Pacheco, Raymond Oral History Interview: Members of the Hispanic Community

Joseph O'Grady

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.hope.edu/hisp_comm

Part of the Archival Science Commons, and the Oral History Commons

Recommended Citation

http://digitalcommons.hope.edu/hisp_comm/7

Published in: 1990 - Members of the Hispanic Community (H88-0234) - Hope College Living Heritage Oral History Project, January 1, 1990. Copyright © 1990 Hope College, Holland, MI.

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Oral History Interviews at Digital Commons @ Hope College. It has been accepted for inclusion in Members of the Hispanic Community by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ Hope College. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@hope.edu.
JO: When did you first arrive in Holland?

RP: In October, '72.

JO: Where was your first place of residence within the city?

RP: Tenth Street within the city.

JO: Tenth Street in Holland--a neighborhood was already established here?

RP: I lived in an apartment, an upstairs apartment.

JO: North of Hope College? South of Hope College?

RP: It was west, West 10th.

JO: What was the condition of your neighborhood? Was it in a fairly good condition?

RP: Well, it was the second ward. I would say it wasn't a historic area. A couple of the houses were historic. It wasn't a well-to do place, it was a place that was well worn.

JO: Were your neighbors Hispanic, or Anglo, or mixed?

RP: The majority were Hispanic.

JO: Where do you originally come from?

RP: I was born and raised in Austin, Texas.

JO: Did you live there most of your life before you arrived in Holland?

RP: Yes. I lived in Austin most of my life up until I joined the military service, came out of the service and my folks, while I was in the service, had moved to Holland, Michigan. That's how I wound up over here.

JO: So Austin is basically an urban area?

RP: Right, in fact I was raised on the east side barreo.
JO: How many people came with you from Austin?

RP: I came by myself, following my service time. Part of that, I guess my family had moved up here. My family had actually moved up here in '66 and they brought the whole family with them. I think there was about six of them that came up then. I came later on after I came out of the service.

JO: So it was your mom and dad, and how many sisters and brothers did you have?

RP: Well, I have a total two brothers and six sisters.

JO: What were the conditions in Austin that made your family move up here? Was there an economic slow down of any sort or did you just want to get out of the city?

RP: I think what happened was my father had a restaurant, tried to make a go of it, it didn't pan out completely. They had sold their original home and began a second home, so they sold everything and moved up here. Initially, for financial reasons, they started working, my father came first along with George ______. They first came out and started working at Heinz. When they had enough money, they sent for the rest of the family. So their family and all of my father's family came up and started making plans and started living. They had other friends after that they helped settle in, too.

JO: What was your first job within the city?

RP: I worked for the Baker Furniture Company. I worked in the upholstery department and then later on I worked in the mill room. I worked in both areas.

JO: Where are you employed now and what position do you hold?

RP: Up until about two years ago, I was employed for the previous 11 years, well, people
refer to it as the unemployment office, but it's actually Michigan Employment Security Commission, or the MESC. I worked in the job service part of it. I worked as a _______ specialist. I worked there for a total of 11 years now between that one in Grand Rapids and Wyoming. Most of my time was spent in Holland _______. I retired after 11 years primarily because of some medical conditions that I had and it was more advantageous to retire and retain benefits then it was to try to hang on and leave of absence without pay after awhile.

JO: In that position did you basically work with Hispanics or with all different minorities?

RP: I worked with veterans primarily, but it didn't prevent me from working with Hispanics as well. Ideally the way the job ________, I worked with veterans only. However, in Holland, as in other areas, but primarily in Holland, we worked with whoever came in. The majority of the people that I worked with were veterans and Hispanic people. The Hispanics primarily because they found a common ground there normally and so it made it easier to communicate. We were able to communicate. A lot of times they would seek someone who would speak Spanish and English. They were more comfortable.

JO: So you were sort of a liaison for the Hispanic community in your position, so to speak?

RP: Right, by virtue of where I was, it just seemed accommodating to speak with someone who speaks Spanish or who was Hispanic.

JO: Did you attend any school in Holland?

RP: Not in Holland, no. Most of my education was in Texas and over at Grand Valley.
JO: But all of your daughters have attended the Holland school system?
RP: Right.

JO: What are your impressions of the school system through your daughters' experience?
RP: Well, I'm going to speak from West Ottawa Middle School, West Ottawa High School, and West Ottawa School District, because that's where my girls went or are going right now. It has come a long way, I suppose, but it has a long way to go yet. I felt this way before I guess. I always felt that there are opportunities there, but sometimes those opportunities you have to work really hard to get them. They're not just handed to you all of the time. We've had to push on certain things to make sure that our kids got the same opportunities. Sometimes you win and sometimes you don't, but I felt that, and my wife had felt too, although there is opportunity there, and everybody says that everybody has the same opportunity, that hasn't always been the case. The opportunity is there, but you'll not get that chance to get that opportunity. So we've had to sometime make sure they got that opportunity by being a little more assertive in our approach. So I guess what I am saying is, whether intentional or not, there has been some bias-nebs involved.

JO: How does that bias come through within the West Ottawa school system? Can you name an incident where you had problems with the school system?
RP: A more recent one that I can think of is where my oldest daughter, Valerie, in middle school, who was having a difficult time trying to get into what they call a mentorship program, it's in partnership with Hope College. What they do, they had a mentor from Hope College who worked with a student from West Ottawa. We were having a
difficult time getting involved with that. We applied for it and all of the right things. This was in middle school. We did all of the right things and waited for something to happen. Nothing did happen so we got a letter of denial from the person coordinating that. So we were inquiring as to why and I guess when we asked about it they had assumed that Valerie really wasn’t up to par, that her grades weren’t what they should be, and this really would be a program for, I guess the word they used _______. What happened was we challenged that with the principal of West Ottawa Middle School. When we met with the principal we stated our position. What we did was we wrote a letter not just to him but to the state Board of Ed and a couple of other officials to get some attention because we had tried to communicate with the person in charge of this and we couldn’t get to him, just as we had tried to communicate with the principal. So there’s a reason why we went that route. It did get their attention finally but they kind of hollered about it about why we had gone that route. It did get the attention and we did get a chance to talk to the principal. We took our information and a copy of the records of my daughter. It turns out her grades, hard to believe at the time, her lowest grade was a B. So there really wasn’t any real reason as far as having poor grades. That was a poor excuse, we felt. We argued that point. We argued back and forth until we managed the following term to get her involved in the mentorship program. She did real well. In fact she did a lot of creative stuff involved in that area. The way everything was done, you kind of have to push. Doors just don’t open sometimes. Sometimes if you know the right people or do the right thing, the doors open. But we didn’t always have that. We had to
make the doors open sometimes. Once the doors open it kind of surprises that someone could do that good. A lot of us can, if we are given the opportunity. We were successful in doing that. Last year on the other hand, my other daughter, the second oldest, went to try for the volleyball team. She didn't make the team. That's one thing I guess. The thing that hurt us was that she didn't make it, not because of her ability but because the coach felt that she liked these other two better. We kind of argued that point. We didn't win on that one, but we just felt that her reasoning was wrong, and it just wasn't giving a fairness to anyone trying out, particularly her because we hadn't seen her scores, and she scored way above at least two more that I know of that made the team. That was interesting how they do that. The bottom line to me, and to the kids too, there's this truth and fairness, and in reality sometimes fairness has nothing to do with reality. It was one of those cases.

JO: Did your daughters ever need any bilingual education at all?

RP: No. When I was a kid I we couldn't speak Spanish in school __________ physically. Any one of my kids would do the same kind of a treatment that I would do so purposely I taught them to speak English when they were young, to communicate English, so that their thinking process would be in English. So that's the reason why. In retrospect, I kind of regret that now because I see that as by not retaining a language you become what they call culturally deprived. I think what it is now, it's an asset to be bilingual. At the time it wasn't. Now, if I had the chance to do it again, I would want them to speak Spanish along with English, playing catch up along the way, to retain the culture and retain the language. My oldest daughter took
it upon herself to learn Spanish. She's taking a real active interest in that area. My second oldest is just coming around to that point. So their awareness is getting there, not where it could have been, but it's getting there. They've taken that step to get more aware of who they are.

JO: How much English did you know? You were quite fluent when you arrived in Holland in English. But your native language, the first language you learned was Spanish?

RP: That's right. In fact, when I went to school in Austin, I didn't go to kindergarten, but I went to first grade. I couldn't communicate. Everything was in Spanish, I couldn't speak a word of English.

JO: What were your first impressions of the city of Holland when you arrived?

RP: Very conservative, very interesting. A lot of churches. [laughter] It was strange. I felt like I was being looked at a lot of time. I can recall one time I was driving down the street, and I was getting followed quite a bit. At one point at the time, I think my wife was with me we were driving, we just stopped at a stop sign, I got out of the car, and I went to the police car behind me and asked the police officer what he wanted because he had been tailing me for so long. He said, "Nothing, sir." I said, "Well, in that case, I would appreciate it if you just kind of go your way so I can go my way." He didn't ________ quit bothering me. I just had to do something because after awhile I got tired of being followed around.

JO: Can you remember any other major problems that you've encountered within Holland?

RP: Not so much in Holland. I know in Zeeland we had a problem between Holland area.
We had a difficult time trying to get an apartment there. We were denied an apartment because of who we were, so my wife called and she was approved. When they found out that we were Hispanic and they would somehow not have it available. We called the Department of Civil Rights and they called and posed as someone else and they got the apartment. Then we had a lawsuit going but we decided not to go along with it. At the time, we didn't want to do anything alone in this kind of, well, we got their apartment and no big deal, but the thing about it is that was my thinking then I guess, and I think now _______ let those things happen too often people feel like there's nothing wrong, and we feel like we don't want to raise any waves, so everything goes on as usual and nothing really changes. Some of us has to become a squeaky wheel so to speak I guess. You want to take that gamble.

JO: Were you ever confronted physically by a Holland resident in any such manner? Did they ever try to physically intimidate you?

RP: Not really. I'm not sure why exactly except for the fact that, because I know people that have, sometimes I think it's me. Sometimes I look meaner than I want to look. It's just my nature. So maybe that's why I wasn't intimidated, I don't know. But I really haven't been openly intimidated in that way.

JO: Your daughter was intimidated once?

RP: She got kicked.

UNK: One time she got kicked at the school and they told her that she couldn't play because she had brown skin.

JO: Could you restate that into the microphone?
RP: Well, she was intimidated because of the color of her skin and she was excluded from activity because of that, her peers. She was assaulted and kicked physically one time. Valerie, we raised her not to hit back. Unfortunately at that time we had always told her not to hit back and whatever, but we forgot to tell her unless it's self defense. So she didn't do anything back. My other daughter, my next younger one, wasn't taught much about that. What she did when she saw that she grabbed that boy and dragged him to the principal's office. My oldest daughter, Valerie, is a little darker. I know she feels awful when she goes places. Somebody doesn't always tell you that you don't belong. It's just a subtle feeling. You just sense that there's nobody close to you. Or have it reversed. Everybody goes ________ to you and makes you feel overwhelmed. It's not a casual thing. Either way you're going to be singled out. The term itself, "you people." Whenever they use the word "you people" it's always the other, the separation of ________. We're no longer "we," it's "you." I would listen to that and always look for key words, and one of the key words is "you people have always done this..." Whenever they refer to us as "you" I know that person has some subtlety in there. They're not blatant and a lot of times they're not even aware of it. That's the thing about it. A lot of them don't even know where, what they're doing. And then we talk about strides that are made, about educational strides, any kind of stride we have. It's true, we have made a lot of good strides, positive strides, but it's all ________ heels, of the pressure behind them. Yes, there is this going on, and we didn't have this program before. We're glad. We're happy for it. But it wouldn't have been there if the pressure wasn't there. It would have been nice if
somebody else had led the initiative and said "Let's do this." Then they can say, "Yes, there is, we're all together on this. There is some common ground here." It's not that way. I think you can look at that statistical stuff that you see, especially in _______ practices, the recent statistics in that area, tells you what the truth really is. The thing about it is that little things really do happen, but it's hard for us to accept that it's happening. It's a Christian community. A Christian community is not supposed to be that way. A lot of us don't feel that way along as we help the other person reach down to someone, then that's okay. When we try to be equal; a different ball game. Things kind of get compared like that. You've seen the two circles compared to each other. We belong to this circle and this circle and here we are in the world in the whole. Here's the Anglo world and the Hispanic world and what happens is that we're okay, and what happens is we go toward the Anglo world more and more, or the white world, whatever you want to call it, as you get closer you always get to the edge. But you don't get in very often, unless you assimilate and even then you only get to the edge. It's very rare that you go into the circle unless you're wanted in the circle. If you are wanted, and you have to concede a lot of things, it's not very often that it'll be the other way around. Then they go into the Hispanic circle. What happens is that once we go over there, lots of times there's no turning back because of what we've done. We've turned our back on our heritage. It would be nice if we could just work together as a partnership without having to surrender our culture, or surrender our language. It doesn't work that way. The big differences that I've seen between the order of the culture now. You have the
Vietnamese and the Laotian and the Hispanic culture. The big difference I've seen recently because I've seen the Laotian and Vietnamese cultures and Vietnamese people really getting ahead now. But what I've seen is that they've had to sell out a little bit and we haven't had to. That's the difference. Our country, our motherland is just down the state, just a few states down over there. We wouldn't have to surrender to them. Especially since we've had that guarantee anyway from the Treaty of Guidarlo. We really had that inherently guaranteed to us. Just by the way our thinking process is totally different. So I don't know. I guess I feel there's some stuff in there. I feel some stuff from you too. I feel like there's a lot of subtle stuff, and some blatant stuff. The blatant stuff I don't worry about. I know that a lot of it. They say it just off of the mouth or just off of the cuff, or even if they do say it mean it, it's just a real small minority that do that. It's just the subtleties that bother me, because the more subtle they are, the more ingrained they are.

JO: I just want to go back to your daughters' physical attacks, if I may. Did these attacks happen when they were younger? Did they have any problems in the middle school grades or in the high school grades?

RP: Well, I'll tell you what happened. We took them out of school then. We transferred them from the West Ottawa School District, at that time it was Lakewood School and Waukazoo School. We put them in St. Francis School. That's one of the reasons. The other reason is because they got to see that they were more than just them. Over here on this side you are going to see all of our brown faces. Over there you have a real multicultural family. So they got to see different flavors and they, at that time,
already had multicultural days, where they saw different cultures, and that the
differentness was really a positive aspect to show someone else _______. Now we
come around here to the appreciation thing, it still hasn't caught on yet. By the time
it would have gone on around here. So it just happened when they were in
elementary school. Now in middle school, was that during the mentorship program
for my oldest daughter, but also I think of middle school and the early part of high
school I think in ninth grade my oldest daughter began to see a difference. People are
different. Little by little their values like the old saying "You aren't what you were
when _________," begin to come out. What happened was that some of her
friends...the old thing about you are what you were when began to come out. I
remember she went, was having supper with one of her friends and I think someone
had broken into their barn. So everyone's at the table eating there and one of them
sitting there and go back to the barn probably those migrants down the road, you
know how they are. Anyway, Valerie felt kind of shocked and hurt by it. She looked
up and the people said, "No, no, we don't mean you, we mean them." [laughter] But
Valerie is one that doesn't sit back too easily. She sat down and though about it and
said something back to the effect, "That is me. That's a part of me. Besides, did you
see him? Do you know if it was really him or not?" They had made an assumption
based on color. Anyway, I think their relationship began to wither away a little bit,
they still talk to each other, but it's a more distant thing. I think she knows that those
things are harder changes. They communicate but they don't really hang around quite
as much as they used to. So it did have an impact on her, but she started to see some
of the things that were going on and began to accept some of those things, because before, most of her friends on the north side were not Hispanic, many Anglos. The majority of them didn’t think much of the differences, but there are the few that make that difference.

JO: Just to continue on this a little longer, have her friends changed since then? Are they mostly Hispanic now?

RP: They’ve been changing. I think it’s more of a 50-50 mix now. Before it was about 90 percent Anglo and 10 percent Hispanic. Now it’s going up to about 50-50. In fact it’s getting the other way, more towards Hispanic. Maybe because she’s really hungry to know more about it. She’s taking like an interest and really wanted to, well, I think she’s taking not just an interest in that area, but she wants to know more about the history of it too, which she’s been doing more on her own, which I appreciate. I’ve learned some things just by watching her too. I think other people will pick up something too just from that. I don’t know if you knew, but she’s a Fiesta Queen this year, so those statements she made are not my statements. They were asking did I help her and no, I couldn’t. They called her on the phone and talked to her. I didn’t know what questions they were asking her. But anyway, those were her answers. She feels strongly about those things. She does want to be a voice, have an impact and mold some lives, particularly herself and anyone else that might have an interest not to become a rival, but to be aware of who we are and that we can have a dual personality. She’s caught in the middle--she’s part Anglo and part Hispanic. We can belong to both worlds. We don’t have to sacrifice anything. We learn to appreciate
those things.

JO: Did you ever feel there was any racial tension in Holland? Was Holland ever divided by any civil rights movement? Did that Hispanic community ever try to confront the Anglo community by marching the streets demanding certain rights?

RP: I can't say that for a fact. You know who might be able to help you with that though, if anybody can, would be Joe. He's been around for years and he has announced that. That's who I think will be key in this. But I can't really say that I really, my activity, I get involved over the last five or six years real strongly in Hispanic affairs and Hispanic advocacy. I did it kind of by accident. My primary goal was, and still is, to give my kids a better quality of life than I had, and to give them the same opportunity as the guy next door. That's all, just the same opportunity. From there, they can make what they want out of it. They can either choose to fail or choose to succeed. As long as they have the opportunity. Sometimes we use what we have at our disposal, sometimes people use status to get the opportunity. Some people use money because we have money. Some people have to use laws in this case, some of the best laws. That's another way to obtain the opportunity. It's not to gain an advantage. It's just to gain the same opportunity. Most of us start, it would be nice if we all started at point zero, but we don't. We all start at, Hispanic and I think females too, and we already start not at zero, but at minus ten. First, you have to prove that you're qualified before you become eligible to qualify. That's what I found out to be true. I had the same thing when I got my job. I was the last one to get hired. I got hired in Grand Rapids. There were ten of us that were hired at one time. I knew
about it before anybody else, and I showed up before anybody else. But I kept being
pushed back, pushed back, and finally I got to the last two people and finally I talked
to the guy. I said, "You know, I knew about this. I'm qualified. I've got my
education, my experienced background. Many of these have this. Many may have
the education, but I also have the experience. But if you don't want to hire me that's
fine. But I want you to know, you haven't hired one minority yet. So it's up to you.
If it's for the money and I think you should _______ about this." Two days later I
got a phone call. It's sad that I have to do that. But I had to do that just to get in.
Once I got in, six months later they were praising me because I had so many
placements and I was opening these contracts _________ somewhere. They were
bragging. The guy ahead of me, _______. I just kept my mouth shut. I hadn't put
my six months probationary period in but I kept my mouth shut, and here he was
bragging about me, the same guy that didn't want to hire me. You know, that's the
way things work sometimes.

JO: What do you think the Hispanic community offers to Holland and what has it offered
to Holland in the past?

RP: Well, it offers diversity for one thing. I think it offers cultural enrichment. It often
tends to share something. We're alike in a lot of ways with the Dutch. In a sense we
are conservative. We hold close to our values. We're close with family, as well.
Our family ties are close. I think the Dutch community is the same way. We hold
close to our religious values. The Dutch community is the same way. We may not
be __________, although in the Netherlands it is. But over here it's more Dutch
Reformed and Christian Reformed. But we hold close to our religious beliefs. We’re committed to that. I think in that sense, we have a lot of common ground there. We have a lot of things to work with together. I think we also have a gay life. We have a way of celebrating, and I think that is good. I think people can learn from us. I don’t know if you’ve been to some of our services at church sometime. The one o’clock mass in St. Francis it can get a little lively. It’s a celebration of the mass. It’s a celebration of the worship. We’re not there to put our stiff shirts on, although you had the option. People will wear what they want to wear. But the thing of it is, it’s a celebration. So people go there for a joyous occasion to celebrate the death of Jesus because it’s the birth of us. It gives us a chance. We see it as a positive thing. We have a zest for life. That’s an asset. Our family values are really strong. I think even in this area, the majority of the Hispanics have the same values as the Christian Reformed and the other people in this area. I mean, we can talk a little bit more about the abortion area because you know, we covet the religious ties again. I think we have a language we can share too. We can partnership each other because Spanish is going to be, well, in fact right now it’s the second most spoken language in the world, second to Chinese. Chinese ______ for numbers. [laughter] We have a lot to offer there. I think the Dutch have a lot to offer us too. I think that’s because the primary, I’m ______ over here, but I think that we have a lot to offer to each other. 

JO: What organizations do you belong to within the Hispanic community and the Holland community?

RP: Well, let’s see. St. Francis, I’m __________ for the school board. I belong to the
Latin Americans United for Progress, that's an organization that's important. I think they're going from more organization than just one, which I'd never had just one organization because it becomes the spokesperson for the _______ and it should never be that way. He's like me, right now with what I'm saying. I should never be the spokesperson for all Hispanics. No one should ever come up to me and say, "What do you think?" because I'll just tell you what I think. I can't speak for everyone else. I think we've looked at LAUP that way for many years. I belong to LAUP and I think that's wrong. LAUP just happens to be one vehicle. We shouldn't just look at one vehicle, we should look at the other vehicles because we have to look at the other points of view. They do come from different Hispanics and different non-Hispanics. Anyway, I was a part of the Holland Hispanic Task Force. I don't know if you've heard about it or not. I don't know if you've interviewed anybody or not. We planned the retreat there and we had a mission to develop the task force. I also, in recent years, was a part of the committee for finding Hispanic ________. Two or three years back, we were down there ________. We did that again. Right now I'm in the middle of something else that ________ on Tuesday. We're going to meet with the County Board. We're going to have a big meeting over there for a special committee for advocacy. It's really to push for an apology from Detective ________ from Allegan County and also to promote other things for the Hispanic community. Some derogatory remarks were made by him, so we're doing all that. I also belong to ___________. ___________ is a different kind of organization, primarily a service organization. They are really different. They're more loosely
organized, but that's been one organization that's been not trying to be in the limelight all of the time, but rather a more service oriented __________. They're focused totally different. Not just for Hispanics...I don't know if you know Scott Bremer, he's that kidney transplant person. Anyway, they had functions for him to raise money for him and they've had a couple of other people that they've raised money for. They're there to serve the people primarily, and to raise money and spend the money for the people. That's where they're coming from. They've helped me quite a bit. They helped me when I got my transplant. They held functions for me. That's why I feel that organization is really for service, they're always there. And they don't question anything. If you have a need, they try to meet it. If you need clothes, they'll find a way to get some. Anyway, the final organization is more of a statewide organization, but it had an impact here because we're going to organize something here very soon now. It's called the Mission Coalition for __________ Hispanics. We're a part of that. I'm on the board of that one. It's a state organization but we also had, this year, we held our first midwest Hispanic leadership community conference with ten states. We had a union march in Lansing. There was something in the paper about that recently. I don't know if you've read it, with __________ in the Sentinel. That worked out in Lansing, but that's the other thing I'm involved with. Other than that, I belong to some veteran organizations, Vietnam Veteran Organization, which is another organization that never asks for anything but is there if you need it. I belong to Disabled Veterans and the VFW. That's about it.

JO: What would you like to see changed in the city?
RP: Well, it's a good question. I guess two things. One is a vision, a real vision, and to act on that vision to work with everyone. I would like to see more Hispanic people on the real boards. I don't mean, for example, the Human Relations Commission, or things that deal with minorities and Hispanics. I'm talking about the real ones, the planning boards, the ones that have control, appropriations. There's nothing wrong with getting involved with them. Instead they put them on token things. That's good I guess at the beginning, but they should really put them where they would put anywhere else. I can't really buy the argument that the person who qualified because I've seen the credentials of other ones who've been under that board who don't have qualifications. But what happened is that they develop the credentials as they go along. You develop people like this. The only way you can develop them is by getting involved. It's like candidates the same way, like Luciano Hernandez. He developed along the way, he's come into his own. But he got raw material, he developed his material. They haven't really given him _______ the opportunity in this area who need that opportunity. There are a lot of people here and they haven't given it to them. The exception for non-Hispanics I've seen who didn't have credentials but have come into their own simply by being at the right place at the right time or knowing the right people. This goes back to knowing the right people and having status. It helps. I don't think it's fair, but it helps. It's one of the realities I guess. The other thing is that we need to have a real cultural awareness, a real appreciation of cultural differentness to look at things in a positive light. When we look at things we don't compare them in negative terms but in positive terms. We
should look at ourselves by not being aware of, let's say Dutch customs, and we should feel culturally deprived for not being aware of that. I think the same should hold true by someone who isn't aware of the Hispanic customs. They should feel culturally deprived because this is at the very least a bicultural society. It has become very multicultural. So we need to understand that by knowing more, it enhances. It doesn't destroy, but enhances. It increases our knowledge, it helps it to cope and to plan ahead because unless we want to become like Chicago, we should start doing something now. Because Chicago has the same problem, but they chose to do nothing about it there by staying in their own group. We can appreciate the uniqueness but we can also become a family more or less. We don't have that here. We're trying to do that here. I think we have a real good mayor. Every time he speaks on something, he's always talking about multicultural, so he's got the right idea. I wish the rest of the council would pick up the same idea. We're not going to get anywhere this way. There are leaders of the community. They can lead the way. You need to make some bold statements and some bold stands, and let me take a chance. They got to be out there and take a risk. Luciano Hernandez shouldn't be seen as the Hispanic on the board, on the council, but he should be seen as a middle class member who has things to say on these plans because Hispanics in general. Specifically they're concerned with Hispanics because they're a part of the constituency right now. But, people pigeon-hole him all of the time. Well what do you think about it? I've talked to him in private and he gets tired of it too because he's not the only one there. They should have asked some of the other council members, what do you think about
this? It's like them, they should ask the Luciano once in awhile, what do you think about this plan to do this over here? But, they don't do that. They wait till Hispanics then ask about it. They shouldn't have to wait for that. This cultural awareness thing is something that we should be aware. We shouldn't be concerned just because you're pushing to see if Hispanics have any concerns. It should contain all of us. I think we're a good city. We've come a long ways and sometimes we say we have to push for things, but we have come a long way. We've got a lot farther to go yet, and I think that to avoid becoming Chicago... We are growing regardless of how you control us all you want. We're still growing because we're getting people from outside cities to come over, and we're growing out. Before you know it, it's gonna sneak up on us. It's better get a handle on it now instead of waiting for it, until it's too late.

JO: Do most Hispanics agree with your views? Or do you want to say something else?

RP: I can't say that would be in agreement. I can say some of them would agree with me. I meet a few of them now and again for coffee, for breakfast, and we share ideas. I talked to Luciano for example. I've talked to a few others, I've talked to AI before...well, just about everyone on the list and a few others. It's always good to get a fresh view of things. I wish I could say I was always right, but I'm not always right. But by the same token, neither is anyone else. But the only thing that works is trial and error and to grab a table and discuss it. Maybe I missed something look like me, or maybe they missed something?. It's always good too, to also get a devil's advocate. You have to have a kind of adversary there to throw
things at you. If you don't, we surround ourselves who think like us all of the time, we would never grow. That's one of the things we try to do every now and then. You need to try to stimulate something, and say we've been meaning to get together anyway. We try to get some diverse views on things and we see things from different perspectives that we didn't see before. That's what the City Council and the city as a whole is to not keep it closed, but get people to think a little different to see what they have to say.

JO: What do you see for the future of Holland and its Hispanic community?

RP: Well, I see Holland becoming more of a 50-50 standing. I looked at the statistics just the other day and they were alarming, but it was interesting. The statistics were saying that at the elementary school aged, a lot of them are Hispanic. The majority of them, it's becoming a larger and larger number. They're getting to a point where it's becoming closer and closer to 50-50. That's how big we're getting. For some reason we keep multiplying. What happens unfortunately is at the end of the spectrum, by the time people get to the graduating class, you've lost a lot of those already. So what you've got, you start with 100, you might wind up with 20 in the end. ______________ compared to 100% of the kids in the beginning. That's a big drop. The idea is to how to retain those now, how to hold them in school, how to keep them in school. Because they can be a work horse. If it's going to be a Hispanic, not just anybody, not just connect with everybody, keep them from dropping out. Because they're going to be supporting us when we need it. Think about it, we have people who become aware of that fact. Basically, that fact is that we're growing regardless. You
can take any rights you want from us, but it doesn't mean the English own them, which is really a violation of the Constitution, really because of the treaty we have. That's one aspect. The other one is the voting rights. You know, you have to be a U.S. citizen. Well, it hasn't always been that way. I think it was in the late '30s, early '40s, when they changed that law, you had to be a U.S. citizen. Up to that point, you had to be a permanent resident. That was about it. But everything can be changed. The citizenship thing...

(end of side A)

(start of side B)

JO: I'm going to restate the question one more time. What do you see in the future for Holland and its Hispanic community?

RP: Again, it's cultural, you really have to grow into that I guess and work on that. More Spanish are coming in, and they're going to come in regardless, they're going to keep coming. It's a multicultural world and right now Holland happens to be in the majority. The minorities happen to be Hispanic. They have to recognize that. Working together and that and it makes things a lot easier if we can work together in that area. I think the Indishony movement and even the law of being a U.S. citizen to vote are going to be detriments in the long run because Hispanics are growing regardless. Any law you want to pass, unless you pass a law that you can't have babies. Right now, the elementary children are Hispanic background and we lose sight of the number I think and they are getting bigger all the time and sooner or later they may end up being bigger than the non-Hispanic. That's something to think about
I think. The sooner we start working together to achieve some common goal to make Holland better, the better we’ll be. Together, I think we can work a lot of thing to get to the good of Holland. I think it’s hard to force someone to do it, but sometimes we have to twist arms for anybody to get in the right direction. It’s like the old saying with the mule, where you have to get attention for longer. If you want to get the attention maybe it'll be easier to do things. A lot of places are beginning to see the value of the Hispanic market. Some companies are beginning to see that now years ahead of time. They know that eventually the Hispanic market is going to be of value to them and so even when we had this conference in Lansing, we had for example, All State, who spent a lot of money and sent twenty representatives from the All State insurance company, just to go to that conference. Just so they can be a part of it, and not only that but they know that market will get bigger and bigger. They're recruiting now trying to get people ready. They're thinking ahead. There are some companies that sent representatives to attend a conference because it's a positive thing. They see it as a plug for them because they have been supporting Hispanic things. They see that as a _______ to they work for later on in future years too. They see it as a positive force for them. I think that we need to see the light. As a whole, we need to work together and we need to get diverse views, a lot of different ethnicities. We have to recognize that, the Hispanic is the largest one right now, but there will be others. There's the Oriental background, the blacks are coming around now. We are having a very multicultural city. We __________ before we become a Chicago. Chicago did good that way and we have a chance to learn from them if we want to.
JO: Thank you very much Mr. Pacheco.