Cone Camp in Redlands. We're not sure of the area...he never really talked about...my dad never really talked about himself so much, just what I know is when I talk to relatives or my mom. He worked for different growers in the area like Westing Brake, the VanLeuven, and J.J. Ramirez, some of these were the growers in the area that he worked for. Oh, as I mentioned before, my relatives also worked for the groves, picking oranges at first, my Uncle Fern, my Uncle Amada and Uncle Forenzia too. My mom had a .. came from a big family and her brothers were in agriculture until World War II, the ones that went became veterans, after they came out, they got jobs at Norton Air Force Base, so they were glad to move up. My dad joined the Hot Cares Labor Union in San Bernardino, one of the in-laws told him about signing up as a laborer, and this is how he got his job at Kassler Corp.....it's Kassler now, it was Fredrickson and Kassler back then, in 1951 and he was a laborer. The Kassler Corporation is a construction firm, a lot of it's on roadworks, freeways...that's where he got his start with that company. Supposedly, he was...the union sent him to do a three day work..job..so two or three of the guys went over there, but they weren't too happy because there was only a couple of days, but he..after the job was completed, they had Kassler...by the name of Jack Kassler...he asked dad if he wanted to stick around and do some work, odd jobs. He said yea...and so he ended up staying with the company ..he was there for almost for forty-five years, until he retired in '95. And even when he retired, he still, he still went back to work at minimum wage because he couldn't go back at union wage. So a lot of what he did at first was working on the freeways, like paving, or laying in pipe, putting pipe in for the drainage. And one time, in the early...late '50s he showed us one of the projects that he was working on was in Victorville, a freeway over there outside Cajon Pass...he went and showed us, he says, "They are gonna open this freeway and I was just working on it...I want to show you what I was doing". That was really the only time we saw what he was doing. But the time when the yard was in Fontana, then in the early '60s they moved the casual yard to Highland where it's at now. Then in '59 they made him in charge of the yard...as yard foreman. He did that for the rest of his career there..just maintaining the yard and equipment, painting and inventorying equipment. There was a lot of equipment, you know, for all the projects they had, so he kept busy there.

My mom, was...all her life, she was a homemaker. She, when she was younger, she did try the packing...you know packing oranges like some of her friends and her relatives

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did, but she didn't do it very long. In 1945...she met my dad maybe in about maybe '44 at ...she said the dance in East Highlands. I guess they had dances out there. And they ended up eloping in 1945..I don't know why they eloped...I guess, in less maybe someone else interview here..she really doesn't say much about why they just ran off and eloped, they went to Yuma and they got married in '45 and in 1946..wait..yea '46, my brother was born, Augustín Junior. But at the time, they were in Santa Paula. They went to Santa Paula, he was sent over there to pick lemons, so they had..rented a little house and that's where my brother was born. They were there in 1947 my dad decided that he needed to go and get his paperwork, you know, wanted to stay here and they said that he needed his paperwork, to get a passport and all that.

Robert Gonzales: I'm sorry, but now I want to ask a question, now when he married your mom, he was still under contract as a bracero student....he was still working as a bracero?

Ernesto Medina: Yea, yea.

Robert Gonzales: Okay.

Ernesto Medina: Yea, he was a bracero, I guess, until he worked at Kassler in '51. Yea, he...so he went back...they came back to Bryn Mawr to live with my mom's parents, and he went to Mexico, that was the first time he had been back since he had left in '42, and he got his paperwork, his passport, I guess that's what it was, I'm not even sure what it was that he wanted, maybe the birth certificate, but he got his He wanted his....they later married through the church, and of course the church wanted the paperwork, you know, his paperwork to....He huh, so he worked, picking oranges, for most of this period until, like I mentioned in '51 he became ...he joined Kassler...but even still...he would still pick oranges like on Saturday, because he always said he picked oranges for eleven years, so if he came in '42, even after he worked at Kassler, he must have still picked oranges, because as you know, construction sometimes is slow, so a lot of Mexican men would go pick oranges, which later I find out, over the years a lot of the people in the neighborhood would do that, you know, they had other jobs.

Robert Gonzales: We were talking a little bit about your father and that he worked would pick the oranges for many years and continued to pick them. Uh....did you ever do any picking of the oranges when you were a child?

Ernesto Medina: Yes, yes, when I...in fact the first time I went with a friend of mine, Leonard and his dad, Jack. His dad was in construction too, but as I said, they .. when it was slow, they always had to pick ... to back them up. I went one time and they called us...the pickers called us a bonus, because all did...I guess looked like mice scrambling around...they just let us pick on the bottom of the tree....you know, they went up on ladders, we didn't. So, I remember, first time I went, I was in like fourth grade, and I think I picked like fifteen boxes, fifteen of those crates, those small crates. They don't

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have those anymore, they have those huge ones now. But back then, they were those small ones. And I forgot how much we got per box, but I made like \$5.00 and the thing...and I picked oranges..you know...when I got older, and I went on my own....the thing I hated about picking oranges, wasn't the work, but getting up early, like 4:00 o'clock, they pick you up around 5:00 and get started like 5:30 or 6:00. That was the only thing that I didn't like, but usually I went..usually my dad would drop me off at certain location...a corner...I don't remember where it was...but you know, the truck would come with the workers from camp and they would pick up the ones that were from here, or the ones that wanted to follow the truck to the site of the picking, and like...I was in Junior High when I started going again like on weekends..eighth or ninth grade, I believe. Like I said, I used to...I wasn't a very fast picker, I was, you know, when you pick oranges you get four trees, and you go up the row, two on each side, and I would...I was...you know you would hear guys talking around...then all of a sudden you hear they are talking far away...and I was still there...I mean, I was left behind...and this happened every time, no matter how hard I tried, I couldn't be a fast picker...not like my dad, who was known to be the centenario, means they pick a hundred boxes. He was one of the...he was known to pick even more than that. In fact, my dad...only one time did he ever brag about...he usually never talked about himself, but one time we went picking..he went with me. Son, I wanted to see if I still got....so of course he picked quite a few boxes, eighty or ninety at the time, but he said that it's not like before, when he was younger, he said "I'm all...I can't pick that size any more"....but said that one time he picked like ...I don't know how many...and no one believe him, you know, he said, about 150...it was a large amount....larger than a lot of the old timers...said hey, no, who is this guy that picked that many boxes....so they all gathered around him and said "That guy, that goofy looking guy"...."No way". They were all like mad that he would pick so many boxes. But that was the only time that he ever talked about it...when he told me that he said, "Do you believe me?" I said, "Well, you said it, I guess I believe you". I didn't think too much about it 'til now that he is gone, but he did tell me that he picked a lot..used to be one of the top pickers. And this was the road that he went with them, you know and they told my mom that he was very fast...but I used to average like 35...which is pretty slow...the average picker would pick about 50 of those crates in one day, depending on how, where they went, and how long they stayed there. Most of the time we started early and finished early. If we worked past 3:00, that was rare. Usually, I remember, when I went we would start early and finish early and even some times they ran out of trees, you know, they finished, you know they picked them real fast and then went home real early. So there wasn't a really exact...like wasn't an exact science to picking oranges. Because I remember sometimes it was not there...the trees were really bare, and some of them were small, so you know, the hard part was....another hard part was getting the arms all scratched up. Even though I had .. even though I wore long sleeved shirt, it stillthey still....it was uh, the tree...the branches were real hard, the branches they were all scratchy and but I used to notice the guys, the fast pickers, would always use both hands, they would like a little clipper they would cut with one hand, they would break off the other, then clip it, or you couldn't...one time, when I first started, I started...I thought oh, these guys are just going like this.....I started pulling them...and they ran over and told me...hey you can't do that, they said, you have to have

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that little green, I guess that little Like a birthmark on them, I would call it,...you gotta leave it on there, so I was That would show you how fast some of these guys were, they looked like they were just picking off it...like picking off the tree, but they were, you had to cut them off, you had to cut them with that little clipper. And the ladders, you learn how to carry the ladder, how they carry them straight up...and every time that there was a thing that sometimes you had a problem with was coming down with a full sack, sometimes they would come open, I don't know how, you know, would come open, and then all the oranges would fall out. But, usually I was pretty tired from doing that kind of work and I never ...said I don't know how they did it, you know, do that their whole lives doing this,that could....I could barely....no, it wasn't much fun. The one time that I went, when I was in high school, I went with my uncle, cause he was in construction, Uncle Pete, but he, like I said, he was laid off right now, so we went picking oranges with him, and we were picking over there by Moreno Valley. The strange thing that happened that time was that it was one day we went to work...it was like, in fact, I think it was payday...I think it was on Friday, and you know, the crew, when we got there, there was only like three or four of us, just from here, so the people that were...like the nationals, they weren't there. And then the word got around that it was _____ showing up and picked them all up. I said, what, that's kind of strange, it's payday and they picked up these workers. I was thinking to myself, I wonder if they had to pay them, but anyway around 10:00, then this new crop, I don't know where they got them, but the new internationals came and they joined us. But I always thought that was strange, what happened that particular day.

Robert Gonzales: So....you were....even after your father was out of the program, there was still some time ...that I hear bracero labor was used.....?

Ernesto Medina: Yea, yea...there still....there was....I'm not sure when the bracero Program ended, but these were all the ones they had were Nationals....because they were from Mexico.

Robert Gonzales: And this was 1964 or something like like that??

Uh, now this was a time, it is interesting that you worked during this time..this was a time...thatthere was a lot of changes coming for the agriculture workers, although not as many as people would like to believe. But, you know, there were changes going on, there had been organization, and ballots by UFW,what if any attempts, do you remember...were there to organize the pickers?

Ernesto Medina: Where I..where I worked, I never saw that..any...I never saw ..I would say that most of them were Nationals, then, they were, I guess they were just glad to be working. But, a lot...there was always a few you know American people born here, working. Like I said, they were only doing it because they were between jobs or

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something. I didn't ever saw anything here...although..I understand that my dad was..tried to organized some of the workers back in the early '40s...uh, I mean, must have been by the time he was 44 or 45, they said that he did try to organize or complained about some of the conditions. But, because of that, they sent him to Santa Paula. That was my understanding why he went...I always wondered why he went up to Santa Paula. He was working here, then all of a sudden, it is my understanding, that they just wanted to get rid of him.

Robert Gonzales: Do you know, was he housed out at Cone Camp?

Ernesto Medina: Yea, he was. He was at Cone Camp until, of course he got married in '45 and then he rented a house, then of course we came back to Bryn Mawr. But he was there for two or three years there. Yea...and the only time I went there was one time when I was picking oranges, they went to drop off some workers, and all I remember was the long driveways. There wasn't much there, but my memory isn't anything special about it. We dropped them off, what I remember about that was there was this one worker from...he was an Anglo from Louisiana, who was saying "I don't mind eating these beans every day, but I sure wish they would serve some fish now and then. They never serve fish...it's just beans, beans every day." That's all I remember about that.

Robert Gonzales: So, they had other people working, besides Mexicans, there and they were living at Cone Camp?

Ernesto Medina: Yea, they had..yea, he was an Anglo from Louisiana and he was living there at Cone Camp.

Robert Gonzales: I never heard of any_____

Ernesto Medina: Yea, because he said he wished they would serve fish....that's the only reason I know he was from there.

Robert Gonzales: About what year was that...do you remember?

Ernesto Medina: It must have been, I'd say...must have been about '64..around there... '63 or '64.

Robert Gonzales: So the camp was open all of those years...I had no idea how long the camp was open.

Ernesto Medina: I think...yea...it was open.

Robert Gonzales: Wow....that's pretty amazing then that it was operating for a while. As a matter fact, you are the first one I've

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talked to who has ever actually went to the camp while it was operating and so.....

Ernesto Medina: Yea, I was....yea, they had the truck with you know the seat, with the benches, you know the two benches,...the workers would all just jump in. And because I didn't have a car, I had to go with them, except for the time I went with my uncle, otherwise I always had to go with the truck with them. Otherwise, I couldn't get there. They all...they went to different locations, picking all over.

Robert Gonzales: (unclear) So, that was something I 've been kind of interested in seeing that...how people lived in and around, but let's talk a little bit...go back a bit about your schooling, what you remember about your school.....

Ernesto Medina: Oh...no, I went to Redlands schools. The first school I went to was Mission School, which is still there. Oh wait, no it isn't...it's something else now. I guess they built a new one now...it's called Bryn Mawr School. But Mission School was over there on California Street near Redlands Rvld., and that's where I went for Kindergarten and First Grade, and then we moved at the time to Loma Linda over there on Rosewood Drive. And then I went to Victoria School, which is now part of the Redlands School District. At the time it was called the Mission-Victoria District, but eventually they became part of the Redlands School District. Then, I went to Redlands Junior High School, which is no longer there, but it is the north part of the high school campus now. They tore the two old buildings down...the two story buildings. And then to Redlands High School. I graduated in '67 and that's ... so...I was always, you know at Redlands Schools...always in Redlands Schools.

Robert Gonzales: What were the schools like? You were going to tell me a little bit about the schools.....

Ernesto Medina: Redlands....well at that time, we had only two junior highs..at least....the school....well, let me go back.....Victoria School was more of....you have more like poor Whites there and poor Mexican kids there. In fact we had a nickname for that area....Mexican kids called it "Oakieville" and we still refer to that as "Oakieville"...the neighborhood around Victoria School. Because there were a lot of like..like Oakie kids there...you know. They pretty much all got along, but they were really the majority. You know, the toughest kids and everything, and so.... But most of these...people worked. You know, they probably had lower income, but they were working people. I never heard of anybody like on welfare, like today. You see more of that. But there was only like a couple of kids that got free milk...cause we didn't have a cafeteria there...so you had to bring your own lunch, but very few kids got the free milk...from the government. So..but the school itself..the principal was Mr. Holms, he was nice, I remember him being real nice and fair with everybody. The teachers were...I think most of them...there was only one teacher that my mom didn't like, that she said she was _____. But I think she was like an old maid. When I was in the

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fifth grade, she was an old maid and so she was...kind of like..not too happy all the time. So that's....my sister had trouble....my sister Pat...one other teacher, named Mr. Hubbard...she had trouble with him. She got expelled because, you know he had trouble with her. But overall, I think that, you know, we pretty well like the school...we thought...everybody got along. Now, when we got to Redlands Junior High, that was different. Because you had more kids, and at the time they only had two junior highs...Cope and Redlands Junior High School. And most of the Mexican kids probably went to Redlands, so we had.....but the thing I remember about junior high...was when that surfer craze started. There was Mexican surfers all the time....it was awful....because....before, you would have fights. But it was just fights. Now, it was a fight between the surfer and a Mexican and a lot of these kids, of course, just dressed surfers, they weren't really surfers at all. But, the thing I remember, one thing that I remember is in..I was like in the ninth grade at the time, and it was after school..and we were catching the bus in the front...and I had heard there was going to be a big ole fight between surfers and Mexicans...to settle it once and for all. So, as I was getting on the bus, I looked over...it was on Church Street...that was there they always had the fights when there was, you know, individual fights. Here I see about a dozen Mexican kids, Mexican-American...and I looked over there and there was about fifty surfers coming down....down the street, coming from the area of the high school down Church Street. You know..We were taking off at the time..the bus...I didn't see what happened...I just...as I was leaving...they were just confronting them...eye to eye...and the only reason I mention this, because my cousin Eddy...he was in that group there and he was involved in that. And what happened was, of course, the Mexican kids got clobbered...you know....like everybody had like a stick or something. But he said that he got hit on the arm with something..and he got splinters in his arm...and he had to go get surgery to get fixed and it still bothers him to this day. And what he remembered was, when the police (they called the police) he said the police came and the surfers helped round up the Mexican kids..the Mexican-American kids. It was like..they were the bad...like here is a fight, and really no one was the bad guy...just don't get along. But they rounded up the Mexican kids. So that was one of the things about Redlands...This is true too...like, there was a fight between Mexican and White kids, it was assumed that the Mexican kid was the start....started the fight...he was the bad guy. The reason that I say this too is that it happened to me one time. One time, I was playing basketball during lunch time and an Anglo kid...and I...we were going for a rebound...you know for the ball....and I pushed him out of the way, not purposely...just being aggressive in going for the ball...and he got mad. His face flushed, and he was one of these kids, you know, with a chip on his shoulder. So he said that he wanted to fight me. I said, uh huh, not me...you know, I was a big chicken when it came to things where I'd get into trouble. I said that I wanted no part of it. So I, the bell rang, and I started going back to class....then, a couple of his friends were with him, told him that I turned around and flipped him off, which I didn't. I just turned around to see if they were following me....and they said "he flipped you off". So he came over...and said...."okay let's go fight...You gotta fight me now". I said, "No, but...." I said "I'll meet you after school." So I said.... "kids always fought on Church Street there....I think it was State Street...right there on that corner....that's where they all had to fight. But, at the time,

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the principal was walking by and he saw that we was gonna fight...so he called us in...and he talked to the other kid first. And then later, he called me in...and I told him what happened. And he said...that you flipped him off...flipped him the bird. I said, "I did not"...but he didn't believe me. I could tell by the way he said it. So anyway....that was the end of that. But this was the only thing that was bad...in terms of relations...race relations.....was the Mexican kids were always the bad guys. And I remember there was thisMs. Parman...must have been very strict. They always seemed to come down harder on the Mexican kids. I was about five or something. Because I know that my sister, Barbara and her friends, they didn't like Ms. Parman, because she was...they thought she was unfair to them..whenever they got into trouble. What I saw too, during this period, I saw a lot of kids...Mexican-American who were like kind of tough guys..like in seventh grade...by ninth grade, they were like mellow and they were acting, like you know, like the Anglos. They was kind of like...you know...that was one of the changes that occurred, you know, transitions that occurs...and the reason that I saw this, is because my sister was like that. Seventh grade she was pretty wild you know, ratted her hair, you know got in fights.....but the ninth grade she had a totally different person...it was almost like the system, you know, got to her and the only way she would survive was if she became...she even got an award at the end of..outstanding student or outstanding citizenship award ... and she ended up eventually being in the Student Government when she got to high school. So, you know, I saw this...a lot of this...these kids, these Mexican-American kids...up from the barrio...you know, they were kind of like wild, but then they become, you know, model students. Which, I guess it's a good thing.

Robert Gonzales: That's interesting...because it seems that...I would assume that there was a lot of pressure to.....Like I was saying.....there seems that during this period of time that you were in school that there was a lot of pressure to assimilate.

Ernesto Medina: Yea, it was. It was....when I was in elementary school, it was...everybody pretty much was the same. Then all of a sudden, junior high was different. You know, kids Like some friends that I had...you know, they started having new friends...and it was a big transition. I guess, this is a difficult period. But I do want to say that you know..it was not really a negative experience. I am pointing out negative things...but it...I...you know...it was really...it was a good period. I think I learned, and I got along with most everybody and the teachers were pretty nice. I do want to say that...for the record....that you might think that I'm trying to be negative about it...but I think this is all probably true of all school. I don't think it's just Redlands. You know, how kids behave and how they are treated.

Robert Gonzales: Okay...when you were finishing school....you finished school in 1965...'66..'65.

Ernesto Medina: Yea.

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Robert Gonzales: And that was the beginning of a heavier
_____ for Vietnam. A lot of things were going on at that
time.

Ernesto Medina: Yea, that was a bad period. I remember ...like when I was in ninth grade...there were kids talking about....."Hey, when you get 18, they're gonna draft you. You have to go over there and fight in the jungle." I would say ..."Oh Shoot !!" I was all scared, you know, I didn't want to get drafted and go to no jungle. But, then in high school the teachers would start talking about Vietnam, you know, the guerillas, the Communists...these "Commies"..guerrilla fighters....you know, you're not gonna see them, and they come out and shoot you. And they are hard to fight them. And it was really scary, really just hearing about it..and how they were tough to defeat and how they defeated the French and everybody they've always had calling us there, that they always kicked out...and now the Americans were involved. It was a scary period...it was really.....I don't think the '60s were such a good period because of that....because of the Vietnam War. So, when I graduated I went tothe only way you could get out of it was to get a deferment. The reason I say "get out" is because I didn't feel that that was a ...you know...a "Just War"....I didn't feel that it was necessary that we have to do...or else get overrun. I never felt that way. I never accepted the domino theory like...that was popular. Like if we don't stop them now, they are gonna....that we will have to stop them on our shores. So, I got a deferment and went to...went to you know, went to Valley and then Cal State, San Bernardino. And, over there, they did have some rallies. I participated in a couple of rallies. I remember one time, we went to the Inland Center..and there were some like kids...and said that we should shut down this place...they were helping finance the war... And we had a rally one time, in front of the Courthouse....and there was this supporter of Ceaser Chavez, name was Lupe Valdez..out in Colton...he got up there and said this is oneyou know I didn't know how they were gonna respond to him, 'cause anti-war people were kind of one issue....you know...like they liked that one issue and nothing else. He said... "when we have a rally we always get everybody in a frenzy by volunteers"....and he started clapping his hands like (clap, clap, clap.....)like that real fast....and everybody started doing it...started cheering. I was glad to see that he was, you know...was accepted. So, I thought....we had one anti-war rally at Cal State, and they were talking about the war...and everybody was going, "Yea, right on." and then they said "Now we are gonna talk about the United Farm Workers." Someone brought that up...and they were still walking away. I was really disappointed....they didn't really want to hear that. They were reminding me of the campaign of McArthy....it was kind of like one issue. He didn't really have anything else to offer....that's probably why Kennedy...Robert Kennedy joined the fray...for president. But in '71 I graduated, and of course, when I thought I was going to be drafted, and you can't get out of it after four years, you know, you are subject to the draft....but they went to a lottery, a draft lottery. And between 18 and 22 you were given a number, and if they picked it, then you gotta go. So I never went because of that. So, my brother was drafted in '68, but they didn't send him overseas. But I knew of some...I knew off hand of three people from Redlands area who went and who got killed there.

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One of them was my brother-in-law....well, through my brother's marriage. His name was Christopher Morgans....I think in '66 he got killed. He was a college graduate. And then, George Cervantes...he was a classmate of mine. He got killed...and another one, I think...Joel Garcia. Joel Garcia...what I want to say about that is....when I was in high school, I think a senior or I don't know, maybe eleventh grade...but when I heard he got killed, I went on and said....."Hey did you know that Joel Garcia got killed"? Everybody went... "So?" No one, like...really cared. They just would say, "well, so" sorry to hear that". But in the contrast....I don't know if you heard about...there was this incident in which four popular students from Redlands High School...were...I think they were drinking...I don't know. But they were being chased by the police. And they ran into a wall. And they all got killed. I never seen so many kids crying and you know, kids walking around crying...because these popular kids got killed. And then, this other kid...fighting for his country...no one reallyI mean, I guess they cared, but they really didn't show any emotion like for these four kids. It was like a bit national tragedy. It reminded me like when John Kennedy got....President Kennedy got killed. People walking around, all upset. But this is one thing about this particular war, you know...like people were lost and there wasn't that much concern...like you know, maybe in the past, like there should have been.

Robert Gonzales: What did you get your degree in?

Ernesto Medina: I majored in Sociology and basically I...I'll be frank with you, I just wanted to stay out of the draft. You know, Iof course, dad encouraged us to get education...and of course most of us did. My brother Augie became a lawyer...he's a lawyer in Los Angeles. And I have a younger brother, Rudie, he is a doctor, a pediatrician. And my younger...other brother Rickey, he joined...he was a Marine....what you call a lifer...career. And my other sister, Barbara worked at a bank and Patsy was a cashier for a while, then she became a homemaker. And Sandra, my youngest sister, she got married early...she had to get married....but she recently went back to get her degree. And now she is going for her Masters. So it is really a big turn around for her...she's made up her mind, just because she's getting old, she doesn't have to stop getting an education.

(SIDE B)

Robert Gonzales: You were talking about the Vietnam War, about the '60s....and how, this was a very turbulent time on a lot of levels. Of course,

Ernesto Medina: Yes, it was.

Robert Gonzales: And of course, you look at...what strayed over from World War II and people that certainly came back here...during that time....so in the '60s_____and so people not necessarily wanting to perform the same thing and do

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all the same....and what sort of local issues did you see starting to come out. What sort of local changes did you see because of all the stuff going on nationally?

Ernesto Medina: Well actually this area was pretty conservative. You know the San Bernardino area ... San Bernardino County...there was a lot of support for the war...of course you had, like Norton Air Force Base and a lot of people worked there. I think they had like 10,000 employees there at one time. So they had a lot at stake..you know...because they were supporting the war...sending cargo planes over there. But, in the area, it is pretty conservative, pretty mild. You know, you had a few students that were against the war...but not like in other areas, in other parts of the country. But one of the issues was of course the Farm Workers, Cesar Chavez. This was a big issue. When eventually, when he had the great boycott...of course my dad was involved...you know...really involved in this. He was...he always said he knew him, Cesar Chavez, and he said it matter of factly....so you know, I believe him. But he tried to get some of the local stores locally to not buy grapes...but of course, they refused. And like after they had some of the contractors sign, he went again and ... like at Stater Brothers....he knew one of the managers there....and they said that they would sell _____ grapes, if you know....whichever price was better. It was that or _____. So, oh yea, they said, if we get a good deal, then we'll sell them. But I don't remember ever seeing any around here, in this area. In fact there was one little market, on Redlands Blvd., in Loma Linda, we used to go there. And the guy refused...said "No...I'll not sell you the grapes....even if I get them. And my dad told me not to go there any more. I still went there...cause I like the food...but I didn't buy any grapes. And even to this day, I don't like to buy grapes....I still think....No, grape boycott. I don't know if they are union grapes, scab grapes, of course now-a-days, the grapes are probably non-union...cause you know, a lot of the contracts expired and then everyone that had signed them.....But that was one of the issues that was big for my dad. Did you want me to talk about.....I'm not sure.....

Robert Gonzales: I'm interested in finding out how...you mentioned about that your dad..how he was active
..... Cone Camp...and what you recall...what sort of ...what got your dad interested in this sort of activity.

Ernesto Medina: O.K.....one of the things, I believe, was probably his response to discrimination. This was something...he'd mention this....I remember he said that in the '40s Mexicans were public enemy number one....and of course he used the example of the Zoot Suit Riots and how they...the Mexicans were approached you know, as the bad guys. Then of course, when we were younger, he always said that when he tried to find a place to rent, they would all say... "Oh NO, we don't want Mexicans....no Mexicans allowed." So, he had you know, these experiences and he had one experience, I'm not sure of the year, I was...I know..I was a small child..in which he got beat up by the police. This was....my mom says that it was the Colton Police....I always thought it was

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the San Bernardino Police....but you know, it was locally. He was drunk at the time, you know, my dad did like to drink and he was, you know, cussing them out. So, you know he deserved to be arrested, but he said they beat him up pretty badly, and they were calling him "Dirty Mexican.....", so this is what I remember. Not so much that he was arrested...but they were beating him and calling him a dirty Mexican...so in so.....So, this...you know, I don't know what happened to the pictures....they took some pictures of him...there were two of them. One he had a bandage...I guess at the hospital, and another one, they showed his feet...and he was sitting there...his feet were all bruised up, where they beat them. And I don't know what happened to those pictures...they were black and whites...and they are gone, I don't know what happened. I wish I had them...that was.....So, I think a lot of these incidences, really affected him, and he is very sensitive to when people would say"You Mexican this, or Mexican that".....so my dad really felt like, you know, that he needed to address the matter of how Mexican-Americans were treated. And so, with that background, I would say that's why he got so involved. Of course, his involvement started with the church....he was always involved with the church. And Bryn Mawr It was Sacred Heart Church, we were called. And he would be one of the many volunteers...help with fundraisers. And in '59 they built the Saint Joseph's Church and of course, they needed volunteers and he participated in you know, labor, to help build with the construction of that church. And he was involved with that church for the longest time....fundraisers, Catechism, picking up kids, always asking, calling to see why they weren't there. Fundraisers, we always had fiestas there, and he was...in fact one year he was the chairman in the middle '60s. And he was an usher for a long time. But I think, in terms of the church, he started reading more things....my dad..he started reading....I remember one time he read about how conservative Catholics are.....and he said "You know, that large numbers of Catholics are John Birch Society Members." You know, John Birch Society is ultra conservative anti-communist group and he was like....in shock that..you know, that this is what he's part of. And then he remembered, how in the past, you know, a Mexican would have to sit on one side of the church and Whites on the other side. And all these things came back to him and eventually he just....around the time he became involved with the Sunday Concerned Repeat, pretty much that was his church....that he would go to Sunday morning meetings, instead of church. But he was....we always went as a family to church. And, you know, he still believed in God, but it's just...the Catholic church...he found...he questioned some of the attitudes towards the minorities. So, in the '60s he became politically involved, yes. One of the things, I remember doing.....we were....we became a member of the Democratic Party and he became a Registrar of Voters...you know registering people....because he took me....we went to register people over there in Westside San Bernardino...the Bench Area in the Rialto Area. Because they ...he said...they were mostly Democrats. I would always go ahead of him, and ask people if they wanted to be registered...then if they said yes, I would put a mark on the curb...and then that way he would know if this house...or which house to skip and which house to go to. And the majority....every now and then we would get a Republican...and he would get mad...and he would say...NO, you don't want a Republican. Even though, I think he got like a nickel a vote...that's not the reason he was doing it. He said, we want to register Democrats...we want the Democrats to vote. So he was....and then we

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would always get the....then on election time we would always go around (not only me, but my brothers...I know if my sisters did, but my brothers did)..we'd go around and knock on people's door and ask if they voted, or if they needed a ride. Of course a lot of people would say, "Yea, I voted"....but they didn't. A lot of people didn't want to vote, even though they were registered. But....he...was a member of the Redlands.....I'm getting a blank now.....I'm not sure of the proper word.....but I think it was the Redlands Human Relations Commission. He joined that.....I remember he would bring members over to the house...you know, like there would be Anglos....and he would said, I want you to meet so in so...you know....and say, we are all getting along. We have different people in the group, different races....we're just visiting. They would just come over. I was kind of....I would say "what are you doing this for?" "I'm born here....I know everybody...I get along with everybody". He would say, "How come you're acting so nervous?" I was you know kind of nervous, and I would said that I guess he's right, I wasn't that comfortable....like I was saying I was. And then, he also joined a couple of organizations which...to raise money for scholarships for Mexican-American kids. The first was the Los Latinos...I think Phil Diaz was the Chairman. He was very involved in that for a few years. I remember going to some of the fundraisers. I remember the one...we went to one...had one fundraiser...in the middle '60 there...in which it was in the P.A. Hall in Mentone (Portugese American Home)....it was a dance and the kids didn't show up. We had a band and everything. That was....we didn't make any money. I don't know what happened. And then, later, in '66, I think, they formed Redlands Educational Advancement League...we all....he was a member of that one. And they, both of these groups gave out scholarships. When I graduated they gave out scholarships that year. I think I got one for \$500....\$300 from REAL and I think that Latinos gave one to Rita Ramos..Barbara Ramos, a classmate of mine. But one of the things that I think that REAL did, was they tried to get a concert, a Mexican American concert at the High School. And so they were working on this. And, of course, they were addressing the issue of the kids dropping out of school and the discipline problems. So they, I think, that got one of the teachers, in fact Mr. Figueroa was the Spanish teacher there, and they made him a Counselor, but I don't know if he was really paid for that...so I don't think he was that enthusiastic about it. Because...and he was really not the person that could relate to all the kids...because he was a very Anglicized teacher, so I don't know if he could relate to some of these kids that had problems...that might want to talk to him. At least it was an effort they made, to have these work with a school counselor. He was also a member of MAPA...he was for the longest time. MAPA was a Mexican American Political Association...was very active at this time...in the '60 and '70s and I think in the '80s it kind of waned and then it came back in the '90s. He always you know..went to the conventions...president...he knew Bert Corona and of course the big thing for them was supporting Cesar Chavez. That was one of the big issues all during this period. My dad also support candidates for office, locally. I remember Ken Diel in '64 election. He put up, like in our front yard, he'd put up a sign...a crude sign...he made it himself. And he supported Bob Minnick...these are all Democrats...for assembly. And then, Al Schwartz for Supervisor. But his one big success story was supporting the campaign of Ruben Ayala. This was an uphill battle because he was up against a popular candidate. I

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don't know...his name was Yan...I don't know his first name. And Ruben Ayala, of course being Mexican American, was...didn't seem like he could win...in conservative San Bernardino County, but he (dad) went all out for him, you know fundraising, and registering people to vote. And of course he (Ayala) was elected Supervisor....and the rest is history. You know, he went on to become a State Senator. So, there is a story attached to this..campaign...cause my dad went to the headquarters over there on Sierra Ave...to see the results of the races...and he saw that Ayala was ahead. You know, he started.....saying that Ayala was leading....and there was a supporter of the other candidate was there...an Anglo...and he said...just wait until the intelligent vote comes in...we'll see who is gonna win. And my dad said "Well, we will see...we'll see about that". And of course, Ayala won....trying to say you know...that the Mexican Americans voted for him, and the Anglo would vote for the intelligent voter....but he got the last laugh there. But that....my dad was always supporting the Democratic...he believed that was the best way to effect change. He always worked within the system. He always wanted to work in the system....no matter how frustrated he got. Especially, like with Cesar Chavez, you know...hardly made any headway around this area...but he still supported him. And I remember he went to talk...he would go to the rallies they would have....I remember the one in Calexico they had....maybe '69...and the reason I mention that...he was talking about Senator Ted Kennedy...talked...and he said, "He was talking and waving his arm...and that arm was real thick. I was just amazed at how big his arm was". That's what I remember about....and of course he would talk...tell us about what he did around here...what he was doing in this area, supporting the grape.....he always gave the report of what he was doing around here...still trying to get stores to buy union grapes and stuff. But the, my dad, in the late '60s...he...became more...in working the Redlands area...and they would have meetings over there....my understanding that the....at the....American Legion Hall on north Church Street there...they started having meetings there. You know, the leaders at the time. And they started bringing menudo to the meetings...so they called these menudo meetings. And eventually they moved to the Impact Church. This might be by 1970...because he used to type the...my dad used to bring the...he made some letter heading...letters with heading of the group on it for the group. It was called the Sunday Concerned Men's Group at first for a couple of years. Eventually it became just the Sunday Concerned Group and they were meeting at the time at the Impact Church...they went to the Impact Church. And he became the Chairman...he was the Chairman for the longest time. And this Sunday Concerned Group was his...really his big passion there...because here was a group, which eventually became very legitimate, a lot of involved, politicians, a lot of elected officials would come and address the group, and they were taken seriously. It wasn't just a radical group, these guys....responsible citizens...working hand in hand with the Sunday Concerned Group was of course was LULAC...Joe Gonzalez Jr. He was very important in the activities of this time. There were other people in the group, there is a whole list actually...I have a paper there mentioning other people involved in the group, but some of the people are gone..just like Rose Ramos, she was in the group. I think Coto Martinez, he would come and address the group. But the Sunday Concerned Group was..main concern was the north side of Redlands...and some of the problems there. And there were many problems that they

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addressed...that they felt...lack of representation on the City Council, Police, community, education, not only hiring more teachers, but the discipline problems...that was always...it's still a thing today..big thing. Hiring...how the City hiring...so they had a lot of these issues that they were addressing. And of course endorsing candidates for office. So in '72 they had a candidate that they thought could win...to represent the north side. His name was Jose Danny Martinez. The only problem was, there was three Martinez on that ballot. Julio Martinez joined the race at the last minute. Of course he was a well known north side...in the northside..pretty well known in the community...veteran. And I'm not sure who the other Martinez was...cause I'm not sure...it was Odie or Norman, his brother. But they were all running, so naturally Jose Danny Martinez did not win. He fell short. That was one of the main...I remember the campaign for that. But the next big issue was trying to get a ward system for Redlands. Of course Redlands is that large...system...everybody just votes for the candidates, regardless of where they're from. My dad felt that if we had a ward system, the north side could be represented. Because you have to represent that area....so in '74 they got it on the ballot. The City Council agreed to put it on the ballot, and of course, my dad would always come and say "Will you type this letter....so we can support him...this issue". And, I remember typing a lot of letters I worked behind the scenes you know...because my dad was really the one...it was his idea...the ideas of like Joe Gonzalez. Of course, the measure didn't pass at this time...it wasn't until much later. But they kept on with this...they kept on with this ward thing. I believe in '89 that it finally passed...they got it to pass. But it was short lived because of course, Redlands...they're too traditional...they used to be...you know, you'd vote for who you want to. You got a ward system, a district system, you have to vote for a person from that area....so I think in '93 they voted it out. So, but it was...the beginnings were back there in '74 when they...the ward system. One of the accomplishments of the Sunday Concerned Group and LULAC was the Community Center. Now, I need to qualify this....the idea of a North Side Community Center was not new...it was not necessarily their idea. But, these were the organizations that applied for the money from which they qualified so the Redlands City could get it. 'Cause without this, they couldn't have got the money, because the money was supposed to go to serve low income people...low income. They might have said seniors on it...but I know it was low income. So, this might have been around '75....they applied for this money...and the reason I was involved in this in a sense was that...he came one day and said "I need a drawing..some type of sketch...and what it's going to look like....I got the application". So I drew some diagrams...and he said, "Oh no, it's too big." He figured how much, I don't remember how much per square foot, but he said "No, this comes out to \$9.00...too much". So we kept making it smaller, smaller, and smaller....kept making a lot of drawings, and finally one....maybe it was like maybe \$500,000...it came out...and he said "Oh, that's good...we'll get that". So we submitted this..application..and when the Redlands City Council got it, they decided it centrally located. The mayor at the time, Mayor Cummings, said he thought it was a good idea to have a North Side Community Center to serve the youth. The Sunday Group wanted a place where the young kids could go..especially the Mexican American kids. The City Council instead used the money to build a Senior Center, which I think it's called Joslyn Center, I'm not sure. But the money was coming in phases, so when, of

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course they protested...they said... "what's going here, this is supposed to be for North Side Community Center." They weren't sure where it was going to be located..but the Mayor said, "well we've still got...you know...still got some more funds coming in..." He was the key to getting it built on the north side. Eventually they did..I'm not really sure of the year...but eventually got it built and you can see today it's very popular there..they even added a senior section to it. I mean, I myself was using it when I started teaching football...to go dancing...and I went there. And Henry Brexa was the director, and he said to go ahead and use the room, this was in '81. So I was there for about 15 years, then in '96, they were getting kind of strict, they were saying that you had to pay dues, I mean pay rent...so I left. I was teaching here in Riverside for _____, I'll just stick with...she always just wanted me to teach here anyway, because there was a lot of...I was always gone, teaching for _____ and always have practicing programs. So, I was always gone. So I just, in '96, stopped going to Redlands, but one of my assistants kept the group going, she changed the name. But I really feel that the Sunday Concerned Group and _____ should get credit for that Community Center...some kind of acknowledgement, not necessarily that they were the ones responsible for it..but that they had something to do with it. But it's a shame that other people get credit for those accomplishments. But I think it was one of their big accomplishments....of the group...of both groups...and Joe in particular...should get..I think should get credit, being that he was from Redlands at the time. But the other issues, they dealt with included the employment with the City of Redlands. In fact, I have a whole document there which where they were found to be in violation of the Federal law, not hiring enough people..not hiring enough minorities. They broke it down by departments.....I don't know if you are an employee of Redlands.

Robert Gonzales: No, I'm not.

Ernesto Medina: Oh..okay. Well, the library was one of them....they said they had very few minorities there and so this is some of the things that they did.....the Sunday Concerned Group. And they were able to...also tried to get the ...let's see...Edison and G.T.E....General Telephone...to also hire more minorities...more of them. Initially they were pretty successful in getting....in fact there was an incident in which there was a neighbor of ours, I think it was G.T.E.....or...I'm not which one, or Edison....he was..he felt he was laid off unfairly. And the Sunday Concerned Group and LULAC came to his rescue and they were able to get him rehired....so he always remembered that....this particular person.

Robert Gonzales: So, you still have some of these documents that you mentioned.

Ernesto Medina: I have one, that I can show you, Bob, the findings on the City of Redlands.....

Robert Gonzales: I've heard about....I've spoke with Joe Gonzalez a few years ago and he mentioned then that there were several of

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these documents that were around. And he suggested to check around...when talking with these families. And here we are and you mention Joe. And you mention...and of course it's interesting here to hear a different side of it too. So, you did a lot of the _____ paper work.

Ernesto Medina: Yea, I did a lot of typing on it. In fact, it's a wonder they didn't realize that it was the same person, you know, because a typewriting looks a certain way....and it was all the same. Sometimes, someone else would sign the letters. Of course the person would agree with what he was signing, that was signing it. But it was a lot behind the scenes at the time.

Robert Gonzales: Yea, that's I think, one of the things that you mentioned in these groups LULAC and the name of the other group....need to get their due....and that's one of the things that you had mentioned...that they really believed that their work would speak for them...that they weren't really into self promotion and that's why all their candidates would rather work for....and they did...for the Community Center....and they did their activities. Now, you mentioned that you taught dance...how long have you been doing that.....since you were

Ernesto Medina: No, I started...after, you know, when I graduated from Cal State, and I realized I wasn't going to be drafted, I went back to Valley College in '72...and in '73 I took a class. I just went out there...I was playing basketball...and they were practicing. That's when I joined. So I learned from Mr. Segovia....Louis Segovia, there. And then I took some classes at UCR..and they had an instructor there, his name was....lets see...his name was....uh.....Javier....Javier...I forgot his last name. But Javier was an instructor there at UCR at the time....oh, Javier Valdez. So I learned from him...and over the years, I learned from different people. So in '76 I started, you know, formed my own group and started teaching kids. I started at St. Joseph's....they were having a fiesta that night...in '76 and saw that kids were going to dance. So I started teaching there. But of course, Father said "Oh, no".....then I joined the Navy. Then in '78 I started again. The Father...Father Usted at the time said, "This is not religious, what you are doing....so you are going to have to pay rent....to use the hall". After that I went to my mom's house for a couple of years until I found the Redlands Community Center in '81. But, he didn't go for that...after a while. But, it really wasn't religious, and he said that since it was just a private using it, so he had a point. So, yea....it was called _____ de Lindo in '78, the name of the group. In '76 it was just for that fiesta, but then I started again in '78 and eventually it was called Grupo Folklorico Lindo ?????_____. So I had that group for 18 years. And, at the time of course, the group in Redlands was St. Mary's...and if you want to learn about that, I think her name was Dolores Cortez...she was in charge. I remember her..they started in '74. Because I remember I used to go watch their programs. You know, impressed with them, how well they performed. But I did this, of course the parents were the ones that do most of the work for the costumes

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and stuff....I just teach the kids...and in '89 there was a reunion here and Rose said to show some of the kids...her cousins...how to dance...so we started the group here in '89. Well, I started another group. But eventually of course, they started getting older, and so they didn't dance any more. And then, just last year... '99... I hardly got anybody that was coming to my classes....and even the ones that were there didn't really want to be there...so I just ..so I stopped....gonna take a break. But for 23 years, I did that. You never know, I might go back...

Robert Gonzales: So did they follow you around a bit.

Ernesto Medina: The demand's not there.....especially now that they have so many groups now. Yea, you have a lot of these instructors from Mexico...forming their own groups. And just in Riverside, there's surprisingly _____ groups there are. There might be five or six...so...they didn't need me.

Robert Gonzales: One of the things that I wanted to go back to....during the time of course there were several more, I'm sure more liberal and far more radical organizations than the organizations that were forming in Redlands.....you know of....of course where? LULAC was fairly conservative, they were one of the older groups. Uh,was there any kind of conflict between people that wanted to take things steps further than these groups were willing to do??

Ernesto Medina: If anything, there were people who would oppose what they were doing...rather than go a step further. I don't know of any in Redlands...Brown Berets or anything. I don't think that they had them over there. But the only...I don't know if there was anybody that was more radical...not really radical...more...because the Sunday....they were ... really attacked some of the big issues...like...To give you an example...Police / Community relations...that was a big thing. The..profiling..they call it now. There was a lot of that...there was always...they were always writing and contacting the Police Chief about harassing...harassing kids talking to them...or else mistreating them. I remember at the big blowout, there was this, I forgot the guys name, but he was like a Hawaiian police officer...who was real rough with the Mexican kids. I remember they were trying to get him....to get him to be fired. Of course, that never happened. But there was ...that was always the big controversy with the police, cause it was hard. A lot of these guys...a lot of these kids were, you know, they were at fault, but yet they were mistreated...they felt they were mistreated and so they still tackled this issue of coming to their defense. There was even one instance where they had a big ole protest in front of the police station because of, I think a whole family was...the police broke into a house, and the whole family was beat up...so this was in the '70s there. So, I mean, this is controversial..cause like I say, a lot of these people were at fault, but yet, being mistreated...still at fault...but just because they did something wrong to you...mistreat them. So this was the issue with the Sunday Concerned Group. Another area was discipline at the school...high school. I remember them talking about a lot of

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incidents in which they came to the defense of the minority kid. I remember the one instance where a kid got kicked out because he beat up an Anglo kid, and the kid had spit in his face...so he beat him up. And I don't think anything was resolved there...but they still came to his defense. And in the early '70s, a big controversy...two Mexican kids were kicked out of school, they were _____ two white kids, and I don't think nothing happened to the white kids...but supposedly they both had weapons, but only the Mexican kids were kicked out. So they had a big old meeting at the school board...a big old crowd there. And the reason that I know this...I mean about what happened, was my cousin was the campus supervisor at the time, so he had to go up there and tell them what happened. And of course the story here was that a Mexican American had a knife, which my cousin said he did, but the supposedly kids had a weapon too, but it turned out to be an Afro pick...which is a comb. I think it's made of metal, but it's a comb that the African American kids used to comb their hair. Well, of course, with that testimony that they, you know, they sided against the Mexican American kids. They were found at fault, because they had their knife. So that...these are some instances in which the Sunday Concerned Group took on really controversial, I mean, it's not really pleasant when sometimes you have to support someone who you are gonna find were in the wrongdoing. But because they..a lot of parents felt there was unfairness involved, they took on these issues like that. But, as for other groups, I'm not really sure what you mean...I don't really know of anything.

Robert Gonzales: I was just curious about..any sort of any interaction or communication or concern about Brown Berets ... or how these groups ... and how they worked together...or if they worked together, you know, just something that I was a little curious about.

Ernesto Medina: They might of..they might of...yea...I remember he did mention the Brown Berets one time. I'm not sure what had happened, but you know....of course, MAPA...he was a member of that group at the same time. He went to the conventions, I remember in '74 they went, and of course they endorsed Jerry Brown for Governor...and the reason I remember '74 because on the way back, the car broke down and he called me to go pick him up. So, that's what I remember about that one. He was always mentioning the MAPA conventions.

Robert Gonzales: We've got...just about towards the end of the tape....is there anything in particular that you want to talk about...anything that we didn't discuss, please feel free if you have any thoughts about...I can go to the next one (tape).

Ernesto Medina: Just ... what I said about the typing letters and having other people sign them...I just don't want to sound like it was something underhanded...but like I said before, what I typed....you know, I typed what they were giving me to type. And the people who signed it were...they were the ones that agreed with that....whatever it is that they signed. I don't want you to think that I just typed a bunch of letters myself and then

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so-in-so signed it, and so-in-so signed it....that never happened. It was always...I only typed what the individual people told me to type, for the Sunday Concerned Group. I just wanted to clear that up.

Robert Gonzales: And like I say, we can add some more to there... whenever you take a look at that and we will get some copies of them.....but I just want to thank you for sitting down with me today and for participating. And we will have a copy of the transcript available to you at some point

Ernesto Medina: Okay.

Robert Gonzales: And I want to thank you for your comments.

Ernesto Medina: The only thing that I want to say...is one thing about my dad..was ..my dad believed in being involved and I think that the one thing that I remember about him...that he wasn't afraid to tackle some of the sensitive issues of the time. And I just think that he accomplished a lot in his lifetime and he deserves some recognition and I hope that at least that the little bit that I remember of....that I remember. Perhaps interviews with other people will bring out...will shed some more light on other things he did, but I thank you for the interview.