

1-5-2008

Interview No. 1600

Agustin Diaz Roldan

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Interview with Agustin Diaz Roldan by Alma Carrillo, 2008, "Interview No. 1600," Institute of Oral History, University of Texas at El Paso.

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THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO INSTITUTE OF ORAL HISTORY

Interviewee: Augustin Diaz Roldan

Interviewer: Alma Carrillo

Project: Bracero Oral History Project

Location: Tucson, Arizona

Date of Interview: January 5, 2008

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Transcript No.: 1600

Transcriber / Summary: Mayra L. Avila

Augustin Diaz Roldan was born in Mexico City, Mexico in 1932; he explains that he owned and operated a meat market but left as a bracero because he was told he would not, he was contracted in Chihuahua and worked in Las Cruces, New Mexico picking cotton; he states that he rotated working in Imperial Valley, Phoenix, Arizona, and Salinas, California from 1954-1960, renewing his contract eighteen months at a time with the same farm company, he picked cotton, lettuce, tomatoes, chilly, asparagus, and strawberries; he also worked as a cook for the farmers, he remembers men were given three meals with lunch being delivered to the fields, they were charged \$1.75 a day for all three meals, he would work seven days a week; he recalls in detail the procedure he went through to become a bracero; he used oil and dirt to make his hands look rough, during his health check they were examined and disinfected, it took him three days to get a contract and he had to rent a hotel; he explains that for fun men would play sports, go to the bar or movies, and that prostitution was everywhere, and that women would even go to the barracks; he also details how men got food poisoning from a can of chilies that had been dented open; additionally he recalls an accident that occurred that killed seventeen braceros burning them unrecognizable and injured many others; he concludes by explaining that he was not aware of the ten percent deduction, he holds Mexico responsible, and he has filled out his paperwork; to him a bracero is not an immigrant but help, help that the United States still needs.

Length of interview 92 minutes

Length of Transcript n/a