

N^{Insider} NARRATIVES



Presented by the U.S. Latino & Latina WWII Oral History Project • Issue No. 3, Summer 2005

This issue of the newsletter sponsored by Frank Danna, DDS, Castroville, Texas

Benson or Bust!

Mark your calendars for Friday evening, Nov. 11, when the U.S. Latino & Latina WWII Oral History Project holds a short reception to mark the beginning of the migration of materials to the Nettie Lee Benson Latin American Collection where it will be available to the general public. The event will feature the display of actual files to be transferred, some excerpts from videotapes and an explanation of how the materials have been prepared.

The Center for American History will also be receiving recordings of the interviews, but the files and entire archive will be housed at the Benson.

The transfer has been planned since 1999 and has been the topic of discussion between the Benson, the Project and the UT General Libraries. Two people involved in the discussion have been David Gracy, a member of our advisory committee who is an internationally renowned archivist, and Christian Kelleher, the Benson archivist, who has guided the Project staff so that the archives will be available as soon as possible after the transfer. David and Christian have ensured that the Project is consistent with the best archival practices—and that includes what material is available to the public.

Other key people involved in the planning are:

- Representing the Benson: Pamela Mann, Mexican American & Latino Studies Librarian in charge of the Benson Collection; Margo Gutierrez, Assistant Head Librarian in charge of Reference and Circulation Services and Library Instruction
- Representing the General Libraries: Rue Ramirez, Library Web Services Coordinator and UTOPIA Team Leader for

the General Libraries; Aaron Choate, Systems Analyst for the General Libraries

- Representing the Center for American History: Alison Beck, Professional Librarian of the Center for American History
- Representing the Project: Maggie Rivas-Rodriguez, Project Director; Yazmin Lazcano, Project Manager

But before the materials are transferred, they will be finished at the Project offices, across campus. As of this date, over half of the 500-odd interviews have been indexed, and only a small portion have been transcribed. The Project is continuing to raise funds for the transcribing, which is labor intensive and requires some training.

Materials to be available at the Benson include:

1. The unedited videotaped interview (by that time, it is hoped that they will be on DVD).
2. An edited transcript of the interview (around 20 pages for a 2-hour interview).
3. An index of the interview (on a 7-page form specially prepared for the Project).
4. Correspondence between the Interview Subject, or Tribute Provider, and the Project.
5. Only when approved—and completed—by the interview subject, the 47-page pre-interview form that includes details of his/her life, their parents, their siblings and their children.
6. The newspaper story written about the subject.
7. Any discharge papers, newspaper clippings, letters, etc., provided by the Interview Subject or Tribute Provider.

The entire transfer of materials will be completed depending on funding for transcribing, digitizing and other preparation.



Image courtesy of the Benson Latin American Collection

For more information please contact our office at (512) 471-1924
or at latinoarchives@www.utexas.edu

★Featured Interviews

For more project interviews, visit our website at www.utexas.edu/projects/latinoarchives

We hope you enjoy the following featured interviews, which include stories of a rifleman going on to finish law school, a miner's daughter's tradition of blessing the mine workers, Braceros working for a better life, a machine gunner retiring as a Lockheed Martin engineer and a Major General's undying love for his country. Full-length stories accompanied by pictures are available on our website. The Project has many stories left to share, so make sure to check back with *Narratives Insider* for more stories in the fall issue.

Juana Sierra

Date of Birth: May 6, 1925

Birthplace: Fierro, New Mexico

Almost 100 years after her parents immigrated from Zacatecas, Juana Maria Mani Moreno Sierra considers her Mexican heritage a gift.

"God gave me my mom and my dad and their Spanish. It is so beautiful to talk real Spanish," she said.

Mrs. Sierra recalls a childhood home full of traditional Mexican food, music and religion.

Growing up in Fierro, a New Mexican mining town, all of Mrs. Sierra's male relatives worked in the mines. It was her tradition to bless them before work. She recalled the unfair treatment of Latino workers and remembers participating in the strike against the Empire Zinc mining company. The strike would later become the inspiration for the film "Salt of the Earth."

Mrs. Sierra married a miner and had two sons. She lives in Hanover, close to her childhood home.

Belisario Flores

Date of Birth: July 22, 1926

Birthplace: Eagle Pass, Texas

Belisario "Bel" Flores had recalled a passion for military service since he was a teenager, enlisting in the Army after finishing high school in Eagle Pass, Texas. He worked diligently during his career, eventually earning the rank of Brigadier General in 1974 and then honorary rank of Major General upon his retirement from military service in 1986.

General Flores was on active duty during World War II but did not see overseas combat until the Korean War when he fought in Korea for nine months. Between the two conflicts, General Flores earned his degree in business administration.

On and off the battlefield, General Flores said the armed forces taught him an array of valuable lessons, including an unwavering commitment to his homeland.

"Last but not least, [the armed forces] taught me patriotism," General Flores said, "my undying love for my flag and my country."

Below: Juana Moreno, Ignacio Moreno and Elvira Moreno, 1947, Fierro, NM





Abner Carrasco

Date of birth: February 1, 1921

Birthplace: San Pedro, California

After working a host of odd jobs to help support his family, Abner Carrasco joined the National Guard in 1938 at age 17. He trained as a machine gunner at Camp Bowie in Fort Worth, Texas. He left for the war in 1943 and was initially stationed in Morocco.

His first experience in combat came at the Battle of Salerno in Italy. Mr. Carrasco recalled the difficulties of the rugged Italian terrain and the experienced German army.

While fighting in Italy, Mr. Carrasco was wounded and was sent to North Africa to recover. He returned to combat two months later only to be wounded again in the intense fighting. He was then honorably discharged for disability.

After the war, Mr. Carrasco used the G.I. Bill to further his education, eventually becoming a quality control engineer for Lockheed Martin.

He is now retired and focuses on spending time with his family.



Tribute

Marcelino Ramirez Bautista

Date of birth: June 2, 1906

Birthplace: Zacatecas, Mexico

In 1916 Marcelino Ramirez Bautista's father took Marcelino with him when he decided to travel to New Mexico to work. When he lost his job, he and his son moved back to Mexico where young Marcelino later met and married Anastacia Nuñez Robles in 1930.

During World War II, Mr. Bautista was hired for the WWII Bracero Program and worked for the railroad in places such as Ohio, Missouri and Kansas. Being apart from his family was difficult, but he visited them as often as he could.

After the war, braceros were sent back to Mexico. Mr. Bautista wanted to give his family the opportunity for a better life, so he emigrated to the U.S. and worked for the Sully Miller Construction Company. His dream of moving his family was realized before he died in California in 1989.

This article is based on information provided by his family.



Thomas A. Casso

Date of Birth: August 3, 1924

Birthplace: Chicago, Illinois

Thomas Casso was born in Chicago on August 3, 1924 and was raised in El Paso, Texas. He volunteered for the Army out of a sense of patriotism. He trained as a rifleman at Fort Ord, California after boot camp and was sent to Fiji—the beginning of an extensive Pacific tour that lasted two and a half years. He faced hardship with bouts of malaria and jungle rot as well as emotional battles he still fights today.

Mr. Casso used the G.I. Bill to get a bachelor's, a master's and a law degree. His military experience also led him to become politically active in his post-war years in California.

In 1948 he married Lillian Palafox, and they had two children. He retired in 1990 as a teacher and administrator of public schools in California. Despite lingering nightmares of his service during World War II, Mr. Casso is glad he served.

"I wanted this country to be an example for all the rest of the world."

PREPARING INTERVIEWEE STORIES FOR PUBLICATION

Countdown until *A Legacy Greater Than Words: Stories of U.S. Latinos and Latinas of the World War II Generation*

A *Legacy Greater Than Words* will be the culmination of six years of work and close to 500 interviews. The majority of these interviews have already been published in one of eight Narratives newspapers. However, we want to ensure that all information is accurate and the stories hold true to the spirit of each person's life. We will need help from all our interviewees and their families in this process. Below is the procedure we are following in anticipation of publication in spring 2006.

Updating our Records

Currently, we are going through each interviewee's file to ensure that we have gathered as much available information as possible. Over the course of the next few months, subjects will be mailed a packet to fill in gaps in the documentation. We will need from each person: a Pre-Interview form, contact information, a summary of military service where applicable, at least one photo with a correct caption and a permission form granting the Project use of the story for this and other publications and uses.

Editing Stories

Also included in the mailed packets are the stories written from each person's interview. They have been edited for grammar and completeness and checked for historical accuracy by our military fact-checkers. We then ask our interviewees to correct all mistakes that may have occurred during the writing process. Those corrections will be part of the subject's permanent file.

Publishing the Results

When the stories are returned to us, with all corrections accounted for, they will be edited to fit the format of the new book. Each profile featured in *A Legacy Greater Than Words* will include a summary of the subject's story, a headshot and facts about the interview itself.

★ **Information on pre-ordering a copy of *A Legacy Greater Than Words* can be found on the back page of this newsletter.**



Juliana Torres updates records in preparation for *A Legacy Greater Than Words* to be published spring 2006.
(Photo by Yazmin Lazcano, Summer 2005)

THE U.S. LATINO & LATINA WWII ORAL HISTORY PROJECT GROUP

A Legacy Greater Than Words



Stories of U.S. Latinos & Latinas
of the World War II Generation

MAGGIE JULIANA MELISSA LINDSAY
RIVAS-RODRIGUEZ TORRES DIPIERO-D'SA FITZPATRICK

The book cover of *A Legacy Greater Than Words*

★ Volunteer Spotlight

Project website: www.utexas.edu/projects/latinoarchives

IN OUR NEXT ISSUE:

- ★ Steps to transcribing for the U.S. Latino & Latina WWII Oral History Project
- ★ Volunteer spotlight on San Diego mover and shaker, Gus Chaves

Vincent Lozano [Data Communication Specialist]

Birth date: March 1, 1965

Birth place: Minot, North Dakota

Residence: Austin

Occupation: Systems Administrator, UT Undergraduate Writing Center

How did you first hear about the Project?
Radio story? Newspaper story? [It] has gotten fuzzy, but some third party media story excited me when I heard it and moved me to write Maggie an e-mail out of the blue.

Why are you interested in the Project?

The Project seemed like a cool combination of online archiving, tech skills and Latino outreach—all things I had become interested in during Library School. And it was!

Why do you continue to help out; what do you get out of it?

These Latino vets' stories are compelling, and they deserve to be more visible as part of the history of this country. If wartime service is one of the traditional ways that the U.S. allows ethnic groups to be considered full citizens, it is important that all of these stories keep getting spotlighted. Maggie and her staff have done a wonderful, persistent job of collecting these stories, sometimes against considerable staffing and funding odds. I want to support their persistence. And to feel in some small way that I am helping out with the technical translation that will make publishing these stories easier.

Please explain the database work you've been doing for the Project and what it can be used for?

I simply created an office database that catalogues the photographs [and other information] the Project has collected over the last five years. Whenever you catalogue, you also end up thinking through what kinds of information you want to preserve [and] organize and for whom (what audience). I hope that this kind of foundational organizing can help the Project as it grows into a larger database that researchers, authors and journalists can draw on.



Photo courtesy of
Vincent Lozano

EDUCATIONAL INITIATIVE

The newest component of our Project, our educational initiative, will begin in the Austin Independent School District this fall. A local television station, KVUE, an ABC-affiliate owned by the Dallas-based Belo Corp., is sponsoring distribution of materials to Austin public school fifth graders in honor of Hispanic Heritage Month. Teachers will receive educator guides which contain a plethora of activities, using stories of Hispanic Americans of the WWII generation as the focal point. The stories, as well as copies of archival photos and personal documents, are taken from the Project archives. With the assistance and support of local community members, we hope to expand this project from Austin to the state and national levels.

Getting Involved

We have convened a Community Advisory Council which is helping us refine these materials and helping us to increase awareness about our mission to have the experiences of WWII generation Hispanic Americans incorporated into school curricula. If you and/or someone you know would like to assist us in this effort, please contact Yazmin Lazcano, Associate Director/Education at yazmin@mail.utexas.edu or (512) 791-9808.

A special thank you to our advisors:

Mrs. Emma Barrientos, Mr. Joe Bernal, Mr. Ramon Galindo, Mr. and Mrs. Virgilio Roel and Dr. Rosemary Morrow (Social Studies Director, AISD).

RECENT INTERVIEWS

Tribute	Tafoya, Elena	Guerra, Henry	Pina, Josa
Refugio, Miguel	Wood, William	Guerra, Juventino	Quintana, Bernanda
Vasquez		Hernandez, Joe	Rede, Alberto
	Puerto Rico	Juarez, Rafaela	Rodriguez, Anastacio
California	Amoros Santiago, Joaquin	Long, Teresa	Salazar, Epifanio Jr.
Jaime, Carlos		Lozano	Salas, Hermie
Reyes, Adolfo		Matta, Alfonso	Sandoval, Noe
	Texas	Navarro, Wilfred	Soto, Felix Sr.
New Mexico	Aleman, Moses	Ortiz, Elena	Shank, Alice
Aguilera, Josephine	Baladez, Delfina N.	Ortiz, Richard	Torres, Maria
Holguin, Arturo	Fuentes, Leonard	Pena, Carlos	Torres, Rafael Q.
Millan, Alberto	Guerra, Elena	Perez, Pedro	Vasquez, Wilhelmina

RECENT CONTRIBUTORS

Arangua, Fernando	Jasso, Mary Ynman
& Jenny	& daughters
Danna, Frank, DDS	Lopez, Diego
Donoho, Grace	& Lisa
Echeveste, Samuel	Munoz, Cynthia
Flores, Belisario	Muniz, Joe
Franco, John	Ramos, Sulema
Graves, LTC. Luke	Reyes, Juan
Idar, Maria Meza	Rivas, Robert
Jasso, Albert & Lydia	Rodriguez, Gilbert
Jasso, Eddie	Torres, Hector A.
Jasso, Frank & Cecilia	Van Epen, Karen

Insider NARRATIVES

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free copy of the premiere issue of *Narratives Insider*.)

I have enclosed a donation of \$10 cash, a money order, or a check
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as part of the University.)

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loved ones. I have enclosed \$40 for each index. (We will send you a
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PRE-ORDER A Legacy Greater Than Words

Since 1999, the U.S. Latino & Latina WWII Oral History Project at the University of Texas at Austin has captured the untold stories of this WWII generation. Altogether, the project videotaped more than 500 interviews throughout the country and in Puerto Rico and Mexico. This volume features summaries of the interviews and thumbnail photographs of the individuals. The stories featured in *A Legacy Greater Than Words* chronicle the lives of Latinos in the 1930s and 1940s—stories that generally have been omitted from historical accounts of either World War II or the Great Depression. Distributed by the University of Texas Press.

A Legacy Greater Than Words



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