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Interview No. 1598

Felipe Pavon Munoz

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THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO INSTITUTE OF ORAL HISTORY

Interviewee: Felipe Pavon Muñoz

Interviewer: Alma Carrillo

Project: Bracero Oral History Project

Location: n/a

Date of Interview: November 8, 2008

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Transcript No.: 1598

Transcriber / Summary: Mayra L. Avila

Felipe Pavon Muñoz was born in Zacatelco, Mexico in 1919, he is the youngest of six children; at the age of eleven he was orphaned; he attended elementary school where he learned to read and write; at a young age he began helping his brother in the farm, eventually he began working in factories, where he was not paid enough; in 1942 he saw a newspaper announcing the hiring of Mexican men, he explains in detail the negotiations that occurred between the United States and Mexico; he recalls braceros arriving to the national stadium in Mexico City; in 1944 he registered as a bracero; he details his physical examination, explaining that it consisted of a rectal exam, lice check, fumigation, a shower, blood work, and a detail inspection of their entire naked body; he remembers that once in the United States braceros were lined up and distributed out without knowledge of where they were going; he describes living in a wooden apartment with three other men, paying \$1.50 for his meals, and the manager taking them to town to shop and to Salinas, CA., for dances; he points out reuniting with other braceros and hearing about their negative experiences, explaining that they were unaware that they had rights; in California he recalls picking beans, onions, apricot, and lettuce; he sent his brother money; he details being injured as a bracero and being given medical aid; he recalls that three hundred braceros worked in picking corn; he recalls meeting his wife in 1949 and marrying a year later, having ten children; he explains that he felt bad that many men sold their farms or took loans in order to become braceros and were rejected; he explains that being away from his family was difficult; he details the activities and progress of his children; he points out that they were paid in cash and the ten percent was deducted, he never received his ten percent and is currently attempting to recover it; he details the struggle and process he is undergoing attempting to recover his ten percent.

Length of interview 98 minutes

Length of Transcript n/a