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Themis Molina Peinado

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UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO

INSTITUTE OF ORAL HISTORY

INTERVIEWEE: Themis Molina-Peinado (1908-)
INTERVIEWER: Vicki L. Ruiz
PROJECT: _____
DATE OF INTERVIEW: October 10, 1983
TERMS OF USE: Unrestricted
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BIOGRAPHICAL SYNOPSIS OF INTERVIEWEE:

Member of socially prominent Hispanic El Paso family.

SUMMARY OF INTERVIEW:

Family histories of the Molina and Peinado families.

Length of Interview: 1 hour Length of Transcript: 27 pages

Mrs. Themis Molina-Peinado

Interviewed by Dr. Vicki L. Ruiz
October 10, 1983

R: Where were you born?

P: I was born in Juarez, October 4th 1908. My father was a doctor in Juarez. And then, after the revolution, he went to Mexico City, and then we came over here to the United States. During the Villa Revolution, my father went to Mexico, my mother came with five of us, we were five. My oldest sister Isis lives in Los Angeles, California. She is a Ph.D. in Romantic Languages and then, another sister that I have here, Penelope. I was the youngest of five.

R: Where did your family settle in El Paso? Did you live in Sunset Heights?

P: I lived in North El Paso, as a small child, but I remember the Carranza family, Mr. Carranza used to work with the Boundary Commission. We stayed there, and then my father always wanted to put us in a girls' school, so he put us in Effie Eddington School. It used to be on San Antonio Street.

R: Where did you go after that?

P: After that, I went to nursing school in what used to be the Masonic Hospital and I studied nursing. Then I went to work with Dr. H. E. Stevenson, an old timer here, and his son Herbert Stevenson. And I worked there until I married. When Arnulfo Peinado came from Chicago, then we married in August

the 23rd, 1930.

R: Where did you meet him?

P: You know, it was funny, I was just thinking today that I met him at a Halloween Party in October of 1929. He asked me to marry him about December, and I said, "No, I don't know you quite well after two months." So I said, "We better go together for about a year before we get married." So we got married and then we had the six sons. My father was Dr. Rafael Molina, and he, (that's his picture there), he was a 33rd degree Mason, and he founded a lot of Masonic lodges all over Mexico.

R: So you were Protestant?

P: Well, I've always been a Methodist. You know, Puebla is a very Catholic state, Cholula has a church for every day of the year, but still my father used to be, what used to be called a free thinker, Libre Pensador. So he got out of Puebla, and he became a Mason. And like I say, he was a free thinker, and my mother was a Methodist--even baptized in Mexico City.

R: Were you involved at all with Houchen? Newark Hospital?

P: No, not with the Houchen. I used to go to Trinity as a little girl because we were in Effie Eddington and they made us walk every Sunday from Effie Eddington that was on San Antonio to Trinity Methodist Church. And then I married Arnold, but I married in a civil ceremony and by the Protestant minister. Then my children were raised as

Protestants, but they have married Catholic girls, except Arthur that married a Presbyterian girl and Shelly, my daughter-in-law that married George--she's Jewish.

R: Are you still active in the Methodist Church?

P: No, no I go to Coronado Christian Church, that is where Dr. James Jauncey preaches. Have you heard of him?

R: Yes, I have.

P: He's a wonderful minister, and he used to come and visit my husband every Friday. Whenever we had any problems, we'd always go to Dr. Jauncey and he's been a minister of the family. So that's where I go. But I go speak to the Trinity Jolly Elders; they meet every third Thursday of the month. And we have a big meeting over there, about 300 people get together, Catholics, Jewish, Protestants, everybody, everybody gets there and we have a program and then a luncheon. It's really very, very nice. We get together-- of all religions.

R: When did you have your first son? How many children do you have?

P: I have six. I married in August 23rd, 1930--that was my husband's birthday, and then the following year, Arnold, my oldest son (that's him over here, he doesn't have any mustache and that's Arnie my grandson). And I have six sons and fourteen grandchildren. This is my youngest grandchild, Philip. He is the son of my youngest son. And then I have

Kathy Peinado, the daughter of Bobby and Irma, this is Melinda, the daughter of Shelly and George. Do you read that article in the paper that came about me?

R: Yes.

P: Well, I'll tell you one thing, we get together every Wednesday, here at the house to eat. One Wednesday, I cook for them, and the following Wednesday, they take me out. Last week was my birthday, on October the 4th, and the whole family got together at Gregory's on Sunday. Daughters-in-law, children, grandchildren, everybody. Then on Tuesday, my children took me to the Coronado Country Club, and then on Thursday, my friends, about ten friends, got together with me, came here to the house for a little drink or something, snack, and then we went out again to the Lancer's Club. So we had three celebrations. Since I've lived here so long, I know a lot friends. Everywhere I go, I meet somebody since the family has lived here a long time. Do you know Emilio Peinado?

R: No, I don't. Could you give me a little about the history of the Peinados--when they came over and why?

P: Well, I'm not a Peinado. I was a Molina; my father was Dr. Molina. I met Arnold, like I said, in 1929, and I married him in 1930, and he passed away. It'll be October the 9th, 10 years ago, that he passed away. We had just gone on a trip to Europe and we stayed in Lisbon, Portugal, and the airplane didn't come soon enough. I noticed he was getting

very tired, and so he said, "I want to go home." And I said, "Well, the airplane was delayed in Paris." So the following day, the airplane came and brought us to Los Angeles. And then I said, "Arnold, do you wanna stay here in a hotel?" "No," he said, "I want to go home as fast as I can." And at the airport at 2 o'clock in the morning, Arnold, Rose, my daughter-in-law, and George went to pick us up at the airport. We got here at 2:00/2:30, and at 7:00, he got up, he said, "Themis, I cannot breathe anymore." He sat on top of the bed, and he fell back, and he was dead. It was just like that. So it has been ten years of his passing.

But the Molina family, like I said, we were five; and my father was the one that dedicated--the Juarez Monument. El Monumento Juarez and here is the speech. And my sister (I wish you would read it, I will lend it to you)--she translated from Spanish to English, because my grandchildren can hardly understand Spanish. Stevie, one of my grandsons, went to study in Spain one year, and now in January, Kathy, and another granddaughter Melissa, are going to Spain to study for one year.

R: Oh, that's wonderful.

P: So, that will be nice. I can show you this picture I want to give my sons to put in their offices. These are the land grants given by the King of Spain to my great-grandmother when they came from Spain to Puebla. This was in 1810.

R: This is beautiful.

P: And this was in 1822 and 1823. My youngest son is a lawyer and he wanted one of them; but Bobby said we better keep them at the office because they'll be having their new offices close to where Gibson's used to be. They have the land there to build their offices.

R: When did your husband get involved in construction? What did he do during the Depression after you were married?

P: My husband? I wrote a story about my husband and I think I have it somewhere there because he tried to dictate it to me when he came to El Paso (I'll find it in a minute). They had the A & A Super Service Station, and they used to sell gasoline by the tank car load. They came from Chicago, and then over here, they put the service station. And the first house that he bought for me was at 1415 E. Nevada--that's where all my children were, well, they were born at the hospital, of course, but they were raised there at that house. When the house got too little, we bought the lot on 2222 N. Mesa where Weiner Schnitzel is and we had a two-story house [built there]. It was beautiful and my bedroom, then my bathroom, and four bedrooms for the children and the bathroom over there and in the bottom, we had the living room, dining room, kitchen, breakfast room, and the maid's room. You know, since I married, I only have lived in three houses. In 1415 E. Nevada, and then at 2222 N. Mesa, and then over here for twenty-one years--so only three houses. My children wanted

me to move to Casitas Coronado. They said, "Mother, you should live over here with us, close to us, and leave your old house." But somehow, you know, my house my husband bought it for me; it has a lot of memories. I've been here twenty-one years. This used to be the garage and he added this room so we could have a like a den, when the grandchildren would come and throw sodas and everything over there in the living room. So over here, they could do whatever they wanted and we didn't feel like it would matter quite a lot. And then the other day, I wrote that "Memories of the Past", and I got an award from the El Paso Historical Society.

R: Oh, I remember the contest. When did your husband get involved in construction?

P: Let me tell you. They had the A & A Super Service Station. And then Emilio, my brother-in-law, he came--by the way, Saturday, they gave him a party in Ciudad Juarez and all the Peinado family got together. Edelmira came from Los Angeles, and Martha, her daughter, with her husband and her children and another sister came, Evelina came from Monterrey. Then another sister, Elvira, came from Mexico City with her daughter Virginia, and we all got together. But the way the construction started was that my husband and his brother Alfonso were at the A & A Super Service Station when Emilio came from Tayoltita. He was the youngest

brother and he came to join them. He was a mining engineer and so he came over and joined them and started a home construction company. So the three brothers started and Gaspar Cordero, another friend and Johnny started the Home Construction Company. Then they started building and, I think, on Alabama, they made Zia Village. They made all these houses around here, not this one or the one over there, but a lot of houses in Mission Hills. Emilio and Alfonso and Arnulfo, they built Crestmont over there, all those houses over there. You know, how things happen, in families, they separated. Emilio went on his own, and Alfonso and Arnulfo split up. Then my husband went to Juarez and he was lending money--that's what he was doing because the houses were not making enough money to live. And then he started the A.B. Peinado and Sons Company with his sons. But the sons, they had just come from college, Bobby and Arnold, and they were ahead of their father, so to speak, in the way they wanted things done. They had more study than their father; their father was getting old, and then he had a sickness. He had a tic-doulaux. Have you heard of that? It gets them like that, and Arnold would get that pain and right away he couldn't close his mouth. He said some people even shoot themselves because the pain is so terrible, and right away I had to take him to the hospital and they had to inject him right here in the trigeminal nerve. But that's how they got into the

construction business, with Emilio. But then they split and everybody went on their way. I think Alfonso was playing the stock market, and he went in business with Louie Peinado, his son, in the jewelry business. Then Arnold went his way and Emilio went his way.

R: When you were at home with the children, were you involved in community service activities?

P: Yes, I did a lot of work for the city. I volunteered for the Providence Memorial Hospital; I was there in Information and the Gift Shop. Then I worked at St. Joseph's Hospital at the Gift Shop. Then I worked for Planned Parenthood and I worked for the Brotherhood of Christian and Jews. I used to work with United Fund, writing envelopes and writing letters and then mailing them. I did a lot of volunteer work. I also worked with the YWCA; I would open the shop and close it--stay there one day. But my husband was still alive and he would call me and say, "What are you doing volunteer work over there when I need you over here. The maid didn't show up [and this and that]. So you close the shop over there and come over and help me." So I had to stop when he was getting sicker and sicker and he didn't want me away from him.

R: Have you seen any change in ethnic relations during the years you have lived in El Paso? In how Anglos and Mexicans get along?

P: I don't know, probably I've been lucky, but to me they've never discriminated against me. Never. I don't know, probably at the beginning. When I was at 1415 E. Nevada, there was this woman who was very anti-Mexican. And my children would go by the alley route to go and bring me a quart of milk or a loaf of bread or something and she would throw rocks at them, at Arnold, at Bobby, at Chuck. But I'm not one that takes anything. I caught that little girl and just gave her a good whipping and then called her mother. I said, "She has to stop or else I'm gonna whip her every time I see her." So her mother came and she said, "You did fine. You apologize to Mrs. Peinado and don't you dare do it again." But that was way back in the 1930s. But since then, I really don't feel that I've had much discrimination.

R: What role do you think that the Peinado family has played in the growth of El Paso?

P: Well, I think the family has done a lot because they have changed, like it said in the paper, the face of El Paso. Did you read that article of Virginia Turner when they talk about the Peinados when we got together in Emilio's house?

R: Yes, in 1978.

P: Yes, but I think that it has--it's not like it used to be. I think, they're more accepted. And you know, they believe, I think, the Anglo people, some of them feel they're superior to the Mexican people, and to me, I don't believe

they are. Because I can tell you about my father; my father was a very proud man. He was Spanish and he spoke a lot of languages. We had a beautiful home in Juarez. We always had maids; nanas that took care of us. We had tutors that went into the house to teach the older children because he didn't want us to mix with the rest of the people. So you see, it was a very different; we had a very different culture. My father didn't want us to mix with any of the common people. He wanted us to be educated in a girls' school where we wouldn't see any boys.

R: It was very traditional.

P: Very traditional. That's the way we were raised. Let me show you this thing, this is my father's speech.

R: That's good, that's very important. May I copy this and return it to you?

P: Yes. And then let me tell you--here's the letter where the American Consul, no the Mexican Consul named my father to collect the funds to build the Juarez Monument. "Colecta de fondos entre las colonias Mexicanas para hacer el Monumento." And here is the letter where they named him the public orator.

R: Oh, that's very nice. After the revolution, did your father go back to Mexico. Did the family go back to Juarez?

P: Yes, we came back and we lived some time in Juarez, and then we moved over here. I remember my father having meetings at

the house that were a favor de Bernardo Reyes. They wanted to throw over el Presidente Porfirio Diaz and have Bernardo Reyes as the president. And they used to have the meetings. And when they found out, they put my father in jail, and then they sent him to Mexicali, Baja California where he died. I went with Arthur, who is a lawyer (my youngest son), about five years ago looking for the tomb and of course, I didn't find the tomb. But I found the records about Rafael Limon Molina, when he died.

R: What did the family do? What did you do when your father was taken away?

P: My brother Osinis, he had to work at the White House to support the family. And like I say, I was going to Effie Edgington and then going to nursing school and I became a nurse. My other sister worked at Henderson Clinic and the other sister kept on going to UTEP and graduated from UTEP and then went to UCLA where she got her Masters and Doctors in Lengunas Romanticas. She speaks Spanish, English, French, Portuguese and Latin because she started Latin with some nuns, unas monjas. I saw her about two months ago. I went to LA to see my oldest sister, and she told me she had just finished translating a book del Espanol Arcaico del 16th Century to English.

R: Oh, that's great.

P: Even though she's 80, her mind is very clear.

R: Where did she teach?

P: She taught at Whittier College. When her husband was alive, they were living in Whittier because he had a job close by and she was teaching at Whittier College. But she graduated from UCLA.

R: She must be one of the first Spanish surnamed women with a Ph.D.

P: She was the first one over there. This one is--a cousin of mine Gustavo gave it to me, my family tree dating from 1763, Molina Alcantara, when they came from Barcelona in 1763 to Puebla. That's how come the king, because Matilde Alcantara vino con el virrey de Espana, and so they were given all those land grants in Puebla. And I've been twice over there to Zacapacuas.

R: It's beautiful.

P: My name and my husband's name, I have a lot of things that I have saved up. It's hard to collect, but some my mother gave to me, and some cousin in Puebla gave me everything that I have. Now I'll show you something of the Peinado.

R: When did the Peinado family come to the United States?

P: Let me see, I think, if I find Arnold's biography. My children wanted one and I wrote it. My husband was dictating it to me, and then he passed away and I finished the last chapter.

R: This is really nice. May I take these to xerox?

P: You want to take some?

R: I'll take them, but I'll xerox them and return them to you tomorrow.

P: No, that's all right.

R: Why did they, did they come across too during the Revolution, the Peinado family?

P: I think I came in 1910 and I think Arnold came in 1912, about two years later.

R: Why did they come to the United States?

P: Because of the Revolution.

R: Political reasons?

P: Yes, political reasons and Villa, I think, was after Arnold's father. Villa was after my father cause he did a lot of writing against Pancho Villa. I don't know why Arnold's father--. I know that he escaped and came to El Paso and then called his family to come over. They started a store over there on South Park.

R: What did Arnold's father do?

P: Well, I think he was a carpenter. I think he was from Durango and he passed by Chihuahua--Coyachie or Cuauhtemoc, somewhere around there. And Maria Anchondo was living there, the Anchondos. She was a beautiful woman, I knew her when I married Arnold, very pretty. And he passed by and saw her and they got married. I think, three or four of the children were born over there. They had ten children; they had ten and out of the ten, five got together last Saturday: Emilio, Edelmira, Maria, Elvira and Evelina and the other

five are dead: Sara, Alfonso, Arnulfo, Elena and Hortencia. Quite a big family.

R: So they opened a grocery store when they came to the United States?

P: I didn't know Arnold when they opened the grocery store. I only knew him when he came from Chicago. Because they couldn't make it over here, they were too many and so they went to Chicago and worked over there. He and his brother had a Checker Cab. Then they came back, that was when I met him. They were living on Rio Grande Street and I was living at 1119 Arizona.

R: Was the Halloween party where you met given by friends?

P: Yes, I was working as a nurse. And it was funny; I was tired. I had worked all day cause with Dr. Stevenson I had to do everything. At that time there was no specialist, as today. Dr. Stevenson would set bones; we would have tonsillectomies at the office. And he would treat men, but when he treated men, I prepared everything and then I walked out and he would treat the men. But every other thing, I had to help him. I gave the ether; I made the bandages; I sterilized everything; I kept the books; I did everything.

R: Oh, he must have been sorry when you left.

P: And so when I got home, I was very tired. And another friend of mine Rogelia, she went over and she said, "Themis, Julia Samuels is giving a party, a Halloween party." And I said,

"Oh, I don't care to go to any Halloween party. I'm too tired." She said, "Oh, no, you're going." So she pulled me up from the bed and she said, "You're gonna wear this dress and we're going to the party." "All right." I dressed and went to the party, and there Pilar Anchondo kept talking to her cousin Arnulfo that had just come from Chicago. We went over there and I was present like about an hour. And they were supposed to pick feathers, that was your lock, story or whatever it was. And I gave it to Arnold, and he picked up the feather. And he stared at me and I stared at him. Well, that night he asked me if he could bring me home, so he brought me home. The following day he was there at Dr. Stevenson's office and every day, every day he could, sometimes he would go for me without a car and we would walk all the way to 1119 Arizona where I used to live. And we'd walk and walk and walk and we stopped there at the house. And then, like I said, about December, he said, "Shall we go to Las Cruces and get married?" "No, I'm not gonna get married like that. Everybody that goes to Las Cruces because something happens." And I said, "If I get married, I'm gonna get married with a white dress. You have to ask my mother and you have to ask my brother, my oldest brother because he's the head of the family. My father is not here, he's in Mexicali." So he did that, they went to--the other man with my husband--and asked for my hand in marriage. And so we settled the day. And I

got married and then went to Ruidoso for my honeymoon.

R: How nice. Did your parents, did your mother have any--or your older brother have any resistance to your marriage?

P: No, no, and I had had another boyfriend that I had been going with for seven years. And my mother never approved of him; he was very good-looking. Arnulfo was very, very good-looking, pero Miguel tambien era muy bien parecido y cantaba muy bonito. Me daba gallo every Saturday I had a gallo. Even Dr. Stevenson when he saw Arnold, he said, "He's the man for you." And my mother and my brother said, "Oh, you can marry anytime you want to."

R: That's good. Were you still going with this Miguel?

P: No, no. He had gone to California and I hadn't heard anything from him. So I considered we were not going together any more.

R: Was he, your husband, allowed to go into the house before you were engaged?

P: No, not until I got engaged, then he could go into the house. We were not allowed. My husband was very panicky and he said, "I want all boys. I don't want any girls because they suffer a lot in life." And I always wanted a daughter. I always cried for a daughter, but, you know, I never got a daughter. I have six sons, and now grand-daughters.

R: I have two sons and my husband did not want a daughter. He

says girls are too much trouble.

P: Yes, that's what my husband used to say. And now I thank God for my family because they're wonderful children. They're very close to me and on Wednesday, I can tell them if I need to sign this paper. I can ask them questions. George does my income tax. Before I left for California, I needed a water tank. So I called Raul and right away, he was here calling the company to send me a water tank. And they sent the water tank and then I called the plumber, he came and connected it. I have all kinds of trouble for them. This house is supposed to be insured for \$100,000; and I told Arnold, "I have it insured for \$60,000 and that's all I can pay." "Well, that's all right, mother, you pay \$60,000 and we will pay the rest."

R: That's wonderful.

P: I try to keep the family together, you know what I mean? If they have a quarrel between them, I'll say, "Bobby, don't be so hard on your brothers. After all, they're your brothers."

R: Is Bobby the oldest?

P: No, Arnold is the oldest. Oh, and Arnold is more diplomatic. He's very diplomatic. He was the president of the Chamber of Commerce. He tries to fix everything between the brothers. Because, like somebody told me last week, it's very hard for brothers to work together.

R: And who are working together, Arnold and George?

P: Arnold, Bobby, George, and Raul. The four of them. They wanted to bring Arthur over here, but Arthur has a very good law practice in San Diego and he's doing pretty good.

R: Who is the sixth brother, there's Raul, Arnold...?

P: Arnold is the first one, then Charles. Charles is in La Jolla and he's a nuclear engineer. He went to give lectures in Ireland, Scotland, Frankfurt, Germany, and Switzerland last year and his wife and I went with him. And they have two children, Ernie and Chuck. But I get along, thank goodness, I get along with all of my grandchildren. And last week when it was my birthday, all my grandchildren were calling me from New York, Fort Worth, from Dallas. My sister called from Los Angeles; my children called me too. And right now I feel, like I told my children, "I don't have very many years to live after you get to be seventy-five." But while I am alive, I'll try to keep them together as much as I can.

R: Don't say that, my grandmother lived to be ninety-one.

P: She did? Let me tell you, it's wonderful to get a certain age. You know, Emilio, my brother-in-law, he's had Alzheimer's Disease.

R: Oh, no!

P: And he cannot remember anything. He can talk to you and the next thing he says, "Who is that woman? I don't know

who she is." And the other day, Leticia Veytia called me about the party because pretty soon he's gonna be gone and then he will not know who's there or who's giving the party or nothing.

R: Where did your sons go to school? Did they all go to UTEP or--?

P: No, no. Arnold got a scholarship, he got a scholarship to John Hopkins when he graduated from El Paso High with honors at sixteen. At sixteen he left for John Hopkins in Baltimore. He graduated with honors and then he got another scholarship to Oxford College in England. But Arnold and the son of the president of John Hopkins College went to Washington to be interviewed and the son of the president got it. So Arnold got the next scholarship to M.I.T. and so he went to M.I.T. and got his Master's. Charles graduated with honors and he went to Cal Tech. And then Bobby also graduated with honors. Bobby is very, very sharp and he is very tough. And then he went to Lehigh University in Pennsylvania. Then Raul went to UTEP and New Mexico State University. George went to John Hopkins and then he came back. He was falling in love with Shelley, so he stayed here and graduated from UTEP as a CPA. And then Arthur came to UTEP and then from here he got a scholarship to Harvard.

R: That's great!

P: And he graduated from Harvard. And my grandson Arnie

graduated from Harvard and he married a doctor who is going to Columbia University. And he's working at Wall Street. It seems like just everybody lives with ambition, to go forward and forward and forward.

R: Did you give them that ambition? Did you always push them to do better?

P: Well, this is the way I feel, what I wrote in "Raising A Family:" Your children are not your children; they are looking forward not backwards. They have to go ahead. I don't envy them that they're getting more school and more money and more everything because that's the way it should be. You know, like Kathy and Melissa are going to Spain to study, I didn't have that chance even though my father was a doctor. But at that time, I remember a teacher of mine in Effie Eddington that wanted to take me to Kentucky. She was from Kentucky and my mother said, "Oh, no. A daughter of mine going away from here? No, you will stay here." Then Dr. Richmond wanted me to go and study in San Francisco. And she said, "A daughter of mine never goes out of the house until she's married." And another lady from here had a beautiful store over there in New York and she wanted me to go with her and be a model. And my mother said, "A model? Oh, you'll end up being the mistress of somebody. No, you don't get out of the house until you are married." (See that picture of mine

when I was nineteen, way over there? You see it? When I was eighteen or nineteen.)

R: Oh, very delicate, very delicate.

P: And I had reddish hair. Of course, now I have it colored, but I had reddish hair, real reddish hair. Y mi hermana me decia la guerita, guerita. And she wrote me a card for my birthday and she said, "I still remember you with your little white dress and your blue ribbons, everything done by hand." My mother would make us little dresses of lace, con encaje, liston, todo hecho a mano."

R: Beautiful. Your family, are you still very close?

P: Yes, we're very close; she calls me and I call her. I go see her and she comes to see me. The other day she called me and she said, "I wanna go and see you." And I said, "Well, I have Raul here, right now and a student from the university asked me to put him up here. As soon as Raul rents an apartment, then you can come over. But if you wanna come anytime, we have a lot of houses--my family, my sons." And she said, "Oh, no. You know I am very shy; if I don't stay with you, I wouldn't stay with anybody."

R: Did your sons help you with the house, help you with dinner or washing dishes?

P: When they were little?

R: Yes. Did you make them sort of share the responsibilities?

P: You know, Arnold would take care of the children. Of course, I always had a maid or two. When I had the big

house, I had two maids. Now I have a maid once a week cause I really don't need them so much; and I have a gardener come every two weeks. But when they were little, we always had two maids and a gardener. But George likes to cook a lot. And he would get up on the table and he would see what I was doing and he'd start chopping. Like last night he called me, "Mother, can you come over and have menudo?" And I said, "No, I'm tired of all these parties." Because we had a party for my birthday; then my son gave me another party; then my friends; then we had the party for the Chamber of Commerce; then they had a party at Casitas Coronado; then they had another party in Quintas Coronado (the one for benefit of the Symphony); and then they had another one in Jardines. So I said, "I can't go to so many parties. I really don't care about going all the way out there to eat menudo. Besides, George, I have a lot of menudo in the freezer." He said, "Well, Mother, I just thought that you could come over and eat with me." And he's very sweet. George is very sweet. He would call me just to say, "Mother, I love you. I love you." Or one day he said, "Mother, what am I gonna do when you die; then we cannot call you; then we cannot go to eat with you on Wednesday?" I said, "Well, keep just the memory in all that I have taught you and all I have told you. Because we all have to go away, sooner or later we have to go." One

time when he was a boy, he wrote me a letter and he said, "Mother, whenever I think of doing something wrong, then I think, would Mother approve of it or not? And if I think you wouldn't approve, then I don't do it."

R: Oh, that's beautiful.

P: Wasn't that sweet?

R: That's beautiful. How old was he at the time?

P: He was about twelve. And then Bobby, Bobby is a big man, a tall man. He said, "Mother you haven't kissed me today. Kiss me." And when he was little, he would hang onto my skirt and would not let me go. One time, Arnold and I were going to Mexico City by car and I was pregnant with Raul and Bobby would not let me go. He kept crying and crying and crying. He said, "Mother, I have to go with you, Mother. I have to go." "All right." I went back to the house; I told the maid, "Put in a case something for the boys, some cambios de ropa and little suits and this and that and then I'll take them along." So she put whatever was needed. I took him to the car and I sat him there [on my lap]. There were about three more people, three in front. He went with me to Mexico City and he would not let go of me. We've been a very close family. One time, tambien vinieron del U.S. News and World Report to interview the family here; they asked, un senior Gonzales, I think he was the president of City Bank. And they asked me, "Give us the name of a Spanish American family que sea de la gente mas

conocida aqui en El Paso." So they sent him one Wednesday when we were eating and he got here and took pictures and all that.

R: What did you do to encourage your children to become so successful?

P: Well, they did not need much encouragement; they wanted to do it. Their father, Arnold, said, "I want them to have what I didn't have. I didn't have this education, but I'll work my fingers to the bone so that they can have all the education they need to prepare themselves." My husband would never write a letter. He would dictate to me, "Answer this letter. Answer this letter." And the minute they called and they wanted money; I would run to Western Union and mail them money for vacation--to go to Florida, Arnold wanted to go to Florida, so I would send him money. Bobby needed shoes or this and that, and then their monthly check. I sent them their monthly check all the time.

R: Did your husband go to school? What was his level of education? Did he go to high school?

P: No, he only had primary. But he was very, very, smart. In business, he was so keen. We were living in E. Nevada and one time, I said, "Arnold, I wish you would clean this ash tray." It was copper. He took it to the office and cleaned it and he sold it. Another time, we had a beautiful car, I think it was a Lincoln. He took it over there to the A & A

and when he came back, he came in a little old car. I said, "What did you do with the Lincoln?" "Well, I sold it." "Why?" He said, "Well, vende cuando te compren y compra cuando te vendan." If somebody offers you a good price for something, sell it right away. For my 25th Wedding Anniversary, he gave me the most beautiful set; there were only two made in England, 125 piece silver set with an English table and there was only one in New York. We had been shopping and Arnold said, "Let's go to this jewelry store." I said, "Arnold, I don't need anymore things. I don't want anymore things." He said, "Well, I got you a beautiful thing. Let's go see what it is." It was a Queen Anne table with all the silver. We had it shipped to the house at 2222 N. Mesa. He gave it to me for my 25th Wedding Anniversary. After I had had the table about three or six months, Arnold came home and he said, "Themis, I'm going to fix you a drink." And I said, "What did you sell?" "I sold your silver and the Queen Anne table."

R: What did you do?

P: I almost died. And you know, to this date, I wish I had it. But then, I keep thinking, maybe, he needed the money to send the boys to school because at one time we had Arnold, Bobby, and Charles in college--so that was quite a bit of money. So maybe he needed that money.

[Interviewer's note: On a subsequent visit, Senora Peinado

related the following story:

P: One night, when we were living at 2222 N. Mesa, a prominent lawyer (and businessman) and his wife came to dinner. Now we had a beautiful house--chandeliers from Czechoslovakia and oriental rugs. The lawyer saw these things and said, "Gee, I didn't know any Mexicans lived like this. I thought they all lived like maids."]

VLR/Grh