

Leo Rivera - [REDACTED]; September 1929; Born Victoria, Texas; Married, three grown children; year of marriage 1959.

How many years did you live in the house where you were born?

I don't know. I was adopted when I was six months so maybe six months.

Would you wish to go into that? Do you know anything about your adoption? All I know is that my aunt adopted me because my mother died when I was six months old and I don't know where . . . Victoria, Bloomington, or . . . around Victoria. I'm not really sure. I know we used to live in Victoria and Port Lavaca--those are two little towns by the coast in Texas--the Gulf Coast.

How long did you live there with your aunt?

The earliest I can remember was living in Victoria when I was about four or five and then we moved to Corpus Christi. We lived in Corpus Christi until 1941 when the war broke out. I was 13 or 14 then. From Corpus Christi we moved to San Antonio; we lived there until I went into the service. I was in the Navy for six years and got out, came home, went to the University of Texas, graduated, worked with the civil service for a couple of years. Saw no future in that and took a job in California.

Do you remember why the family moved from Corpus Christi to San Antonio?

My stepfather was from San Antonio and he thought he had better opportunities to get a job in San Antonio than in Corpus Christi. Besides he wanted to be close to his family where his brothers and sisters were. That's why we moved.

So it was the impact of the family, huh?

It was just my stepfather, my mother, and myself, so it was . . .

What did your parents do?

My stepfather was a laborer in construction. My mother did odd jobs, was a seamstress or do laundry or that kind of stuff.

They did that all their lives?

Yes. For the most part.

So your mother didn't work other than odd jobs?

No, she didn't. She raised me at home. There was a time there when my stepfather was really sick, so she had to go out and do some work and I don't remember what kind of work she was doing at that time.

How many brothers and sisters do you have?

I have three brothers and one sister. As I said, I was raised apart from them, so I don't know where one of my brothers is. He's in Texas somewhere. I know one of my brothers is in New York City and one of them is in Colorado (the oldest) and my sister is in Houston. I keep in close touch with my brother in Colorado because he used to live in San Antonio and we used to get together quite often as opposed to the others who moved far away and I didn't know where they were.

So basically, it was just you with your aunt and your stepfather?

That's right. In essence, I was an only child.

Who was taking care of your other brothers and sisters?

They were living with my half-sisters and half-brothers in Bay City, Texas.

Do you know what they do for a living now?

I have no idea.

Do you know if they went on for a higher education?

I know that they didn't. None of them did.

Where did you attend elementary school?

I went to elementary school in Corpus Christi, junior high and high school in San Antonio.

What about college?

I went to the University of Texas in Austin and took some graduate classes in math at San Jose State. Also graduate classes at Saint Mary's University in San Antonio and a couple of graduate classes in mathematics at the University of Texas.

Who supported your education?

Me. I worked part time and I had the GI Bill. I worked my way through school.

You said you were in the military? How do you feel this affected you?

Positively. If it hadn't been for that I probably would have wound up in the wrong . . . In the barrio you take a wrong turn very easily.

How did this affect your family life?

Hard to say. At that time when I went into the Navy the reason I went into the Navy is I couldn't find a job. My stepfather was sick and there was no income into the family. That was one of the reasons I went in. This was in 1948.

Approximately how old were you? About 17 1/2, 18 when I joined.

Could you tell me what your economic level was in the family at that time? At the time I went into the service? Throughout your childhood. I know at one time we were on welfare. It was tough. It was really hard. How did you perceive your living conditions?

We had a house that we had built on a lot that my mother and my stepfather had bought and we didn't have to pay rent. But as far as

income into the family it was really pretty bad. When I was in high school I had to work in the cafeteria for lunch. I don't remember other than once in a while my mother would do some laundry. That was about the only income we had. Would you classify yourself as poor? Very poor. Was this just you as a family or did you feel it involved a racial or group issue in terms of poverty? No. I think it was because of the sickness of my stepfather. Because when he worked, we did pretty good. He made pretty good money for the kind of work he was doing and I don't know if it had anything to do with the fact we were Chicano. At that age, you don't think about those things. In retrospect, do you feel there was some sort of connection in being brown? There might have been something but of course you have to take into consideration the educational level of my stepfather and my mother. As a matter of fact I was just thinking--I am third generation. My grandfather was born here and my mother was born here, but she doesn't speak any English. How did the military change you? That was when I first decided that if I was going to do anything I was going to get an education, go to college. I had the idea of becoming an engineer and so when I came back I started school and enrolled in college and that's what I had in mind. That's what I did. What issues or situations that you observed in the service made you formulate those opinions? I was fortunate that when I took their examination that they give you when you enter to find out what you're best suited for, they were contemplating sending me to become an electronic technician or radar operator. Which in the service that is a pretty high level job. In other words, they have the deck hands which are the laborers in the Navy, they're

the deck hands of the people in the engineering. And they have the radar operators and electronic technicians, so you're level of achievement puts you at a certain level in the service and you have contact with people who have gone to college or dropped out after a couple of years. So your contact is more with people who have a little more education and they start talking to you about this kind of thing. And that influences your decision. When you get out into civilian life and what you're going to do. Did you feel at that time, not having had any education, that they were any better or that you were any less? No. Matter of fact, I thought I was better than they were. There's a story I tell my kids all the time. When I was going to school in Port Lavaca, when I first started they had three school systems. They had one for blacks, one for Mexicans, and one for white kids. The Mexicans went up to the fifth grade in this elementary school we were going to and it was all Mexicans and I didn't know any better. When I tell my kids this, heck I always thought they did it because they thought we were better than they were. And I haven't changed my mind yet. When did you move to San Jose? I moved to San Jose in 1962; I moved to Milpitas in 1962 when I came to work for Lockheed. What brought you here? Lockheed. They recruited me from San Antonio. I was working civil service in San Antonio and I was what they call a GS5--a degree they give you immediately from graduation from college. I was a statistician working at the Aero Space Medical Center at Brooks Air Force Base in San Antonio and during that time I was doing statistical analysis on some medical work going on at Brooks--medical experiments. At that time the head of the department was trying to get rid of a black keypunch operator and she

asked me to talk on her behalf at the civil service hearing and I went and they were trying to set her up so they could fire her. They were saying that her percentage of keypunch errors was about 50 percent. When the Civil Service Commission asked me to come to the hearing, they asked me if I had given her my work during my course of my work at Brooks Air Force Base. I said yes. They asked me what the percentage of errors were in my experience. I said maybe 2 or 3 percent at the most. Well apparently this guy didn't like this very well, the director, and the consequences that he made a statement to one of my co-workers and unfortunately there were no witnesses. He made a statement to her that as long as he was there I would never get a promotion to a . . . Grade 7 or any promotion of any kind. So when I heard that I knew I didn't have a chance. So there was a Lockheed recruiter in town, I saw the ad in the paper, and he was recruiting engineers. When I called him up and I told him my background, he said to come talk to me, bring me your resume. I did that and within two weeks I had an offer from Lockheed--at about twice the salary I was making in San Antonio in civil service and so I said I have no choice I got to take it. So they moved me out here.

Let's get back to your education. When did you graduate from high school? I graduated in 1947 and I went in the service in 1948. I was in the service six years. You started college when? 1954. Could you describe what type of courses you took, your degree? My degree is in mathematics. I started out in electrical engineering and I had a hard time grasping some of the theories of electrical engineering because electricity is something you can't see and you can't touch so it's all theory--electrons move this way and electrons move that way. As a

consequence of that I was almost booted out cause I got into trouble academically, my GPA fell below what was required and I had to make it up the next semester. I was on scholastic probation. I did not . . . the next semester and I, fell one point short of making it up. So the Dean of the School of Engineering called me in and asked me what my plans were because you're one point short of staying in school. He suggested that I change my major to mathematics since I was doing really well in math and he would allow me to stay in school. I said ok, so I changed my major to mathematics and I did pretty well. I've always been pretty good with math. I took all the required math courses; as a matter of fact they required that you take a change (?) from the School of Engineering to the School of Arts and Sciences where the math department was at the University of Texas. They require that you take a language and I took Spanish . . . not to have to take it and the requirement was that you take a language which is not your native language. So being born in the US my native language is ENGLISH and I've spoken Spanish all my life so I took the advance placement exam in Spanish and I got credit for 12 units which put me at the graduate level in Spanish and I took two graduate courses in Spanish. So that's how you beat the system? Why do you feel that requirement was so? They require a language for any BA degree at that time. Some people take German, others were taking Russian, Italian--I chose Spanish to beat them; as I said, I got 12 units. If you look at my records, I have a minor in Spanish because I have 18 units. Could you tell me about the atmosphere at school at that time? At the UNiversity of Texas, I think I mentioned this before when we were talking off the record, there were a lot of Chicanos--quite a few--I

used to hang around with guys who were engineering majors, physics majors, architects. There was only one guy who was in social sciences. Everybody else I knew at school was into the sciences and when I came out here to San Jose I couldn't understand why there were no Chicanos in the math or engineering department. There were very few if any. I was taking some graduate classes at SJS and I didn't see any Chicanos in math. Why do you feel that was so? I feel maybe that one of the problems that I think that for some reason the Chicanos were being directed away from the sciences because apparently the mentality of the guero is that we can't do it. We got proof that we can. So you saw quite a difference in Texas and California? Another reason that I think that is contributing to this at that time is that in Texas in order to get a good job you had to have a degree. If you wanted to make good money you had to have a degree--you go to college to get a degree. It doesn't make any difference what degree you get. Otherwise you wind up pumping gas or working as a bagger in a grocery store. Over here in California it's a lot different. You can be a plumber and be making really good money or you could be a . . . because of the unionization and all of this, that kind of thing. So really there was not that much emphasis on the education. Whereas in Texas you go pick cotton, pump gas, if you don't have an education that's where you're going to end up. It may have changed now but that's another contributing factor and the differences . I maintain that there's a lot more educated Chicanos in Texas than in California. There may be room for argument, but I don't know. During this time when and where did you meet your wife? I met my wife when I was going to San Antonio College which is a junior college in San Antonio. I

was going to school with this friend of mine, there were about 3-4 of us that used to hang around together all the time and this one friend of mine that was studying to be a medical technologist was dating my sister-in-law and he asked me to go out with him one afternoon to this place where they had a tardiada--a dance on Sunday afternoon. My sister-in-law brought my wife and we sat together and that's when I met her. That was in 1956. We started going out. She was working for a doctor--secretary. That led to romance? You married her in 1956? No. 1959. I waited a few years. I was going to San Antonio College and I wanted to go to the University of Texas but what I had seen was that a lot of my friends that I knew that were going to the University of Texas from San Antonio they would come back on weekends--it's only 80 miles from San Antonio to Austin--and they would come home on weekends. I saw a lot of them dropping out. You can't keep that up, coming home every weekend. You don't have time to study, so I told my wife why don't we get married and you move up there with me. That way I'm not going to be wasting time coming home on weekends. So that's what we did. We got married before I went up there and she moved up there with me and then she became pregnant and I had to move her back to San Antonio to her father's house so he could take care of her while I was in school and then I would call but I wouldn't come home because I had to hit the books. I'd come home about once every two or three weeks, not every weekend. Because I was determined to get my degree. So how were you supporting the two of you? I was working part time as a data processing machine operator at the Texas Employment Commission at Austin. At that time if you got a job paying you \$1 an hour you were doing really well. I was making \$3.50 an

hour, and that's because I had experience in that kind of work while I was going to San Antonio College I was working graveyard and going to school days and that's the kind of work I was doing . . . civil service . . . Air Force Base. From your own point of view, what is a Chicano perspective? In general, that's a hard question. I think the Chicanos are going to have to a lot of us are we're very provincial. Provincial, I said this to one guy and he took it wrong. He thought that I meant that we are very poor, that we're lower class. That's not what that means. Provincial means that if you're not from Texas, if you're from New Mexico I'm not going to like you very well. But if you're from Texas, you're all right because I'm from Texas. Provincialism is one of the problems Chicanos have. You can see that the people from Mexico, if you're from Guadalajara and I'm from Tamalimpas, you're all right because your Mejicano but really my people are better than yours. As a consequence we have a lot of division amongst ourselves which shouldn't exist. A lot of our people have their own groups. You see the Del Rio Club--those are all people from Del Rio. They have their own dances. If I'm not from Del Rio, can I go to your dance? Well, it's all going to be people from Del Rio. What the hell do I care? That kind of thing. That's one of the things that has separated us along with the fact that the people from Mexico and the people from here don't see eye-to-eye on a lot of things. There's a lot of people that will not get involved in many things that the Chicano is trying to do. Economically, politically, socially, it doesn't make any difference. In MAPA there are few if any Mejicanos from Mexico that belong to MAPA. Maybe it was the name, Mexican-American Political Association. Whatever, but they wouldn't

get involved. Because if you were born here and they were born over there, they think we are not Mejjicanos. That's true they are Mejjicanos and we are not, which is one of the problems. That's why we came up with the word Chicano. How do you define a Chicano? A Chicano is an American of Mexican descent. I'm Chicano; I'm not Mejjicano. I go to Mexico; they tell me hey, you're not a Mejjicano and that's not right, I'm not a Mejjicano in the sense of the word. I'm Mejjicano in the same sense that Kennedy was Irish but I'm not Mejjicano in the sense that they're Mejjicanos. They're Mejjicanos because they were born over there. That's one of the reasons that the word Chicano came about is that people from over there. If you go over there now and they'll tell you, you're not a Mejjicano. It's a term used for identify? That's right. You come over here and the guero tell you you're Mexican. You say wait a minute man, what's going on here? Give me a break. But I think we've come along way--economically. Politically we still have a long way to go because of our people to get involved with politics. Why do you feel that is so? I think the attitude of La Raza, the Chicanos is it doesn't make any difference who I vote for, they're going to do whatever they want anyway. They're going to take care of the guero. How do you feel that attitude is instilled in Chicanos? I guess it may be because of the attitude of the parents sometimes . . . instill it into their kids that politics is dirty, politics is something you don't want to get involved in. But yet they all way their kids to be president--which is a paradox. What role do you feel the educational system has in this? The educational system first of all one of the problems we have with the educational system is that it has to be instilled into the kids that in order to

be able to achieve anything within any system whether it's the political, the educational, the social, economic, whatever system there is--the only way you are going to be able to do something meaningful is to become involved in the system, to know the system, to learn it, to exploit it, to the benefit of the Chicano. And we have not been able to do that politically. I don't know why. As I said, I was involved politically for years and years and a lot of Chicanos would rather go out and have a beer than go out and walk a precinct. It's like any other system. You study the system. Every system has an input, an output, and a process and you learn what the process is, how do you exploit that process. How do I get input into the system so that I can get the output that I want from that system? What were you doing in 1965? I was in Houston, Texas. I was working for Lockheed at NASA. We were doing some computer systems development for NASA for the space program. At that time were there any influences or attitudes you were having? Funny you should ask because at that time I had already . . . I was working on a contract for Lockheed in Houston. The contract was with NASA and that was the time the Blacks were trying to integrate themselves--to get services--to be able to go into a restaurant and get service. Was this part of the Civil Rights Movement? The Civil Rights Movement. The Blacks were really involved down south and I had decided about then that I wanted to come back to California. I had a real problem with one of the directors of the NASA project in Houston. He was a manager. What happened was that I had been on a trip to Los Angeles for Lockheed and I was gone a week and I came back to Houston and I reported back to my office on Monday morning and I was told that I was going to be moved back to California

on Friday, which gave me all of the week to try to settle my house and try to get everything ready to go and I said why? The guy told me that NASA had requested I be taken off the project. Well I couldn't believe that. Maybe I suspect that it had something to do with the fact that this guy was a Redneck, a racist type, and didn't want me in the project. So I did some checking. I called some of the people at NASA that were involved in the project we were doing for NASA and they said they had nothing to do with that. I called a friend of mine that I was working directly with at NASA and he did some checking with his boss and they said no we had nothing to do with that. It turned out that it wasn't true. I did not have time to sell my house so what I did is I went to work for Lockheed Electronics which also is a part of Lockheed but is another division and I stayed on the project which meant that this guy was lying. Because if they had wanted me out of the project they would have told Lockheed Electronics we don't want this guy. Anyway, I worked there from 1965 to about June 1966 and during that time you read articles in the paper about what was going on. And I read an article in the paper about this guy who owned this restaurant in Houston, this Mexican guy, Chicano, and he had said that he would allow the Blacks into his place to eat but they were going to pay double the price. He was going to double the price for any Black that came into his place, he was going to double the price of the meal. . . . was a really a racist move. So I said this is bullshit; this has got to stop. This guy didn't see the way they were treating the mejicanos in Texas in the first place and he was going to treat the Blacks the same which is - you can't fight racism if you're a racist yourself. I wrote a letter to the Houston

Chronicle outlining this is the guy that's obviously the white people consider a good Mex because he's doing this kind of stuff. In July I came back here to San Jose to Sunnyvale to work at Lockheed here in 1966. What became of that article you wrote to the paper? They published it. I saw it. What kind of reaction did you receive? I didn't receive any reaction because I left, right after that I left. I don't know if that guy wrote back or anything. Anyway, when I came back I decided I was going to start getting involved and try to do something for la raza. The first organization was not MAPA. The first association I joined when I got back to San Jose was La Sociedad Progresista Mexicana. I don't know if you ever heard of that organization. La Sociedad Progresista Mexicana is a very conservative Mexican organization. These guys . . . they are the richest Mexican organization in the state of California. Do they still exist today? Oh yes. They got a lot of money. But they are a very conservative group . Their goals are supposedly to protect the rights of the Mexicans in the US. I don't think they are achieving that. I say they are conservative in the fact they won't get involved in anything political. I can see that because they are a non-profit organization. That's ok. But you can still support, you can support. I tried to get them to support Cesar Chavez--that's political. What's political about that. So what were your main concerns at that time? I was concerned with everything--education, politics, economics, the whole bit. One of the things that happened there, the lodge that I used to belong to was in Mountain View and then we formed one in Milpitas. These were strictly upper class? No, they're not upper class. One of the requirements of that organization is that you be of Mexican

descent. Are there any other requirements? No. You have to be of Mexican descent to join the organization. Well, you can't be a gambler, you can't be this and you can't be that. The meetings are behind closed doors like . . . where you have secret words to get into the meeting and all the meetings are in Spanish. You have a ritual that you go through at the start of the meeting and the end of the meeting and this kind of thing. What type of rituals are those? You have to know certain things that you have to do in order to be recognized and this kind of stuff. Like parliamentary procedures? No. You don't wish to discuss it? No. I can't. Are you still a member? I'm a member but I don't go to their meetings. Like I said we formed a lodge in Milpitas and I became the president of the organization in 1966. I was one of the founders of the lodge in Milpitas and I became president. I became president for the sole purpose of seeing if I could change the direction to get them to be more active in the Chicano movement, to get them to support Cesar Chavez, to get them involved in the issues of the day. I didn't succeed. I'm curious as to if it's a non-profit organization and they don't wish to get involved in political issues, I still don't understand the purpose or how effective they were. They're not effective at all as a matter of fact. What they do, they have an insurance policy. You join and you and your wife are charged (at that time it was \$1 a month) and you would get a \$500 policy for each of you. Have you heard of the Mutulistas? They're in that same vein or organizations. It's sort of a fraternal organization. They call each other hermanos. I did get them to do one thing. I got them to establish a scholarship program. Not much and they didn't do it the way I wanted them to do

it. What I wanted them to do was to adopt someone for four years and say we're going to pay your scholarship dues. Your fees, your books. But you have to come back each semester and tell us how you're doing. If you're not doing good then we'll give our money to somebody else. They didn't do that. What they do is give \$100, \$200 which is almost meaningless. In 1966 that was a lot of money, but now it's not--it hasn't changed. They're still doing the same thing. When I was president of that organization--Milpitas chapter 1968--because Art Cabrera was running for the assembly district and I was involved in his campaign. As a matter of fact that's when I first became aware of MAPA, through the Cabrera campaign. I tried to get them to bring Cabrera in so he could speak to the group off the record, just have all the members there. I told them not part of the meeting, we would close the meeting, stay here, and have Cabrera come in. Well, they wouldn't even do that. Because it was political. Yes, but after the meeting you're not doing anything political--it's political, but it's on your own time, but they wouldn't bring Cabrera in. They wouldn't donate any money. Well I said let's make a collection from him and no we can't do that. Would you say it was more of a social club? I would suspect very strongly that they liked to dance and drink and then after that I was still president of that lodge when the Chargin case. Chargin had made some very racist remarks in court, open court, against Chicanos. We had gotten a transcript of the proceedings of the court through some person that was present. Chargin had said something to the effect that Chicanos are animals, they should be put away, Hitler maybe had the right idea of killing all the animals in society and this type of thing which is a very racist statement. And

as a consequence of that there was a big . . . By that time I was also in MAPA at that time. When did you leave this organization? I only served one year as president. I was still president when Chargin was. . . I was president of MAPA and president of this organization that was toward my presidency of this organization. I brought the Chargin case and I said we got to do something about this guy. This man is talking about us, everybody in here. One member really pissed me off. He got up and said we don't even know this kid that he's talking about. And I said he's not talking about this kid, he's talking about everybody, he's talking about you and me--we're animals. They said no we don't want to do anything, we don't get involved. That's when I decided that I didn't want anything to do with that organization anymore. I was already president of MAPA and we were picketing the Superior Court. Let's start from the beginning with MAPA. When did you first get involved with MAPA? What is MAPA? MAPA is the MEXican American Political Association. Their goals and objectives is to make the Chicano, the Mejicano, to get him involved politically in the political process, the goal being a strong political voice will enhance the opportunities for la raza. Get involved in political campaigns, get appointed to city commissions, county commissions, and state commissions, get involved in voter registration, and get the people alerted to the fact that politics is one of the methods we can use to achieve equality in this society. That was the objective of MAPA. What year was this when you became involved with MAPA? 1968. What was the social climate or atmosphere at the time? Everybody at that time that was involved politically that was involved in anything was a very militant group. MAPA was a very militant group at that

time. As a matter of fact, when the Chargin case came up we were picketing Superior court, we would go up to San Francisco, trying to get people to support us and trying to get Chargin out of the judicial system. We were picketing construction sites, we were picketing the post office. For what reasons? Because they weren't hiring chicanos. While the name said Mexican American Political Association, we were also into employment. The post office was one of the groups that was being picketed because of its lack of chicanos in their work force. We would picket job sites because the unions were very racist in their hiring policies. We were into politics. At that time the grape boycott was in full force. We were helping Cesar Chavez picket Safeway, Lucky, everything. As a matter of fact Cesar Chavez would call the local chapter of MAPA (I was president at that time). How long did you serve as president? One year. It was a tough job. AT that time it was tough because not only were you active locally, but since MAPA was a state organization, as the chapter president you were a member of the state executive board which meant that you had to go to Los Angeles, San Diego, Sacramento, wherever there was an executive board meeting which was on a monthly basis. YOU had to be there. The issues would come up and here's what you're going to do and here's what we're going to do. That kind of thing. But that was one of the most active years that I've ever spent. I was active locally for one year, president of the local chapter and then I became director of the northern region (two-year term). I became director of the northern region which was all the way from San Luis Obispo all the way up north--Sacramento. San Luis Obispo and it didn't include the barrio in Fresno County because that was central California. But then

Sacramento, San Francisco, all the way up. That also took quite a bit of time. As the regional director I had to put out fires. If a chapter had a problem I had to be there to find out what was wrong and straighten it out and that kind of thing. What other issues did MAPA get involved with? That was it. Economic and political systems were mainly the two main issues. YOU mentioned something about your membership, they were somewhat militant? Yes. A lot of them if you called them and told them we're going to confront this school board, or we're going to picket this place, they'd show. Some of them were, like I said earlier, you have to cover the whole spectrum in this oral history thing. We had some right wingers; we had some guys that were Republican right wing and we had some guys that were out on the left side. Could you give any names? I don't remember the names of those people. None stand out in particular. The people that didn't show up to the picket lines were the right wingers, the conservatives, Republicans, that they thought everything was great. And the left wingers were the ones that wanted to bomb the Bank of AMerica. How did you maintain order? One of the first things I learned that you have to do if you're going to be president of an organization is you have to know parliamentary procedure. If you know parliamentary procedure, you can maintain control really easy. I learned that and I studied. I bought a Robert's Rules of Order--the unabridged, the big one and I read that. Basically, you were self-taught? Did this happen during your presidency of MAPA? When I became president of MAPA, the president that had been there had gotten together with another group of people to support the Fiesta de las Rosas which was a project which was instigated by a lady by the name of Mary Jean Saurwein (?) She

was some lady that had the idea of promoting what the Spaniard had done in San Jose. This Fiesta de las Rosas was nothing more than something to glorify the Spanish. The Chicanos here naturally said wait a minute. The Spaniards didn't build San Jose; it was the MEXicans that did it. They started organizing against this and the President of MAPA before me (Pat Vasquez--and he's a good guy, he just got in with the wrong group); Pat Vasquez was president of MAPA and I had been elected. Right before he left office they had a meeting and they passed a motion that MAPA would support La Fiesta de las Rosas--going against every other Chicano organization in San Jose. All the others were against it? So when I took office . . . There were a couple of other guys that were involved commercially; they were going to try to make some money off the Fiesta de las Rosas. Were they Chicanos, businessmen? Yes. They weren't businessmen, but they were going to exploit this and try to make some money off of it. As a consequence of this I came into office and put a statement out to the press, the Mercury, that we in fact were not going to support the Fiesta, that MAPA was not going to support the Fiesta. Had the previous organization already informed them that they were going to support them? Yes. Naturally they liked that. The Mexicans are fighting each other again. As a consequence of this, there was a big fight amongst the MAPA members because I had said we're not going to and just like they were influenced. . . the previous president was influenced by whoever influenced him to get involved in the Fiesta, I was influenced by the fact that I not only did I have Chicano organizations backing me, I had members backing me and I had students backing me from SJS and I had professors from SJS backing me. They

said OK let's call a meeting and being new to the presidency, they pulled a parliamentary procedure that I had never heard of--one of the guys at the meeting, Jesse Delgado, an aide to Don Edwards for a long time, he came to the meeting and he made a motion that we not support Fiesta, it was seconded. One of the guys that was supporting the Fiesta after a little discussion he made what he called a substitute motion and I had never in my life heard of a substitute motion. I didn't know what the hell he was talking about--what is a substitute motion? Well it turns out that a substitute motion is a parliamentary procedure that can be used to kill the main motion. If it passes, you can kill the main motion. The main motion was not to support. He made a substitute motion and it died. His motion didn't pass, so we were back to the main motion. That's when I said I have to learn parliamentary procedure otherwise they're going to kill me. As a consequence, the previous administration, his group, lost. As I mentioned, at that time the people that were supporting me started joining MAPA--Humberto Garza, Jose Carrasco, Randall (?) Jimenez, Jesse Reyna from SJS, Sofie Mendoza, Jack Brito--everybody, people that weren't joining MAPA before. People who saw MAPA as a very conservative organization joined MAPA because of this issue. Did you contact them or did they contact you? I was already involved with them. They knew this was coming up and I had told them I'm going to need all the help I can get. So they were there. Anyway we won that one but the next time we had a meeting the guy gave me the keys to the building but he went over and had the locks changed on the MAPA office. I called a meeting and we couldn't get into the office. Where was the office located? Right there by San Antonio Plaza on

San Fernando right there where it runs into the plaza. It was in the Redevelopment Agency. The buildings had been condemned and they were going to be torn down. As a consequence, just about everyone had moved out and this building was vacant so they let us use it--the Redevelopment Agency allowed us to use it. I had also asked at that time, because at the time the guys were trying to kick me out of office, without going through due process so I contacted the MAPA legal advisor, Bob Gonzales, an attorney from San Francisco, he was a state legal advisor. He came down and there was a restaurant right across from there. Since we couldn't meet at the office, we went to the restaurant and talked. The guy was good enough to let us use a couple of tables for our little meeting and Bob Gonzales advised me that these guys didn't have a leg to stand on because once the membership elects me only the membership can get rid of me and they have to do it by recall. They can't just say you're out. This was in the MAPA State Constitution as a procedure you have to follow. They had to tell me what the charges are and give me time to answer the charges before a recall meeting. This guy didn't do it. Not only that, they went all the way to the state because in months after that there was a state executive board meeting at Berkeley. They went there and they lost at the executive board meeting so that was it. They were out and I was still president of MAPA. Even though they didn't participate. But that's what happened with MAPA. Let's get back to the Fiesta de las Rosas. What actually happened, or were you there? Well they went ahead. Naturally the city, Jean Saurwein (?), they had a big parade in downtown San Jose for the Fiesta de las Rosas and the more active chicanos, the more militant chicanos, went

over there to disrupt the parade. I wasn't there. One of the more militant groups was the Black Berets which was being led by Sal Candelaria. They were trying to disrupt the parade. They were picked up and were put in jail and sent to Vacaville for psychological testing, which reminds me of what the Russians do, right? Anyway, I don't know what happened at the Fiesta, other than the disruption of the parade. Do you recall any particular instances or reading from the paper? No.

RIVERA INTERVIEW - TAPE 2

You mentioned La Raza Unida? When I was president of MAPA, a group of people got together to form a confederation of organizations so that one of the purposes so that we would not duplicate each other's efforts. Like if MAPA was going to do the political thing, then let MAPA do the political thing and UPA or MACO or CSO or those other organizations don't do political things, then if they want to get involved politically they should come to MAPA. And if we want to get involved in educational things then maybe we should go to another organization so that each organization is doing . . . we got everything covered, but one organization covers a particular area. We got together at SJS and formed this new . . . called La Confederacion de la Raza Unida and we had at that time- MAPA was there, CSO was there (Community Service Organization - one of the oldest organizations), UPA (United People Arriba). There was a group called El Grupo. You might want to ask Jose about that one. What do you know about them? I just know that they existed. There was MACO, there were some Catholic organizations, there was some people from the GI Forum, there were several groups that met. That was the main thrust of La Confederacion was to like I said to form an umbrella organization that would say we would elect delegates from each organization to that confederacion and La Confederacion would say this is a thrust that we're going to take on a certain issue. If it's a political issue, here's what we're going to do. And then MAPA would be the implementor for example in the political issues. In the educational issues, somebody else. Then we would all go to support that organization in whatever they were doing, we would support them. It was a

good idea. Who formulated this concept? There was a guy by the name of Jack Ybarra that was very active at that time. He and a group of other guys had gotten together and they formulated this idea of having La Confederacion. I think it was formulated after an organization in Los Angeles. There was another organization in Los Angeles that had that same concept. The one in LA worked a lot better than ours. Why was that? I don't know. Maybe it was the personalities involved, but I don't know why it really never got off the ground. It worked semi-good for about two or three years and then it started falling apart. I think one of the things that happened is that organizations like to be independent. They don't like to be told this is the way we're going to go. But if you have a board of directors made up of representatives from the organizations and they say this is the way we should go and those representatives agree, then the organization should go along with that. Or they should tell their representatives this is the way we want to go so you make that pitch up to the board of directors. But I don't know. It just didn't work like it should of. A good concept. That way we get somebody from La Confederacion whether its a board member or chairman of the board that could be speaking for all the organizations this is the way we're going to go on this issue. Like I said, it worked for three or four years and then it started falling apart. Who were the directors or the president? At that time the first one was Jack Ybarra. Then we had Jose Vasquez. I was on the board, but I was second vice-president of La Confederacion. You were actually one of the original members? Yes. Ernestina Garcia would give you a little history on that. Somebody is going to talk to her or she'll be talking to the class.

Next you mentioned MACO. MACO, Mexican-American Community Organization. That was a group of people that were in the Gardner area. Do you know where Bird Avenue and Virginia Street are? That area right there is the Gardner area. A group of people that called themselves the Mexican-American Community Organization. I was involved with them because . . . What was their purpose? Just to get involved in community issues and try to resolve whatever issues came up. They would try to resolve it within the Gardner area. They were headed up by a guy by the name of Ramos, and I don't remember his first name. His wife's name is Teresa and his name is . . . I don't remember. Their organization was a small organization. It was not a big organization because it was a neighborhood type of organization. They had asked me to come teach parliamentary procedure. They got some money from what is now ESO, Economic and Social Opportunities. They had some funds from ESO to help somebody teach parliamentary procedure to the whole group because not only were they involved in their own organization they had representatives to the Model Cities Board of Directors. Not knowing parliamentary procedure and being a member of the board of directors is not conducive to being able to participate very well. So they asked me to come to teach and I taught for about three months I taught parliamentary procedure to those people in a classroom setup - 20-25 people. I taught it in Spanish and I taught parliamentary procedure in Spanish so they could. . . They're not very fluent in English so I had to teach it in Spanish. I was involved with that for about a year-and-a-half, two years. I'd go to their meetings and try to answer their parliamentary questions that they had. You were strictly a parliamentarian? Yes. Whatever became of the group? I don't know.

They disbanded. They used to meet on Virginia and Bird, there's a little store right there. Next door to the store they rented the building and that's where they used to have their meetings. Next you mentioned MACSA. MACSA, Mexican-American Community Service Association. What were their goals and objectives? It's a social service organization. They try to help people resolve any problems that they have with any other agency whether it's a city agency or a educational agency. They have programs where they try to get . . . In MACSA we used to have programs during the summer where we would take kids to ball games, Giants ball games, swimming at the beach, off to the mountains, give the kids an opportunity to get out and kids that would never have left home for any reason we would rent a bus and take them out to a picnic up in the mountains or to Santa Cruz or to the ball games. We had monies from United Way; United Way was the funding agency for that. . . . Again, being a non-profit organization, MACSA could not get involved politically in anything that was political in nature. After work . . . anything they wanted. Is there anything in particular that you did? Other than in being director? I just went to the meetings all the time. I personally instituted as MACSA director, there wasn't anything in particular. I just took over some of the . . . What happened is that MACSA was in danger of getting defunded by United Way. Why? Because United Way saw the administration of MACSA as being too "militant." Not during my directorship-- before. So the board of directors said. . . See when you get funds from an organization like United Way, they have certain rules that you have to follow. Apparently the administration of MACSA wasn't following at that time the rules that were set down by United Way.

What were they doing or not doing? I guess United Way saw them as not doing what their charter calls for them to do. They were getting involved in too many political issues is what the United Way board saw them as doing. That was their rationale. As a consequence, they told the Board of Directors of MACSA that they were going to defund unless the director was changed. So what the Board of Directors of MACSA did was they closed MACSA, fired the Director, and then hired me as the director. Prior to that I was director of a project for SJS that was called a Special Opportunity Grant. A special opportunity grant was a grant that was given to model cities near SJS to do a study on the higher education system in Santa Clara County. The idea was to form a consortium of higher education institutions to better serve the Chicanos in Santa Clara. As a consequence of that I had to go talk to Santa Cruz, UC Santa Cruz, to see what they were doing in this area; I had to go talk to City College, SJCC; I had to go talk to West Valley; to DeAnza; to Metropolitan Adult Education system; and find out what it was they were doing and see how we could get together and form a consortium so that there was no duplication of efforts. Like anything else, everybody else wants their own little empire. The adult education, MAEP, says we teach English as a second language; SJCC says well we do too. Our objective was--one of you should do it, not everybody. And then they would start, we're doing it really well; yeah, well, we're doing it really well too. So we did a study on that. What the conflicts were, how we could form a consortium of higher educational systems and I was there for about nine months and before the grant was up and the final report was written, I was recruited to head up MACSA. Richard Romo took over as director

of the Special Opportunity Grant and he finished up, wrote the report, and sent it to the state. Nothing ever happened, I guess. But then I went to MACSA as director and I instituted policies set by the board, instituted programs that the board said they wanted, and started from there. What effect did these programs MACSA had have on the children? Or the community at large? One of the things that we used to do at MACSA is on Fridays we used to have a meeting of people that were involved in the educational system to try to formulate what was going to be done on a certain issue. We had people from City College that would come over, like Mauro Chavez, Jose Carrasco and Jose Villa from SJS, Jose Brito from San Jose Unified School District, Ramon Martinez from SJ School District, Pat Aldrete from SJ School District, Marcos Herrera from SJ School District. We had Rudy Cordova from SJCC. We had this big meeting every Friday and we discussed issues, problems, what was going to be done. That was one of the most uses that was ever made of MACSA in terms of usage of MACSA itself as a facilitater. That hadn't been done before. A facilitater for the educational people to get together from all over to talk about the issues and formulate policy about what should be done for certain things. Such and such a guy at my school district is harassing Chicanos; how are we going to take care of that. We had members of school boards come to our meetings, Chicano school board members from Franklin McKinley, from wherever. We didn't have that many school board members. One of the first was this lady from Franklin McKinley, I don't remember her name. She used to come to our meetings to discuss things that could be done and how they could be done and that kind of thing. Was this in contrast with the United Way funding? We

never told them. MACSA couldn't put its label on anything? No, that's right. I couldn't say ok, MACSA supports this. Publically, how did MACSA stand on the issues that were discussed at these Friday meetings? I could write letters supporting a particular educational issue, but I couldn't write a letter supporting a candidate for a school board or a candidate for a political office. If it had to do with an educational issue itself or an issue having to do with a certain policy of the city or a certain policy of the county, then I could write a letter saying you know what, this is the way MACSA stands on this particular policy, this type of thing. You were being more effective informally than formally? Yes. Earlier you mentioned Model Cities. My involvement with Model Cities was more of a . . . What was Model Cities? Model Cities was a government grant that was given to each city, federal grant, that was given to each city to assist in the modernization of fixing up of areas of low-economic, people of low-income. It was housing, parks, streets, everything like that. What it was, they designated the area, the city itself designated the area from south of Santa Clara from the Gardner area, from where the Guadalupe river runs all the way east to Oleander and Sal Si Puedes and all that area. And some parts of the north side of Santa Clara, Alum Rock, were designated as model cities areas. Each area like the Gardner area, Olinder area, Sal Si Puedes, all those were allowed to elect two people to the board of directors of Model Cities which would set policy on how the grant, who was going to get grants, how much, and what particular projects. My involvement in that was mostly as a . . . in seeing, finding out how everything was going. If I thought something was not being done, I was a rebel rouser. What the black

folks call a mau-mau. I didn't have a title; the only people that were involved as part of the Model Cities were people like Jack Brito; he was chairman of the board, Model Cities Board for awhile. We were mostly in there as support group for a particular group. If we saw that something was going to be done here and we thought that they needed it down there, we'd speak in favor of certain projects. Who is we? Jose Carrasco, myself, Humberto Garza, Rudy Coronado, Jesse Reyna, we were all involved in trying to help the people. A lot of those people were not fluent in the language, so we'd go over there and verbalize what they wanted to say and help them out. For example, make presentations. How long did Model Cities exist? 1974. I think they went from 1970-74. Why did it end? Different administration came in, they cut off the funds, we don't do that kind of stuff anymore. Federal administration. What changes did you make through Model Cities for the community? I didn't make any personally. I was involved in seeing that certain things were done. There were a lot of things that were done. For example, at Olinder, they built a community center at Olinder Park that wasn't there before. That was built with Model Cities funds. There was a soccer association that came out because of Model Cities. The San Jose Soccer Association, I think it is. They initially got funded through Model Cities. So there were a lot of kids involved through that. I think they built a community center at Brebach Park. Gardner Community Center; I think that was built with Model Cities funds. Those were all projects that the people came up, presented to Model Cities, and got funded. Another one was Biblioteca Latino Americana was part of that. The library off Virginia. I don't know if they were funded because of . .

There was another one, Gardner Medical Clinic. It initially started with Model Cities funds. A lot of experience in parliamentary procedure for a lot of people. You were noted throughout the community as a parliamentarian? They thought I knew it all. Why did you do all this? I like to think I did it because I wanted to help the people. Your personal philosophy? Yes. It's my personal philosophy. One of the concerns I have is that a lot of Chicanos, I don't know if it's a lot, but quite a few Chicanos that get an education and go on and get a good position forget the people. They forget where they came from. It's been my philosophy that I don't think I'll ever forget that. I think people should help each other, especially la raza. We would be a lot better off if everybody that has an education would eventually go back and help somebody, whether it's one person or whether it's an organization or whatever. To help them get out of what is known as the vicious cycle of poverty, lack of education, poor economic . . . , lack of political participation, all of that vicious cycle goes back to education. Nobody has helped anybody else in that cycle. But if you break somebody out of that, they're going to help somebody else, hopefully. It doesn't always happen, but hopefully somebody will get them out of that vicious cycle of poverty. Why do you feel this way? That's just why. I don't think it's anything religious. Morally. I just think it's right. Do you recall the walkouts at Roosevelt Junior High School? No. I don't think I was here at that time. Did you become aware of them later? Yes. After I got involved with some of the people that were active in the community, I became of them but I don't know if I was here. I came back from Houston in 1966, July 1966. What do you recall about the

Roosevelt Junior High School walkouts? I don't remember anything. I wasn't paying attention at the time I guess. Do you recall . . . about it at the time? Do you recall the walkouts at SJCC? No. Did you have any friends that were involved in them? Sure. Could you explain what happened? We never talked about it. I just know they were resolving it. Rudy Coronado and Jose Carrasco and those guys were involved in it, but . . . Do you recall the Fiesta de Las Rosas? Can you explain what it was, what happened, how, and why? This lady by the name of Mary Jean Saurwein had convinced the city council that it was a good idea to hold a fiesta to honor the contributions of the Spaniards to the building of the city of San Jose. Honoring the contributions of the Mexican. As a consequence of that, people in the community got upset because they were honoring the wrong people with the Fiesta de las Rosas. Mary Jean Saurwein had convinced the city council to go along with and as a consequence of that we had people from various groups in the community that were really upset and were ready . . . were going to city council meetings, protesting this. And they . . . at City College and at State and were very upset over the idea of a fiesta to honor the Spanish contributions rather than the Mexican contribution to the development of the valley, specifically San Jose. There were demonstrations against this. The parade was held over people who were trying to disrupt the parade and so I guess they succeeded. I wasn't present at the parade, but I knew what happened there. What happened at the parade? There were some people from the Black Berets that were trying to get the people to stay away from the parade. I don't know whether they succeeded as I said, I wasn't present at the parade. It wasn't only the parade, it was also

people from UPA, United People Arriba, which is another organization, that got involved in that. Some of the more "militant" Chicanos were involved in that, trying to disrupt the parade. But nothing violent. They weren't trying to beat people or anything; they were just trying to make them aware of how wrong this thing was. That's what the Fiesta de las Rosas was about. From what I understand, there was violence at the end? As I said, I wasn't there. There might have been some violence on the part of the police, but not of those protesting. You mentioned Mary Jean Saurwein, could you tell me more about her? I don't know much about her other than she was really trying to convince the Chicano organizations to become involved in this fiesta. That's all I know about her. I don't know where she came from, or where she lived. She was not politically involved to my knowledge. Have you heard of the Mexican American Youth Organization or other organizations at the high school level? Yes, I heard of MAYO. What did they do? Well this was mostly an organization to try to get to the young people at the high school involved in recognizing their heritage and being proud of being Mexican rather than accepting the stereotype that the majority of society had of the Chicano. And it was successful in some cases. In San Jose we had a woman that was director of MACSA, the first director of MACSA. As a matter of fact, one of the founders of MACSA was instrumental in forming the first MAYO chapter of San Jose High School. They did quite well. They did all right in getting Chicanos to recognize the fact that they can do a lot of things they were led to believe that they couldn't do--for example, going to college, which was almost never mentioned to Chicano students. Is it through this organization that information was

distributed? Yes. Any other specifics? No. That's all I know about the organization. I wasn't involved in it. That's just what I knew about it. One of the founders of the organization was the first director of MACSA--Lino Lopez. But he was instrumental in getting the MAYO chapter formed. Not only San Jose High, but county-wide. And that was one of the reasons for founding MACSA--to try to get involved in forming these MAYO groups throughout the county. It was very successful. Were there any others you recall? No.

Were you aware of Chicano EOP at SJCC or SJS? Yes I was aware of the existence at both City College and State.

How did it come about? As the name states, an educational opportunity program for Chicanos and it was established and its job was to get Chicanos, to help them get into institutions of higher education such as City College and San Jose State. Rudy Cordova was very much involved in that at City College. The formation of the one at State--you had people like Humberto Garza who was one of the first directors of EOP at State. Then came Gabe; Gabe Reyes took over for him. That was the principal reason for forming EOP was to help Chicanos. There was nobody helping Chicanos get into institutions of higher education. The idea was to get (?) and get them started in education rather than let them go out and pick grapes and work in the fields. Do you know anything about the formulation of EOP? No. No, I don't. What was happening in 1968 politically, concerning Chicanos? Politically that was the first time that Chicanos had gotten together and had a candidate for the assembly district. Arturo Cabrera, Dr. Cabrera, who was a professor at SJS was put forward as a candidate for the 24th Assembly District at that time. Of course as usually would happen,

there was no help from the Democratic party in any way for Art. As a consequence he lost in the primary. But for a first effort, it wasn't bad. Although, just off the record, . . . What led Art to run for politics? At that time I think MAPA, the Mexican American Political Association, was becoming quite strong as a political activist organization and they were encouraging Chicanos from throughout the state to run for various political offices. They said that they had targeted the 24th Assembly District as a political prize they wanted to go after because at that time the 24th Assembly District was in large part was a Chicano district; although the Chicanos were not the majority in the district, they had the vote that could sway the election either way toward the Democrats or toward the Republicans. As a consequence of that, they figured that if we ran somebody who could show the Democratic party that we had clout in that district just by sheer numbers. But he lost in the primary so he was not the candidate for the 24th Districts. What was the mood of the Chicano community in 1968? Are you talking about the activists? Activists and the general population, both. The activists, the political activists figured since they weren't going to run, weren't going to be able to back a Chicano and the Democrats didn't give us any help in putting a Chicano forward for the 24th Assembly District, then we figured it was in fact a Chicano district, the local chapter of MAPA went on record as supporting Earl Crandall who was the Republican nominee for the 24th Assembly District just to show the Democrats that they couldn't the Chicano as being in their pocket as being an automatic Democratic vote. And we helped Crandall get into office as a matter of fact because there were quite a few Chicano votes that

went his way because of the MAPA stance. Crandall, by the way, paid us by renting an office for MAPA in San Jose. He paid the rent on the MAPA office for a year which is, that's politics. What about the mood of the general population? Well, it's like everything else. The general population and it's not just true of the Chicano population, it's true just . . . they're not that keen on politics. They'd just as soon sit home and watch TV and drink a beer as go out and vote. But they weren't too excited either way. Although as I said, the activists were; and as a matter of fact, there were more people becoming more active at that time because of all the student movements in all the colleges and the Chicanos were out there talking to everyone else about how we've gotta do this to help ourselves. We were . . . You mentioned the Chicano student movement. What specifically were they doing? The Chicano students were becoming involved very actively in political campaigns. They were walking precincts and they were distributing leaflets and they were registering voters and they were very much involved in the huelga with Cesar Chavez. They would support Cesar Chavez whenever he needed pickets for any place that they wanted to picket--they were right there to help. Not all students, but a lot of the Chicano students recognizing that Cesar was doing for the farm worker and naturally a lot of our people came from that stock; they were farm workers to start with. They identified with that real well. But they were very active at that time. What effect did the Vietnam war have if any? The Vietnam War had the effect of actually draining a lot of the Chicano, the young Chicanos, away. They were being drafted in huge numbers to go fight the war in Vietnam. A lot of people didn't like that the people were getting

away with not going into the service--the rich people or people who could afford to stay in college. As a consequence of this, in order to bring attention to this particular thing, there was a demonstration in Los Angeles against the war. People from all over the state who came to Los Angeles to protest the drafting of the Chicanos into the war effort in Vietnam. I don't know, that was probably about 1971, probably about '71; they had the Chicano Moratorium, what we called it. It was organized by the people in Los Angeles--MAPA, GI Forum, and a lot of organizations from the LA area called everybody to go demonstrate against the war in Vietnam. It turned out to be a pretty good march, pretty good demonstration. The really die-hard, Communist Workers Party started attacking the cops and then the cops came out in force. They were waiting for it. At that time, my son was there with me (he was eight years old); I had him with me. What role were you playing? I was there to participate. The march had already ended at the park. Which park? I don't remember the name of the park. Do you know where it started? Tampoco. It was in East LA. The exact purpose? It was called the Chicano Moratorium. It was a demonstration against the war in Vietnam. Strictly the war in Vietnam and nothing else? Yes. That's how it was. And when the Communist Workers Party attacked the cops, the cops came out and started throwing gas canisters and . . . away at everybody. It's a good thing that my son and I, we had already finished the march like I said and we were at the park. And then we saw this group of people and said what's going on. My son takes off trying to go see what's going on and I had to run after him and grab him and bring him back, get back here dummy, what's wrong with you!

We had to start moving away from that area because of what was happening. Do you recall anything else about it? No. Other than that, no. So there was violence? There was a lot of violence, instigated by the police again. What became of this moratorium? There was a very famous writer from the LA Times that got killed; he got killed by a gas canister. They fired it into this bar and it hit him and there was a big barruyo (?) about that about why they fired that canister into the bar. There was nothing happening in the bar at that time. Ruben Salazar, that was his name, the writer for the LA Times, he was a reporter. He was there to find out what was going on and he got killed. Did the community view this as accidental? No. Heck no. The community saw this as a deliberate act on the part of the police to kill somebody that was writing in the LA Times and was writing from the Chicano perspective. Whatever became of his death? They had a big investigation and of course like everything else the police said it was an accidental killing, it was not deliberate on the part of anybody. So no one was ever sentenced to jail because of it? No. What was the community's reaction? Well, what can you do? Was there more violence afterwards? No. I don't remember any violence further than that. But it went on for years, the investigation of Ruben Salazar's death. So you were there on your own or were you involved with an organization at the time? I was with MACSA; I was there director when I went down there for that. So you weren't involved in the organization? No, the whole thing was put on by the people in Los Angeles, by the activists groups in LA. Were you aware of the Economic Opportunities Commission of Santa Clara County? Yes. What could you tell us about it? Not too much other than when I first

came here the EOC was on East Santa Clara Street; that's where it was. I wasn't involved in it because it was an organization that was more involved in helping out organizations, funding (?) organizations, that were helping, they were people. And I didn't belong to any organization at the time so I just knew about it and I read some articles about what was going on in EOC. From what I understand, it used to get pretty heavy at some of those meetings. The people involved would get. . Do you recall the names of some people involved? Al Pinon was one of them. Jack Brito, naturalmente. Perez; I don't remember his first name, but he was involved pretty much. Jack Ybarra was involved. Yaya Martinez, Jose Martinez. What were the issues involved? There were no issues other than these people were involved in EOC. They sat on the Board of Directors. What were the disagreements about? Like I said, I wasn't involved in it, so I don't know. What do you know about the Consent Decree for Chicano Sheriffs? I don't know anything about that. Have you heard about United People Arriba? UPA, sure. Who or what did they stand for? United People Arriba was an activist organization from the eastside. It was made up of people like Sophie Mendoza, Jack Brito, Jose Carrasco, Humberto Garza, Randall Jimenez, Rudy Coronado, Fred Hersch; those were some of the people that were involved in it. What was their purpose? Their purpose was to take issues affecting the Chicano community and try to resolve those issues; for example, housing on the east side, medical facilities on the east side, education of the Chicano from the east side. All those issues were issues that were undertaken by UPA. Not only would they try to undertake these issues, but they would try to get help from other organizations to try to resolve some of these

issues which were affecting the Chicanos throughout the whole east side. Sophie Mendoza was a very active lady. When was this organization formulated? I don't know. Do you recall any issues that stand out? Medical. They were instrumental in getting a medical facility on the east side, a clinic. Sophie Mendoza, the UPA group, was instrumental in getting that, that medical clinic on the east side. Do you recall how long this group lasted? No, I don't. I know they were around when the Confederacion was formed. When the Confederacion de la Raza Unida was formed, they were still around. But I don't know how much longer after that. Do you know who were the original organizers of this group? No, I don't. You stated their goals and objectives, didn't you? Yes. Was there a paranoia about government surveillance about individuals affiliated with any of these organizations? I don't think it was paranoia. I think it was a truism. What do you mean? There was government surveillance of these groups; there was in fact. How do you know? I know because I was on the list of the Sheriff of Santa Clara County and I was told this by an employee of the Sheriff of Santa Clara County that there were several of us "activists" that were on a list in a locked vault in the Sheriff's Department and were to be arrested in case of the outbreak of any hostilities. Any strictly on the fact that we were activists and that's the only reason. And I know that for a fact. When we were marching one time from the fairgrounds to St. James Park all you had to do was to look to the side and you could see the FBI taking pictures of all the people that were marching. How do you know it was the FBI? You can't miss them--with their black suits and black ties. You mentioned the source, just how reliable is it? The source?

Pretty reliable. And I wasn't the only one. You mentioned the list; do you recall any others? George Castro was supposedly on the list; Jack Brito was on the list; Jose Carrasco was on the list; Jose Villa was on the list; who else did she mention? And I think she also mentioned Humberto Garza. There were others probably on the list.

Why do you feel this happened? The paranoia on the part of the police department, not on the part of the activists. We weren't paranoid. We knew we were being watched. There was paranoia on that part because they thought we were going to try to overthrow the government.

What indications led you to believe you were being watched? We would have meetings sometimes at which we would invite people verbally and somebody would show up that wasn't invited by anybody. For example there was that newspaper . . . What led you to believe that you were being watched? We had indications by the fact that we'd call a meeting and people that were not invited would show up. And so we felt that somebody probably, maybe possibly, at the least knew about the meetings since they would send somebody to inter . . . the meeting. Although I don't think that's the right word, cause the guy they sent was well-known to us. Although he hadn't been invited to the meetings. Who was sending him, or who do you feel was watching you? We think the local police agencies were a little bit paranoid thinking we were going to overthrow the government. Or that we were going to talk about bombing the Bank of America, which we never did. You feel there was paranoia on the police part? Yes, definitely. Did anything specifically ever happen to you? No, not to me. Like any nighttime phone calls? No. But I can tell you about one thing that happened to a friend of mine that works at Lockheed. He has the same name as a

very active Chicano down in Los Angeles and this guy was working here (I don't remember his name--Elias, Ruben Elias, parece que se llamaba), very active Chicano down in LA, very well-known in the LA area. Anyway this guy was working here at Lockheed and he went down there and he had some classified material in the car he was driving. The police saw him and they pulled him over for something. When he showed him his driver's license, they thought he was the guy from LA, not noticing the address from San Jose. So they took him in for investigation and here the guy had some classified information in the car. When they take classified information, they wrap it up and they stamp it so that nobody can see it . . . with sealing wax. And they wanted him to open the package and he said "I can't open the package." Because he can't open it until he gets to where he's going, right? Well, he said, "Call the FBI; that's the only person that can open the package." So they send the guy's name . . . They picked him up and held him for about four hours until they could get the FBI to come and he could tell the FBI what it was about. They finally let him go. But it was paranoia on the part of the police, right? Were there any specific actions as a result of this surveillance? No. When I tried to get back to Lockheed, I had a hard time finding a job back there after. I got done being Director of MACSA; I tried to get back to Lockheed. Nobody would touch me because they thought I was too much of an activist. But I finally got back because a friend of mine was in a position to hire me and he did. You feel you were affected directly by these activities? Oh yes, absolutely. Was there anything else? Sure. If it wasn't for my activities, my activism, I would probably be a manager at Lockheed. Why do you say that? Because they

take a dim view of people getting involved in especially civil rights activities. Was this the management of Lockheed? Yes, absolutely. They're not going to tell you this is the reason we're not going to, they're not promoting you because you're active, they don't tell you that. But you know the reason. Why do you feel this way? Because other Chicanos that have not been involved have been promoted. If you're a "good Mexican." Because you're not causing no trouble, you think? Right. You're not a troublemaker. What about your qualifications and so forth? That's secondary to being a troublemaker. You said that others have been placed in management positions except for yourself. No, I said that other Chicanos that have not been involved in anything have been progressing ok; there's nothing been in their way. But in your case it's different, ok. Is there anything else that you feel? No.

RIVERA INTERVIEW - TAPE 3

What do you know about the conception of the Mexican-American Political Association? MAPA was formed in the 60's after Kennedy got elected to the Presidency. There was a group of organizations that called themselves the Viva Kennedy campaign and it was a group of political activists, Chicano, Mexican, whatever you want to call them, political activists throughout the southwest. After the election they decided they had formed something that they could continue to active in and they decided to each go back to his own state. The people from California, the people from Arizona, the people from New Mexico, the people from Texas, go back to their own state and form an organization of political activists, mainly Democrats, mostly Democrats. But legally they couldn't call themselves political association and be partisan to one group so they had to call themselves nonpartisan. The people in Texas called themselves the Latin American . . what was it? LULAC? No, LULAC, League of United Latin American Citizens, but Albert Pena from San Antonio was the chingon. It was PASSO, Political Association of Spanish-Speaking Organizations, that's what they called themselves in Texas. I don't know what they called themselves in New Mexico. In Arizona they had a very funny name, something about American Voters Association. I don't know why they called themselves that. But it was the same group, the Viva Kennedy campaign. In California, they called themselves the Mexican American Political Association. The founders were people like Quevedo (?); he was from LA and Fred Corona was from LA. And from San Jose they had

a Chicano attorney, his brother taught at City College for awhile. I can't remember his name. Anyway, those guys got together and they formed the Mexican American Political Association and they met in Fresno and formed the association, wrote the bylaws and like I said they were mainly interested in helping the Democratic party. But they couldn't do that and become chartered as a Democratic organization so they wanted to be a nonpartisan organization so they called themselves Mexican American Political Association. At one time there were, I'd say, about 60 chapters statewide. And very active and very strong. Their goals? Their goals were of course to make the Mexican American people in the state of California aware of the benefits of participating in the political process and teaching them the political process, becoming active in voter registration campaigns for candidates, and backing candidates, and endorsing candidates but in a nonpartisan way. They would have their conventions and they would have all the candidates there. Each candidate was allowed to speak and then they would endorse a candidate. How effective was this group, in your opinion? (No response.) What was your specific involvement with MAPA? I was president of the local chapter of the San Jose Chapter of MAPA and I guess that was 1970-71. Then I was Director of the northern region of MAPA which was an area from San Luis Obispo across to the north of Fresno all the way up to Sacramento and up north to (?). What do you feel was your legacy? In MAPA? I don't think I had a legacy. There was more that I could say. Nothing stands out in my mind. What do you know about the

conception of the Mexican American Community Services Association? MACSA was formed, like I said earlier, was formed by Lino and I can't remember the guy's name. It was formed as an organization. The concept on MACSA was to form a service agency, there wasn't any one agency in east San Jose where Chicanos could go and get information on what services were available to them from the city or county or state. There was nothing there. So Lino got together a group of people and they formed a Mexican American Community Services Agency with a specific charge of being a service organization to the east side people. They got their first funding source from some organization in San Francisco that gave them their first grant. After that they went after monies from United Way to continue operations. One of Lino's favorite things was to go out to the schools and talk to the students and get them to realize they had potential and form the Mexican American Youth Club, MAYO clubs, throughout the schools in east San Jose. This was during what time period? I don't know what the time period was. I don't remember when they formed MACSA, but in any event he was quite successful in doing that. After he left, Pete Silva, I think, took it over. They had various directors after that--Pete Silva, Delia Alvarez was a director, there was a guy who was a director there for about six months. Several good things came out of there. One of them is that the Casa Legal. Do you know what the Casa Legal is? No. The Casa Legal is a, it started out as a legal clinic for low-income people. Donisio Macedo was one of the first people. It started in MACSA. What they did is they formed this group of



September/October 1972 that I became Director of MACSA. And I was there for a year and I went back to work at Lockheed. Do you recall anything specific about that time? No, not really. Everything was pretty calmed down by that time. Everybody was fat, dumb, and happy. Do you recall any local newsletters or newspaper articles that were published during this period? One I recall is the one that used to come out in the news, the Mercury News, it was the Mexican American Notes. It was written by Luis Juarez. But he wrote principally about social goings on, not really about anything that the activists were doing or what the issues were. What was he writing about? Mostly social notes. What do you mean by social notes? So and so had a party and so and so was there. He was not getting involved with political or emotional issues? No. He used to work for the city, the City of San Jose. In what capacity, do you recall? I think he was in Housing Development, Housing and Urban Development, I think that was his job, and he was the director there. So he figured he was there just as a token? I think so. His articles, as a matter of fact, you could tell he wasn't doing too much writing cause about the fourth or fifth one you'd see again what you'd seen the first time. Do you have any copies of these? No, I don't. I couldn't save that stuff. Havia otro aqui que se llamaba, como se llamaba, Humberto Garcia was the publisher. It was a social thing too. They had several people contributing to this--it was more a booklet rather than a newsletter, a little booklet. You had a lot of advertising and a lot of

chismes about so and so at a night club and he was with so and so and that kind of stuff. I didn't pay any attention to that either. Do you recall any political or economic articles in the paper? No. What was your involvement in the farm workers movement? My involvement was mostly in support of the farm workers movement. I supported Cesar Chavez whenever he called for pickets. One of the organizations that he would call most of the time would be MAPA for people to go help in picketing Lucky and Safeway and that kind of stuff. Of course, he also called student organizations at San Jose State, but mostly it was support-type activities. What was expected? From MAPA or from the organization? From both. Cesar Chavez expected help from Chicano organizations in the state and we were glad to give him a hand whenever we could whenever there was any activity to be supported we'd give him a hand. We'd help him out. I went down to . . . este . . . where was it? down in Fresno. . . de donde es Cesar Chavez, what's the name of that place where he's from? not Tulare, Delano. I went down to Delano a couple of times to some of his fund raising functions he had down there. Were you acting as an individual or through an agency? Just as an individual. I took my family down there a couple of times to his fund raising activities. Could you tell us what happened or what was your reasoning for going? We just heard about the fund raisers; they told us; they needed help. We'd take cans of food or clothing or whatever we could and we'd go down there and enjoy the day. They had music, speeches, and that kind of thing. We'd donate whatever we could to help the farm workers movement. That was

the extent of my involvement with the farm workers. Earlier you mentioned boycotts and pickets and strikes. What happened during those times? What was the attitude of the people? Was there violence? There might be some violence on the part of the ranchers but as far as the farm workers themselves, there was no violence. Whenever we picketed, we would avoid any kind of confrontation with anybody. You always have one or two that want to confront the pickets about the farm workers and so we would avoid that. We wouldn't get involved in that kind. We'd just ignore them. That's how you dealt with it, you just ignored them? Yes. Well you did most of your picketing here then, locally in San Jose? Yes. You mentioned some agencies that participated in these events. What was the connection there? Connection in what way? With the farm workers movement and the agencies. The agencies were always made aware of an event was coming up because César Chavez made sure that everybody was notified so that if he needed any kind of help in anything, whether it was housing farm workers that were going to be picketing on the picket lines or whether it was providing people to help in the picket, on the picket line, we were aware that we'd do what we could. Was there any set rules you followed? I don't remember any set rules other than don't get violent. And who mandated that rule? Cesar. That was Cesar's. How were all these groups organized? The pickets. They would meet at a central place and then they'd send them out to different stores that they had targeted for picketing. Do you recall who was the organizer? I don't remember who it was. What was the feeling of

the people at that time who were picketing? Do you recall?

Sure. The feeling was that we were doing a good thing. That whatever we could do to help the farm workers was good because it would help the Chicano. Not only would it make the majority of society aware of the problems that we face, that the farm workers face, but also make them aware that we're not all farm workers and there's problems in the urban communities also, like the east side where we had a lot of problems in education and drugs and that kind of stuff. What was the farm workers movement? The farm workers movement was a unionization process. They wanted to unionize and they had all kinds of obstacles not only from the ranchers but also from the governmental agencies that didn't want them to unionize because unionization would then mean they would have to deal with the union rather than with the individual farm workers to get them and they'd have to pay them more money because they were paying slave wages to the farm workers most of whom were uneducated and had no idea what their rights were. They needed a union to protect their rights . . . workers. Also, the other part of the farm workers movement was a political movement. One of the objectives that I thought Cesar had was to politicize the Chicano, to make him aware that they could use the political system to better the Chicanos in California and the United States because Cesar would through the union endorse candidates or not endorse candidates and we . . . One of the conflicts that we had that existed between the farm workers and MAPA was that most of the people at MAPA were urban people that lived in big, urban areas like LA, Fresno, Sacramento, San Jose

and Cesar's first priority was the union, so the conflict ca  
endorsement of candidates. Sometimes we'd be opposing each  
other. As a consequence, we had to meet with Cesar and make  
aware of the fact that 85 percent of the Chicanos lived in ur  
areas and we had problems which are different from the farm-  
workers problems. And so we had to endorse candidates that w  
going to address those problems rather than just strictly a f  
worker issue. Were you aware of the migrant ministry? The o  
thing I know about it is that Jose Carrasco was involved in th  
farm worker ministry and I think this was before I met him.  
I'm not too much up on what they did. You never attended  
any of their meetings or functions? No. The migrant ministry  
I thought you said farm workers. No, the migrant ministry.  
They were much involved with the farm workers. Yes, I  
knew that. You know very little about them? Yes. I don't  
know too much. Have you heard of the Chicano Teachers  
Organization? Yes. The Chicano teachers were Jose Carrasco,  
Marcos Ortiz, Ramon Martinez I think was one of them, I don't  
know whether . . . There was several other people but I don't  
remember their names right off hand. They were mostly people i  
San Jose Unified School District. What was their role and  
function? I wasn't too involved with them. I just know about  
them. The education of the Chicanos. Like I said, I'm not  
really aware of what they were doing, but they were organized  
trying to get San Jose Unified School District to recognize the  
fact that Chicanos were being short changed as far as education  
was concerned because of the policies that they had. The

expenditures of money was not fair, was not proportionate and Chicano teachers were organized to try to get that to change, meeting with the school board, San Jose Unified District School Board, presenting their case there. As a matter of fact, we would go to school board meetings throughout Santa Clara County and would take issue with any policies that they had, if we heard of any discriminatory practices that were going on. Concerning Chicanos? Yes. And students I would assume. What do you know of the Associated Chicano Professors? I don't know anything about them. The Association of Mexican American Educators? I know something about those people. I broke up one of their conventions. They were a group of Chicano, Mexican American educators if you will. They were a little bit on the conservative side. They were concerned with educational issues of course and they wanted more Chicanos in the classrooms. They wanted to make sure that a unified front was presented to the state and local governments as far as the education of Chicanos was concerned. But like I said, they were a little bit on the conservative side and I went to one of their conventions down in Santa Barbara. At that time, I was teaching at San Jose City College and I went to their convention to find out what it was they were doing and I said that I had broken up their convention. I almost broke it up. I . . . succeeded. It would have been nice. What happened? They had the general meeting and I challenged their quorum. I said they didn't have a quorum because there were very few people in the meeting room. The parliamentarian told me they had established a quorum and I said how did you

establish a quorum. He said well we counted the number of people here and that's a quorum. And I said well that's not according to the rules. The rules are that at a convention . . . According to whose rules, their own bylaws? No. He never told me that. He said according to Robert's Rules and that's where I got them because according to Robert's Rules of Order a convention quorum is established at 50 percent plus one of the number of people registered at the time of the opening of the meeting. And I knew that there was at least 500 people that had been registered and there was only about 80 people in the room and I knew that wasn't a quorum. But as a consequence of that, they started . . . the parliamentarian apparently didn't know his Robert's Rules of Order that he should have. So I told him that he didn't have a quorum, that anything they did was illegal. What were they attempting to do? They were just trying to carry on business which is ok, but you still have to have a quorum. I went to a meeting in Fresno for those guys. They had called a special meeting in Fresno and they had invited Galarza (?). The agenda for the meeting stated that they were going to be addressing the problem of Chicanos employed by the state educational, Superintendent's Office, and it turned out what they were there for, they were concerned about one of the employees being fired by the Superintendent of Education, at that time I think it was Wilson Riles. As it turned out, that was all that was on the agenda and Galarza got up and just blasted em because he told them they had invited him there to discuss the issue of employment and they were there to protect one man's job and he didn't think that was

their function. So he walked out of the meeting. You never knew Galarza, huh? No. Dr. Galarza. No, I never had the opportunity to meet him. Have you heard of Model Cities, Inc.? Yes. I know about Model Cities. What was their purpose? The Model Cities was a grant which was given by the federal government to cities so that they could upgrade urban areas and build parks, roads, sidewalks, and help upgrade the neighborhoods, the poor neighborhoods in the urban areas. Each city would then have what they called the Model Cities, Inc., Board of Directors which was to get the money to do the projects that they had set up, that they thought they would do. The fallacy in the whole thing, in my opinion, was that although they were an incorporated board, they still had to go to the City Council of the city to get the monies. In other words, they did not actually have control. The grant would come through the city, for example, in San Jose, the grant for Model Cities of San Jose would come through the City Council and then the City Council would give the money to the Model Cities Board of Directors. But they would have to approve the projects which defeated the whole purpose of the whole thing. They would, for example, if they didn't like a particular project, they'd say, no, we can't give you money for that. And there were a lot of projects that were good that were approved, but there were some that the City Council would not give them any grant money. They had . . . Model Cities of San Jose were made of people elected by the neighborhoods, for example, the Gardner neighborhood, Olinder neighborhood, Sal Si Puedes, about five or six neighborhoods that were targeted by Model Cities as . . . by

the City as being eligible for Model Cities grant. What was the criteria for eligibility? The City would designate an area, for example, they designated everything east of . . . south of Santa Clara to the Guadalupe River and east along Santa Clara all the way to Mayfair, way over on the east side, Story Road, that whole area. And then the neighborhood would then . . . they were designated as Model Cities area and then each neighborhood would elect representatives to the Board of Directors of Model Cities and the Board of Directors would then elect their president of the Board and would hire their Model Cities Director and then the Director would then hire the people necessary . . . the staff.

What were the goals? The goals were, of course, to upgrade the neighborhoods, to build parks, build libraries, build sidewalks, help in any project that the Model Cities people thought would be beneficial to the neighborhood. For example in the Gardner area, they built a Gardner neighborhood center, they upgraded the park, Grebeck (?) park, which was at Virginia. I think they built the Olinder Neighborhood Center in the Olinder area and I think they built a library there. They did some upgrading on some of the streets and they had money to help people upgrade their houses, painting, repairs, bring their housing up to city code, and monies were allocated for this and there were people who took advantage of that. It sounds to me as if the things you just described were the things the city should have done for itself.

Good point. Which is what we were saying all the time. We used to say why do we have to have the federal government come and bring money to do this when it's your job to do this thing.

And, of course, they always said, well, we don't have the tax money to do this, we need to have blah, blah, blah, and all of that. But that was one of the points that we always used to bring up. Why can't the city, we pay taxes, I didn't live in the Model Cities area, but the people that pay taxes, why do they have to go to somewhere else to get money? Which is one of the big points that we always used to bring out. So I assume this was a highly political organization. Very political. Do you remember who were the key people involved? The Model Cities Director, there were several. Bob Martinez was the last one and Jack Brito was President of the Board of Directors at one time. I don't remember who the other key players were. Did you participate in Model Cities? I participated more as a rebel rouser, let's not . . . more as an observer. I was director of a project called Special Opportunity Grant which was a state grant allocated to San Jose State to try to get a consortium together of higher educational institutions to find out where they were duplicating efforts and try to eliminate the duplication of efforts. For example, the charge was that we were supposed to go out and find out what San Jose State was doing, what San Jose City College was doing, what Santa Clara University was doing, what UC Santa Barbara was doing to try to get Chicanos in the Model Cities, well not specifically the Model Cities area, but in Santa Clara County, to find out what they were doing for those, to attract the Chicanos and the grant was given to San Jose State and administered under San Jose State and I was the director and the office space was donated by the Model Cities.

So I had my office right there in Model Cities. Whatever became of this? What happened is I started the project and we were doing all this stuff. I had one person from San Jose City College on the staff, Dr., I was going to say Strelitz, but it's not Strelitz. I don't know. But he was on the staff to help us with any statistical analysis that we had to do. We started gathering all the information from all the schools to see what they were doing and like everything else, it got very political because San Jose City College was teaching, for example, English as a Second Language, and Metropolitan Adult Education was also teaching English as a Second Language. Our objective was to consolidate those and have one of them do it. Well, neither one of them wanted to give it up, so we had that conflict. That conflict had to be resolved. Our charge was to . . . write the report, it was a one-year project. So we had to gather all the information, write the report to the state higher education commission and have them try to resolve the problem and I left before the project was completed. I went to become Director of MACSA. The person that took over for me was Ricardo Romo; he took over as director and there was only about four months left on the project when I left. Was that one of the reasons you left? No. One of the reasons I left was because I wanted to take that MACSA directorship. But the State Higher Education Commission never did anything with the report. They got it and they just filed it. What led to the creation of EOP? EOP is the Educational Opportunities Program at San Jose State. One of the problems that led to it is the fact that there weren't a hell of

a lot of Chicanos at San Jose State. One of the reasons for that, of course, was that there were no opportunities being afforded the Chicanos to get into State either because they didn't meet the minimum qualifications which meant that the students had graduated from high school but they didn't have the minimum qualifications. So in order to overcome this particular problem, the thinking was if we could form, if somebody could form some organization on campus that would get these young Chicanos into, help them get into college, a lot of Chicanos don't even know how to apply. They don't even know what they have to do to apply. EOP would go out and try to recruit Chicanos to get into San Jose State and not only that but give them tutoring, help them overcome any problems they might encounter on campus, get them up to speed on their qualifications. The idea was that if you got them through the first year then they could probably do it on their own. Once they got the hang of what it is to be a student, what you have to do, so EOP was formed with that in mind. I think Humberto Garza, if I'm not mistaken, was the first director of EOP. They were doing pretty good. I don't know how they're doing now, although my thinking is that it hasn't changed much in increasing the number of Chicanos at State. There's still a long way to go. We will increase the number, but I think it's sort of gone back to the way it was. Why is that do you think? I don't know. We need to do more work. In what areas? I think we have to go back to the high schools and find out what the problems are there. A lot of our Chicanos . . . One of the big problems I see in education of

the Chicano is the lack of counselors. There's not too many counselors that the students can go to and say here's what I'd like to do. Because they're overloaded; they have one counselor for 500 students or something ridiculous like that so that if you get to see a counselor for 15 minutes in one year, you're doing real well. What was the response from the administration? I don't know. I wasn't involved. I just knew what it was and what they were doing, trying to do. Do you know about the creation of MAGS? Yes. I remember when MAGS was first proposed as a Mexican American Graduate Studies Program. At first it was a program and then I think it became a department and I think now it's back to a program. Again, one of the big problems that was being addressed by the formation of MAGS was the fact that a lot of the Chicanos, not only Chicanos, the Anglo majority didn't see any problems in the Chicano community. They'd say, well, what's the problem. They were not aware not only they were not aware of what the contribution of the Chicano had been to the building of this country, especially in the southwestern United States, who built the railroads, who built the cities, that kind of contributions the Chicanos have made to the growth of the country. In order to make them aware of that, and not only them, but a lot of the Chicanos that lived here were not aware of what our contributions had been. The studies program was proposed in order to make the Chicanos culturally aware of what we had done and to try to bring pride to them so that they wouldn't feel like what have we ever done and that kind of mentality. Did you know any of the people who were in charge of this? Lou Carranza was one of them.

Art Cabrera was one of the first people involved in the formation of MAGS. Jose Carrasco was one of the people instrumental. Rudy Cordova, he's got a brother that was also instrumental. They were all parts of MAGS. What methods were used, do you know? No, I don't know how they went about it. Do you know how the school responded to the formulation of MAGS? No. I wasn't in on that. What led to the creation of the School of Social Work? I don't know anything about that. From your perception, what was the impact of the Chicano movement on the local non-Chicano community? The impact of the Chicano movement on the non-Chicano community. They hated our guts. No, they, I think it made the majority of society aware of the fact that everything in the United States is really hunky dory. There's problems that have to be addressed and I think we got a lot of converts over to our side, people that would ordinarily say, ah, they got no problems, they're just out there to make trouble. Converts meaning Anglo whites? Yes. They would come over and say, yea we see the problem and if we can do anything for you, let us know. . . always had the white liberals that in my opinion were mostly there because of their guilt feelings rather than because they wanted to do anything for the Chicano. But there was a lot of them that were sincere, that were out there to help and would do anything to help. What of those that weren't sincere? You could always tell who wasn't. You could always tell the white Anglo that was there that was not sincere. How? Well, by all their actions. You asked them to do some things and they would say, I got something to do or whatever. But there were quite a

few that were out there on the picket lines when Cesar Chavez was picketing. There were quite a few that would side with us on educational issues. When we had the problem of busing, busing students, one of our concerns was that we were busing Chicanos out of their neighborhoods into other schools in order to integrate the schools and some of us were opposed to that based on the fact that this was going to effect the lives of the Chicano, the young Chicanito. Some of the Anglos were siding with us, but not because they saw the problem as we saw it but rather because they didn't want Chicanos in their schools. They took it the wrong way. They thought we were against it maybe because we didn't want to go to school with the gueros, but they didn't understand the problem. What impact did the movement have on the local Chicano community? As with everything else, we got our share of Chicanos that don't think there are any problems only because they may have been born into a middle-class atmosphere and they don't see the problems and they say we really don't have any problems, we're doing all right, that kind of thing. Some of them would come out against us. The majority of them wouldn't say anything. We have our share of conservatives that don't see the problems. As a matter of fact, I had one lady tell me that until the Texans moved into Santa Clara Valley, that we didn't have any problems, meaning that the Texans had come over here to cause the problems. Tells you how they viewed the movement of the Chicano activist. What did the Chicano movement mean to you? I spent a lot of time away from the family, but I'm not sorry I did because I think a lot of the things that we did

were for the benefit not only of my family but at the same time the Chicano population. I got involved because I wanted to. I wanted to help. I wanted to do see what I could do to better the situation. My family didn't have any regrets. I don't have any regrets. I think it's all for the better. I think we did what we had to do at the time, whether it was picketing, whether it was going to school board meetings, city council meetings, supervisors meetings, or whatever we had to do, we did. We had to voice our frustration with the system. . . to not just the social, economic, political, the whole intact system. What does the Chicano movement stand for? Some people may view the Chicano movement more as a philosophical idea rather than a movement. But I think it's more than philosophy. I think it's a movement that has to continue. Because we still have a lot of problems that have to be solved. They're not going to solve too many years of problems in ten years, in twenty years. It has to be a long, drawn process. We have to keep moving, we have to keep going forward and doing whatever. . . What do you think it's going to take? It's going to take a lot of education, a lot of involvement in the political process, a lot of involvement in the economic system, in the political system, all the social systems that exist in the United States. We have to get people knowledgeable in each one of the systems so that by knowing the system you'll be able to pinpoint the problems and have an idea of how we can resolve the problems within that particular system. I always make the analogy between a system and a person that tries to fix a TV that doesn't know anything about the TV.

You've got to understand what the television does, the audio, the video, how it comes into your set, how it gets the picture out, how it gets the audio out. If you don't know any of that, you can't fix it. But if you know that, then you can fix your TV set. The same with the system. If you don't know the system, you can't stand outside and throw rocks at it. It's not going to budge. You have to get into the system, learn it, know the rules--use the rules the way the power controllers know them and then use those rules against them to get your own ends. Because that's what they do. They know the rules and they can get you with their rules. And any meeting that you go to, if the president knows Robert's Rules of Order, he can toss you, he can put you down and there's nothing you can do. But if you know Robert's Rules of Order better than he does, you can get him. In your opinion, what is injustice? Injustice, that's a deep philosophical question. Injustice to me is not injustice to you. To me injustice is, for example, if within a group of people, for example, I commit a crime and I go before a judge and the judge says I'm going to give you five years for that crime. And then another person comes along, having committed the same crime under identical circumstances and that judge says I'm going to give you one year's probation. That's injustice. How does this relate to the Chicano movement or the Chicano himself? This is exactly what has been happening to the Chicano in the judicial system, as a matter of fact. And we can probably pinpoint that to the fact that the Chicanos don't have access to the good lawyers that will prevent this kind of injustice from happening. And of course it

boils down to economics. So here we have the tie in between the judicial system and economic system. A Chicano that's poor and commits some crime can't afford an attorney that can get him off. Whereas somebody else that is well off can afford an attorney that will get him off. That is a tie in between the judicial system and the economic system. It's an economic thing.

Similarly, Where does the social system come in? The judicial system is part of the whole social structure, the judicial, economic, educational, political, those are all social systems. Similarly, if a politician's son, a well-known politician's relative of some kind, or a politician himself is convicted of some crime, then he's liable to get off, easier than somebody that's not well connected politically. Now we have a tie in between economic, judicial, and political system. So you have three systems that tie in together. Suppose it's a professor that's into the educational system, he's well connected educationally, he's got the economic resources, and he probably knows a few judges, and he knows a few politicians, so now you have all four systems all tied in together. We don't have that connection of the social systems, whereas I may be well off economically and I may know some politicians, I don't know anybody in the judicial system and so I don't have that tie whereas I could have the tie over here for two systems, but I don't have the other ties. So you have a problem. It takes a network of all? Yes. Which is one of the reasons Chicanos shouldn't concentrate on only one system. When I came to San Jose in 1962, I started going to graduate school at San Jose State and I was in the

school of mathematics. There was no Chicanos there, none, zero. I was the only one. A lot of the Chicanos that were coming into San Jose State were being counseled to go into the social sciences and I think with me, educationally, to get our Chicanos into all phases of the educational system, the economics, and to the political system, and to the judicial system, the whole gamut, we gotta get that network. If we don't, we're going to remain in the same quagmire that we're in and have been for years. On the other hand, what is justice? Justice is the negation of what I told you about the person committing a crime and getting. . If I do a crime and I get two years and somebody else does the same crime, he should get two years, that's justice. If I get off, he should get off. Educationally, if you take a group of people and following all the laws of statistics that say that within a group of people you will always have one. . . Within any group of people, statistically, you will always have one sixth of the population will be at the lower end of the scale economically, educationally, politically, in all the other social systems. Two thirds will be in the middle, and one sixth will be at the upper end, statistically. So that means if you have 100 Chicanos you should have that distribution; if you have 100 Anglos you should have that distribution; if you have 100 Orientals you should have that distribution. But it's not like that. What's happening is that within the Chicanos, 100 Chicanos, you should have one sixth at the lower end, two thirds in the middle, and one sixth at the upper end. But we're skewed. Our distribution, especially educationally, we're skewed toward

the lower end. The curve is not a normal bell curve; it's a skewed bell curve--where you have most Chicanos at the lower end of the educational curve--and that's not just. And the reason for that is because we're being screwed educationally. The system is not working. The educational system in the United States was not geared, was not designed with the Chicano in mind. It was designed with the middle class, white, Anglo in mind. When they designed that system, it was for them. They didn't have Indians in their schools. They didn't have Blacks in their schools. And they certainly didn't have Chicanos in their schools. So the design of the system was faulty right from the beginning. That I agree with. Were there ethnic allegiances established with other minority groups? There were. We had ethnic alliances with the Japanese American Citizens League, we had ethnic alliances with some of the Black groups. We had ethnic alliances with some of the Native American groups. And when any issue came up that was of mutual interest we would get together and work together. But most of the time, each group would do their own thing. What kind of activities took place? We'd have fund raisers in which we would get together with the Blacks and have fund raisers to raise money for a particular event. What type of fund raisers? Barbecues and that kind of stuff. Car washes? No, we didn't do car washes.

RIVERA INTERVIEW - TAPE 4

How was the church impacted by the Chicano movement? I have no idea. You're asking the wrong man. You're not a religious man, Leo? Not really. How was city government impacted by the Chicano movement? We'd like to think that we made them aware of the fact that we needed to have more representation at the city level. We like to think some of the people that were elected to the city offices were elected because of the activism of the people involved in the Chicano movement, politically involved. When Mineta was there as City Councilman, he was very well attuned to our problems and he would try to help in the appointment of Chicanos to city commissions and city boards. Do you feel this was a direct result of the Chicano movement? Maybe not a direct result, maybe because of Mineta's experiences as a Japanese American he was sympathetic to the problems and he knew what kind of problems we had. So he would try to help. Surely we were instrumental in getting some people appointed because of letters that we would write, once we knew what steps and procedures we had to take, once we learned the political process. We'd like to think, or at least I'd like to think that we were instrumental in getting some people appointed to boards and commissions and getting more Chicanos involved in the city. Hiring practices of Chicanos that the City Council, the City of San Jose had for a change, in the police force, in the fire department, in the staffing of the city offices. I think we had a definite impact there. How were the educational institutions impacted? We certainly were instrumental in getting more Chicano

teachers hired. We exploded their myth that they kept perpetuating that there were no qualified Chicanos to be hired for the schools in the east side where the majority of the Chicanos were. We had a definite impact in the hiring practices at San Jose Unified School District. A lot of the Chicanos that are there were hired during that period, at Overfelt, at Andrew Hill, at Silver Creek right here, at Lick, at San Jose High. We had a lot of Chicanos that were hired during that period and that was because of pressure from the Chicano activists. We kept telling them they had to hire more Chicanos. At State we can't say that we've succeeded, but we've done quite well considering. . . When I first went to San Jose State I think there was only maybe, Cabrera was probably the only Chicano there. I don't remember any other Chicano teachers there, Chicano professors. But we have a lot of them now; well not a lot, but we have more than we did then. Which is still not enough. Which is still not enough, but hopefully we can better that situation. What kind of impact did your involvement have on your family? I think it had a good impact. I think that my becoming involved actively in all the activities that I had my family, they certainly didn't suffer because I didn't lose my job, I didn't. . . but I was involved and they became aware a lot of the problems that they might not have become aware of. They didn't mind my involvement and if they had minded maybe I would not have been as involved as I was, but I spent a lot of weekends away from home. But that's the price we had to pay. And there was no big impact on any . . . So would you say that your wife and children were supportive? Very

supportive, very supportive. How has this affected them? They don't let anybody step on their toes. They're very vocal when they think something is being done to them that shouldn't be so if they see something that they think is wrong, they'll speak up. They're not shy about voicing their opinions on anything. Do you feel this is a positive? I think so. I think this helps them. Of course, it's like I always tell them racism is, it's something that you can fight only if you're not a racist yourself. If you're a racist, then you got no call to complain if someone is against the Chicano if you're a racist yourself. What impact has this had on your extended family? I think my extended family got bigger. In terms of what? I gained a lot of friends that I consider very close friends that I might not have met had I not become involved actively. I know people throughout the state of California that I can call on any time I need any help of any kind. I gained a lot of good friends. I didn't lose any friends. On my job, maybe I might of . . . it might of had an impact on my job in that if I hadn't been as active as I was, I might be a little higher up the management ladder if I hadn't been as involved as I was. But again, that's the price you pay. That you feel was due to your involvement in Chicano . . . , not due to your abilities? That's right. Because it wasn't my involvement in . . . There's a lot of management people that saw me as being too much of an activist and as a consequence you pay the price. That's injustice, wouldn't you say? That's an injustice but like I said, you got to learn the system. And I did learn quite a bit by activism. I learned quite a bit about

the political system, the educational systems. With that in mind, could you list five people who were instrumentally involved in the activities of this period? Five people that were involved? Sure. And who were they? Let's see. George Castro, Jose Carrasco, Humberto Garza, Jack Brito, Rudy Coronado, Ernestina Garcia, Pat Vasquez, Bob Gonzales from Sunnyvale Senior or Junior? Senior. Fernando Zazueta, Ed Ramirez, Sr., Ed Ramirez, Jr., Manuel Ramirez, Delia Alvarez, Donisio Macedo, Jack Brito, how many more do you want? Sophie Mendoza, Ramiro Perez, those the ones that come to mind immediately, but there's probably a few more that . . . Ramon Martinez, Pat Alderete, Rudy Cordova, Lou Carranza, Mauro Chavez, Isador Carrasco, Rudy Madrid, Sonny Madrid, Roger Flores, Irene Madrid, este I could go on. Where do you feel the Chicano movement is today? Well I'm not really sure I know how to answer that question. I think maybe Or is there a movement? I was going to say, maybe there isn't one, not as we knew it in the 60's. Can you explain that a little more please? If I remember correctly, anything, anytime that any issue came up that was concerning Chicanos, it would take us a couple of hours to get people aware of the issue and have them ready to become involved in the resolution of the issue whether it was by going to a City Council meeting, or going to a school board meeting, or going to any kind of community meeting where this kind of issue would be discussed. But I haven't seen anything like that lately. Maybe it's because there's a different kind of activism going on, the activism is not as vocal as it used to be, and it's done on a more diplomatic basis. I

don't know. I haven't been actively involved in anything for a number of years. I can't answer that question. Although I try to keep up with what's going on, I'm not always up on the latest.

What do you feel led to that cohesion back in the 60's? The cohesion was brought about because of the fact that the injustices which were being perpetuated were blatant. They didn't try to hide the discrimination that was going on against the Chicanos. And maybe the powers that be have learned and have become more subtle in their injustices, but I don't know. That's what I would think that we had a lot more people, I think, involved in planning out what the injustices were and bringing the issues out into the open. Maybe that's what it was. In the past, if Jimmy the Greek had said what he said nobody would have thought anything about it because that's blatant. He blatantly came out and said what he said. Jimmy the Greek, the sportscaster? Yes. But now he said it, so he's fired. Well, how many people think like he does but don't say it. That guy from the Dodgers, Campaneris, when he said about Blacks not being able to be administrators. How many people think that and don't come out and say it? That's where I see . . . if he'd said that . . . now he got fired, but a long time ago You think they would have praised him for it? No, they wouldn't have praised him, but what it would've taken, it would have taken big outbreaks of protests from the Black community for them to do anything about it. If there was a Chicano movement today as in the past, what direction would you like to see it go? Upward. What do you mean by upward? Well, that's a tough question. What direction would I

like for it to go? I would like to see more unity, I think that's the word I want to use, amongst the Chicanos. By that I mean that I would like for us to present a united front in any issue that would come to the floor. The majority population likes to divide and conquer, and that's The first rule of warfare. That's what they'll do. They will look for, in many cases they have found Chicanos that will go public and say things against other Chicanos. And I should think what I would like to see is more of a family atmosphere. If I have a disagreement with you, let's not go public. Let's me and you talk about it and resolve that rather than going public with the newspapers. Meaning dirty laundry. Yes. That we had a lot of that, but I would like, that's what I think would be a step in the right direction so that I would like the Mejicanos from Mexico become more involved in the issues that affect the entire Chicano community, because they're, whether they like it or not, they're here and involved and it's their problem too. Too many times the Mejicanos from Mexico are reluctant; I don't know why, but they're reluctant to get involved in the issues affecting the Chicano. For some reason they seem to think that they're going to make the gavacho mad and what do I care if the gavacho gets mad, if he's doing an injustice? I don't care. Of course, I'm speaking from being an American, they can't send me back to Mexico. But see a lot of Mejicanos tend to think that if they do that, they're going to get sent back to Mexico. But then again, that would be a step in the right direction--to get the Mejicanos involved. Do you feel if by chance or design an issue arose that

you would become as active as in the past today? I might become active, but not as much as I was in the past, only because I think that it's time for younger people to take over and start doing the things that have to be done. I'm close to 60 years old and I don't have the energy that I used to have. Don't you feel you would be needed in terms of your knowledge, expertise, and leadership abilities? I might be able to do that, but the thing is if I become involved actively as I was in the past, then I might be taking away an opportunity for a younger person to be able to take on a leadership position. I have the experience of . I've been involved actively and I know a lot of things, and I have a lot of experience. But I could lend my expertise to whoever was in a position of leadership. I could be an advisor and I could become involved in that . . . But I wouldn't, for example, I wouldn't become chairman of a committee or an organization only because like I said I think it's time for the younger people to learn how to be chairman and how to run meetings and how to take activist positions. What do you feel it would take to start the movement again today? I guess from what I've seen, it would take an issue which all Chicanos would view as something that needed to be resolved and could be resolved only by people getting actively involved in that situation. For example, an issue? For example, if they were to, if San Jose Unified were to start cutting funding from schools on the east side and giving that money to schools in the Almaden Valley or the west side, then that kind of situation I think would arouse the people to become more actively involved. Hopefully that

would be an issue that could get them involved. Like I said previously, I think we're all fat, dumb, and happy. We're not hurting economically, a lot of us are not hurting economically, so we just sit at home and watch TV. That's too bad. Do you feel this was a part of the undoing of the movement? I think so. I think people . . . Well, number one, they got tired. A lot of the older activists got tired. They figured well maybe we've done enough, maybe they thought the problems were solved. The problems aren't solved by any means. But they figured somebody else is gonna have to do it because . . . Burnout, I think, may be the word. Burned out. Fortunately we still have some people that are not . . . that have carried on the activism, but not like the activism we had in those days, where we . . . and picket and yell and scream . . . at City Council meetings and . . . the way it's being done is a lot more subtle, a lot more "unsophisticated." In terms of what? In terms of instead of going to confront the power structure, you do it subtly, you write a letter and you say this kind of thing. That's what's been happening. Although there may be other times when that's not happening, they'll go to a meeting and voice, but not like it was before. I don't know that we'll ever get back to that. So you don't feel it will ever come about again? I don't know. I'm saying that unless somebody. . . Unless it's really an important issue. Yes. Is there anything you'd like to say about yourself and/or the Chicano movement, past or present? Like what? Anything, final thoughts, words, comments, opinions, attitudes, beliefs, morals, values. I don't think I have anything to add to

what I've already told you. I might have missed a couple of things. I don't know whether I told you I was teaching at City College for a couple of semesters. Jose Carrasco was my sponsor and he was sitting in on my classes, sometimes come in and take notes on how I was doing. The funny thing was during one of those time, during that time I was evaluated by somebody at City College, one of the administrators came in and sat in and the only thing he had to say was that I had an accent. He didn't say anything about how I was teaching, I was getting the material across, that was his own thing. I had an accent and I should work on my accent. I don't think I had an accent, number one. So that was . . . So I confronted that guy along with I don't remember who else it was that was with me and they had to strike that from the record because that had nothing to do with my teaching ability. Jose Carrasco was the guy that was my mentor when I was that time at City when I was doing. . . They had this program at State where you could go teach at City College without having your Masters, as long as you working on a Master's degree at State. So that was a pretty good experience, teaching at City College. I liked that. That's a lot of fun to teach. I don't know whether I've told you about the project that George Castro and I along with another guy, he's a physicist at Lockheed, name of Bob Garcia. It was a project called Special Education for the Educationally Deprived which was designed to teach students in ghetto schools mathematics. The theory being that children, regardless of their background, could grasp abstract mathematical concepts. And we had pretty good project going there but like

everything else, nobody ever followed up to see what happened to the students or anything like that. We had students that were doing very abstract mathematical concepts, set theory, order (?), linear equations, quadratic equations, solutions of linear equations, system (?) linear equations, exponents (?), order pairs (?), order triples (?), and like I said, I don't know what ever happened to . . . But it was a pretty good project.