Chavez, Savas Oral History Interview: Sesquicentennial of Holland, "150 Stories for 150 Years"

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Oral History Interview with
Savas Chavez

Conducted October 28, 1997
by Geoffrey Reynolds

Sesquicentennial Oral History Project
"150 Stories for 150 Years"
GR: Could you please state your name and date of birth?

SC: Savas Chavez. [date removed], 1926.

GR: Were you born in Holland, and if not, where were you born?

SC: No, I wasn't born in Holland. I was born in Big Springs, Texas, 1926.

GR: Why did you come to Holland?

SC: Well, I was talking to a friend of mine that his family moved to Holland and he was coming. I asked him...I inquired about Holland because I had been thinking about moving for the benefit of my children. I had four at the time. He told me that Holland was a nice clean town and there was a lot of work. So when my time came, I decided I would move to Holland. Of course, we had the choice of California too. But I didn't like California. I had been there during my military service.

GR: What year did you come to Holland, Michigan?

SC: 1953. It was in the month of June. We left Big Springs, Texas, on the nineteenth of June.

GR: You brought...your four children's names were?

SC: I brought Alberto Chavez, Alicia Chavez and Armida Chavez and Angel Chavez. And my wife Ramona. They were all raised here in Holland. Plus others were born here in Holland.

GR: Could you name them, please?
SC: Savas Chavez, Jr., Arturo Chavez and Carlos Chavez. Those three were born here in Holland Hospital.

GR: Describe your first impressions of Holland when you arrived.

SC: Well, first impression of Holland was beautiful city, very beautiful city, and the lakes, the channel, the big lake you know. Everything was trees. Of course, I came from West Texas. There were not too many trees in West Texas (laughs). In Holland, my first impression of it I was very impressed with the countryside and everything in it. It was beautiful!

GR: What type of work were you involved in when you first arrived?

SC: When I first arrived in Holland, we didn’t have a place to live. So we had to go and live on a...I don’t remember the name of the farmer, but it was a little shack they had for migrant workers. But I didn’t come here to be a migrant worker. I came here to make a living! So we went to those places until we got a place to live north of Holland on 136th. We rented there. And then my first employment was Holland Wire Products which was on Tenth Street and Maple at that time, and I worked there for many years. I did once go to Heinz but Heinz always laid you off. So I couldn’t afford that because I had children, and I went back to Wire Products and stayed with them for nine years.

GR: After that, what job did you take?

SC: After that, I got sick and I went to a VA hospital in Ann Arbor and they told me I had to change my job because my job was doing me wrong--a lot of smoke. So they said they would send me to school under the Disabled American Veterans. So I
attended one year in Pine Lake. The state had a school there. Veterans had a priority. So I spent one year and then I came back and I went to work for H. E. Morris Company which is now Hemco, Morris Hemco Company. I worked there twenty-three years and I retired in 1988.

GR: What are some organizations or activities you’ve been involved in while in Holland?

SC: I’m a lifetime member of the Disabled American Veterans. I was a member of the American Legion, but I dropped it because I’m retired now, you know. Does that include volunteer work that I’ve done?

GR: You can talk about those.

SC: I did volunteer work for Evergreen Commons as a bi-lingual interpreter in English. I did volunteer work by taking people to the hospital when they needed a ride. I participate in the Spanish programs with Marta Muniz, I worked for her (she recruited me to work for them), and I also participated in other activities in Evergreen Commons here in town. I think I did that for four or five years - I’m not sure of the time. Then I decided to rest for a while, and now I’m working for the El Centro, which is a pretty good organization and now I’m doing volunteer work too. They don’t pay me, same with Evergreen Commons, I never got paid - just volunteer work. That’s just about it.

GR: Since you’ve come to Holland, what have been some of the most significant changes you’ve noticed since you’re arrival?

SC: Holland has changed a lot, because the industry has grown a lot bigger in Holland and better jobs. My kids, most of them have good jobs, improvement on the...northside
of Holland is very big compared to when we used to go across the river and about a mile out there we'd hunt pheasants and there aren't any anymore (laughs). A lot of the politics speak for the good, it is still a beautiful town. I am very proud. I have lived here for 44 years and I am very proud of it, and I hope it keeps going that way. There were little things along the way that we were very unhappy about. I stayed in Holland and proved myself to the community.

GR: What do you think caused most of these changes?

SC: When we started getting a lot of people from different races. That's including Anglo-Americans too. We started communicating with each other. We always communicated with the Dutch people, beautiful people, but we started communicating with other people. We got involved. When I came, you didn't see very many Hispanics getting involved with where this city was going. Now we got (Hispanics) even in the police department and in the city council and everywhere. And that's a beautiful thing, you know. They gave us the chance to prove ourselves, and so with everybody else who comes into Holland.

GR: Have you been involved in many of these changes yourself?

SC: Well, no, not necessarily involved in the changes. Probably these changes were made too because some Spanish speaking people had education. My education was very low. I didn't get too much education to get involved. But I had some friends who came here at the same time and became policemen, and one who was here from Mexico became an American citizen. The opportunities were there, but I failed at the education, that kept me down. And I don't blame nothing for that. Nobody is to
GR: How have these changes affected you directly?

SC: Like I said, I had to go to school, because I had a disability. And they sent me to school because of the veterans - the federal government. And because I went I learned a trade, which was machine shop, and that was good, that was part of my changes. So a lot people are now getting involved because they don't have any education. So I figured I started by going to school and the people knew I was going to school. A lot of people did too (go to school). I mean I'm talking about adult education. And there have been a lot of them who graduated from high school in the adult education. So this part I did good, I think (laughter).

GR: Yes you did. Holland has been recognized as one of ten all-American cities. What qualities do you think earn Holland this honor? Why were they given that honor this year?

SC: Well, I tell you, the Tulip Time is Dutch, but I think it's American. And we Spanish, we got our own (Cinco De Mayo). We call it American too even though it came from Mexico. But I think that the Tulip Time should have something to do with All-American city. And also the clean town. It is very clean. Even up to this day, I go on trips and people who have been hear say, "Oh, that's beautiful, what a clean town." And you feel proud. Even though I wasn't raised here; I wasn't born in Holland. But I'm sure my children, they were born here, they are very proud.

GR: What things does the community still need to work on for improvement?

SC: That's a hard one for me. I think that much has already been done that can be done,
you know. I think we’ve never had any big crimes in Holland when I first came over here. Now we are beginning to have a lot of them. Well, not a lot of them, but I think we could get together, and get the city of Holland involved with children, teenagers, and religion - most of all religion, churches. Get involvement to stop these dangerous crimes that we’re having. Because I found out in my days of teenagers, that when a kid has problems, he doesn’t know how to solve them. But the problems will get worse and then he gets into this mess and ruins his life for the rest of his life.

GR: Are there other negative things about Holland you can think of?

SC: Well, there was when I came here, a little bit of segregation. But I think it’s gone. Not on race but on part that if you have two or three kids they won’t rent to you, because kids ruin their house, you know. So we had a lot of that problem. But others before me tell me that they came here in the ’40s and they had problems - going into a tavern and drinking a beer. They never had any trouble in the restaurants, but in certain places they weren’t let in. But that’s all gone.

GR: Did they ever mention why that happened?

SC: Because of their races - they didn’t allow them to do that. But that was the ’40s; in the ’30s we had a little problem that we went into a place and started speaking Spanish. Initially, at that time, people weren’t educated with Spanish speaking people, so they didn’t understand what we were saying. So they wanted them to speak English. But they didn’t know their background, like my background. I was born in America and my first language was Spanish. At that time, they didn’t know these things. So that’s another good thing you’re doing, because you can let them
know. All Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and California - we learned the Spanish language first. And then we learned the second language, which was English. That was one of the things that we had to be patient. We don’t understand their side of it, but they don’t understand our side of it, where we came from. There are a lot of people asking, "How long ago you been in the United States? When did you cross the river from Mexico?" I never crossed the river from Mexico! (laughs). And a lot of these are silly questions. I don’t understand why they ask me, because they didn’t know what happened over there in Texas, what happened in California. But it was nothing compared to what I had in Texas about racism. There was nothing here in Holland like that. They understood right away, and I have a lot of Dutch friends, they still call me on the phone. We still go out in groups to go out and eat in restaurants and all that. So I think we should prevent anything like that from happening again. I believe that the law should be backed up on these crimes (segregation). I really want the law to work.

GR: Describe the role the church has played in your life.

SC: I wasn’t too much into going to church when I was a little boy. I am Catholic; I just went for first communion and baptism and all that. But I got away from the church because we mostly would work. We used to work on picking cotton on the ranches. And we stayed there. So when we moved into town we didn’t go to church. But that’s one of the things that helped me coming back to Holland - I started going back to church. I didn’t understand the church or nothing about it. So I got away from it again. But now, since I’m retired, I’m getting back to it again. The church has
played a big role in my family. We are always having problems and all that. Now
we are just getting back together again. It’s a wonderful time in religion or whatever.

GR: How did you decide to join the church your currently involved with? What parish are
you a part of?

SC: St. Francis. I’ve always been a member, but never an active member of St. Francis.
And the same thing back where I come from. We had a church, and I was a
member, but I never went. I never got involved. I never got to know what the
church was trying to tell us.

GR: What role does the church play in Holland as a community, do you think?

SC: I think that is what makes Holland a beautiful community, a beautiful town, and clean
and working people, just beautiful.

GR: How do you see the church playing a part in the city, the community, and the
college? Do they play different roles?

SC: I think that the college has been here a long time in the city. It’s a good Christian
college. But there are some differences, you know. Now that Holland became a city
of people from all over the United States, from all over the world, I guess it’s fair to
say that, there is a difference in the college because maybe someone doesn’t think
they should be so close together (laughs). Because the city is politics and the college
is Christian, especially this Christian college. So sometimes a Christian college has
to tell the city this is not right, and let’s do this or change this because it is not right.

GR: How does the college affect the community? And how does the community affect
Hope College? How do they interact together?
SC: No, I think it’s a good thing they got a college. Most towns where I’ve been that have a college, especially a Christian college - because I come from a town that has a small college, but it’s not Christian - but especially when they are Christian, it is good. It is good for the community, for the town, wherever it is, not just Holland, anywhere. We should have more of those small colleges. As a matter of fact, I was in my home town a year before last and I met a girl who was working in one of the restaurants there. I went over to her, and she asked me a question. I said, "I don’t know. I used to live here, but I don’t live here anymore." Then she said, "Where are you from?" I said, "From Michigan." And then she said, "I am from Michigan too." And then I said, "What town are you from?" She said, "Holland." She lived here in Holland but she was going to college over there. You know, why would this girl, who lived in Holland, go up all the way to a west Texas town where they got sand storms and rattle snakes, when she’s got Hope College over here? I don’t know. We talked and the woman she had to go work, you know she was a waitress there, part-time. But she was in my hometown working and I was there visiting.

GR: Why do think there isn’t any more minority representation at Hope College?

SC: I think religion has got something to do with that. And at the same time, I think that to us, to come to represent people here in Hope College. We haven’t got the background on the Bible and all the religion part of it. I’m speaking for myself, because I’m Catholic, I don’t think Catholics got the background of the Bible like the Protestants do. So there are a lot of Protestants now, I think that in the future we will see equal representation. But I know that Catholic Priests, they are very well
educated, they have meetings with Hope College. Hope College came to our rescue when our church was burned. We had our masses in the college and we had one in the Third Reformed Church. And we had our masses there. I think that is community, Protestants and Catholics all working for Christ.

GR: What role does your ethnicity play in the Holland community? What role does that background (Hispanic) play in the Holland community, in your opinion?

SC: My background was not very...just that I moved, that's all. But I hardly ever vote in city elections or county. I just vote state and federal government, because I don't know half of the people running. And education does hold you back to play a big role. But in the role that I play, I've got some volunteer work, I've got good work I think, and I would like to keep doing it. But I'm 71 years old (laughs).

GR: And what is your heritage again, your background--its makeup, your father and mother--could you explain that?

SC: My father came from Mexico. My mother was an American citizen. She was born in San Angelo, Texas, but my father came from Mexico. He had enough time in the United States to become an American citizen, but he made a mistake and went back. That was the law - he couldn't come back. He died in Mexico.

GR: Did your mother also?

SC: No. My mother had been with her father, which was my grandfather, in Mexico, and she didn't like it. So when they crossed the river back, and they were American citizens, she didn't want to go back. But one of her sisters, I think, stayed in Mexico and was married there...once you get married you make roots. So she died over
there, my aunt. But all of them came back to United States and they never went back (laughs). So when my dad decided to go back, we stayed. It was 1930 or something like that. I was only 4 years old.

GR: Holland’s diversity, as far as ethnicities, as been increasing over the past several years. What effect has this increasing diversification had on the community? What benefits has it been that there are more ethnic groups in Holland? What benefits have they reaped from that? Is it good? Bad?

SC: Explain ethnicities.

GR: The different ethnic backgrounds in Holland that we have now compared to the ’40s, has that helped or had a negative aspect in Holland?

SC: People come here to go to work. Holland is always a town, and I’ve seen the bad days when employment was low all over around Holland, but they still came to Holland to work. So naturally people would come over here from different races or different parts of the United States. They come here because of work. So that’s good. But on the other hand, they bring their own ways. They bring their way of doing things, and their way of living, especially their way of living. So that is not so good for Holland, because like I said, they (Hollanders) don’t understand the ways of other people that come in to Holland. And that could happen anywhere in the United States. If a white man went into my home town from the east, and came across the railroad track, and then he went to one of our restaurants to eat, we’d say, "What is this guy doing here?" But that’s people, changing. That’s why that was brought into Holland with the people. Saying, "Hey wait a minute, what are these people trying to
do here?" Until they accept them, then they learn something about them.

GR: How has the role of woman changed in Holland over the past several years?

SC: Well for us Mexicans (laughs), we didn’t like it. It was a very, very big change. We came over here and you know women work and men work. When I came over here, my wife didn’t work. I didn’t believe women were working here - supposed to work. But then we had too big a family, and she was having some big problems staying home with the kids and all that. Finally, the youngest one went to school and her ways at home changed. The doctor told me that she should go out. I said, "We don’t have money for her to go out and spend, only one check." So she told me she wanted to go to work. And that made a big change because once she started working, she had to say what was going on in the house and all that. Before, I was the boss, and now she’s the boss (laughs).

GR: How has that changed, not only in the workplace, but in your church and in the education of your children? How has your wife played a part in that - the church and the education part in your life?

SC: Well, she was a good mother. All the education she gave, and she went to church, but she didn’t get involved with the kids, like nowadays. Oh that’s a Dutch word: nowadays (laughs). People, women, are beautiful you know, getting involved with the children and all that. It’s something; it’s beautiful. But my wife never did that, like I said. She was a housewife, coming out into the workplace and then she wanted to go out and buy things for her children that she had otherwise never had bought. But she never got involved with the church, but she did go to church.
GR: What controversies have you witnessed in Holland? What large problems have you seen while you have lived here?

SC: Oh boy. I hope my Dutch friends don’t know about it. Well, this mostly politics. I think that there should be something done for people that have these problems. I used to live north of Holland, then I moved to present address at 128 Reed. So at one time, that little piece of land, they used to call it federal district (it is out of the city limits of Holland), but the city at one time, a long time ago, I don’t remember when it happened, gave them water from the city to that little strip of land. But if they wanted to hook into the water surrounding them... So when I bought the house I didn’t have no water. By that time politics were bad. The city wanted to take that to make it the city limits. The people that lived there, which was mostly Anglos, Dutch people, they didn’t want to belong to the city. This was politics and I was brought right into the middle of it. So I went to the city because I needed water. I couldn’t get it from the ground. I think about four years I had to keep after them. I got a little bit of water, just enough to live. My kids had to go to school, had to be clean and all that. The line that passed in front of a house, the guy that owned the house before me, he didn’t want to hook into it. All the rest of them had water and I didn’t have water. And that’s one of those things that I couldn’t understand. Why? It was just all politics. So I finally went to the Health Department. But I went to the wrong Health Department. I went to the Health Department outside of the city limits of town. Then some guys, I heard them talking. I was just sitting there, and they were talking about the Health Department. And then they said, "Well, you went to the
wrong Health Department (laughs) --the city has their Health Department and the county has their Health Department." And then I said, "You mean I went to the wrong Health Department?" So I went to the right Health Department. And there was a guy there and he said, "You got to be kidding. They have to give you water." I said, "No. They don’t want to give me water." So he came over and looked at my house. He said, "Come over, I’ll give you the permit." He gave me the permit. I already had the plumbing. He said, "I’ll do it. Today I’ll do it." Because he knew what I was going through, everybody knew, even the guys where I worked. And he gave me some water. I went to see him to thank him, and he wasn’t there at the City Hall. I don’t know where he went, but he wasn’t there. And that was a big battle. Four years it took me.

GR: Are there any other things that you remember that were controversial in Holland?

SC: No, not off-hand. No I don’t think so.

GR: Tell me about a job in Holland you really enjoyed. You said had two jobs. Did you enjoy one more than the other?

SC: Well, as I told you before, I had to quit my job at Wire Products, which was a good job too. But I had to quit it because of my asthma. I worked other places like Scotts, just four or five weeks, and Heinz. But I went to H. E. Morris. I stayed there twenty-three years. And I really loved that.

GR: You liked that job?

SC: Yes. Then my time came up to retire. I decided to do it because they were coming in with computers. And you had to go one year to learn the fractions and the
decimals and all that. Then they came out with the computers. The company said they were going to pay us to go and send us to school - "You’ve got the seniority and everything, but why don’t you let a younger man take over." I said, "I think so. You’re right." And I stayed until I retired.

GR: And what did you do there?

SC: I was a lathe operator. I never operated mills, but I went to school; I learned how to operate mills and all that. And I worked in the lathe department. That was pretty fine work. And then I retired. It’s machine shop work. Mostly it was late, late work.

GR: Is there a perceivable generation gap in Holland in your opinion? Do the adults and children understand each other?

SC: Well, I think (laughs) the adults, are used to it you know. And I think the younger should take over. I always have believed in that. It is more or less on the young people, I think we should employ them. That’s why a lot of them don’t have a sense of responsibility. But I do think that people who are retired, who are old now, should get involved trying to help young people that don’t understand what’s going on with this country. Everybody is against crime, but everybody wants to have four or five guns in their house!

GR: How would you define your generation? How is your generation unique, in you opinion?

SC: At first, coming up, I kind of felt sorry for myself. Then I found out that that wasn’t going to help. So then I started doing things for myself. I’ve always worked. I’ve
worked since I was a little boy, picking cotton and all that. Like I told you, we used
to do as migrant workers. We used to travel all the way to Nebraska to pick the
beets, and pick the potatoes and all that, in Colorado and all those places. Some of
the people came to Michigan. But we always worked. This is the thing I had to
make up my mind - I had to get myself out of feeling sorry for myself, and that there
really was opportunity for people that work hard. My biggest goal in life is that I
always work, maybe not important jobs. Now people begin to see it as an important
job because if you want to sit in an office and you want to eat potatoes, you don’t
know where the potatoes come from but if they (migrants) don’t pick them (the
potatoes), you don’t eat them. Those people are doing a great job. I really praise
them for what they’re doing.

(end of side one)

GR: Have the problems and concerns of the average Holland citizen changed over the past
years? Have you seen, in the problems that occur, changes in the way people react to
them? For instance, you were talking about the crime.

SC: Well, yes. Mostly it has been my experience throughout my years that when crimes
happen in a community, they try to keep it low. But if it’s a minority, the newspaper
usually puts up a big story saying this happened. But when it happens to the Anglo
people, they don’t. That’s true about Holland. It’s true about everywhere you go. I
think that reporters, the media, should do this. If they are what they are supposed to
do, they should put in the truth about certain things.

GR: How is daily life different than when you first came to Holland, from the ’50s to the
'90s?

SC: Traffic is terrible. I think it's Chicago (laughs). I'd rather drive in Chicago than in Holland. Go into Grand Rapids, and then going on this street to get to the expressway. It's terrible, the traffic. That was a very big change. Other things: we got a lot of Mexican food in Holland now. I try to remind my friends who are Dutch that they used to say we are going to make a Dutchmen out of you. They were talking to me and they were going to make a Dutchmen out of me, but while they are eating Mexican food (laughs). We got a lot of businesses in town that are owned by Mexican people or mostly Mexican people. But people who came from other than Holland, they had a business over there, they come over here and make business. But a few of them started here. It's hard to start a business in Holland because I tried. I couldn't.

GR: And what business was that?

SC: I wanted to buy a party store. You see these people, some from India, I don't know where they get the money, but they buy a lot of party stores. I tried to and the bank wouldn't give me a loan because I had no experience in business. I wanted a party store, that's what I wanted. I knew what I wanted, and I knew where it was, but I couldn't get the money.

GR: Can you describe a significant turning point in your life? Through your entire life, is there one moment that is significant to you?

SC: Well, to that question I would answer: two of them. I was used to my home town and I lived in my home town and then World War II came along and I wasn't old
enough, but as the war went along I was old enough and then I had to leave. So when I went out of my home town, out of the state of Texas - it was different. I made all new friends that would speak English, Anglos. They were nice people. I thought all the time that those people over there were nice. That was a very big thing. When I came back, I found out that I came back with a different attitude. The people that live across the tracks. So that was a big thing in my life. Another thing was when I moved to Holland. That was a big thing for me to move because everybody told me that I wasn’t going to make it. I had a better job in Texas than I had here. I worked for the VA Hospital. I said, "Well, I want my kids to have an honest a chance as I did have. That was my reason for coming to Holland. Holland was recommended to me by a friend of mine who died here in Holland. But all his family was here already. I chose Holland, and I came and saw, like who was that guy that said I came, I saw, and I conquered? (laughs)

GR: Has your life changed since you’ve been in Holland?

SC: Yes. It has changed a lot. One of the biggest changes was that in Holland I accepted that women could do things other than being at home and taking care of kids and washing dishes. Most of all my friends accepted that, those who came over here. Of course, now it’s all over the United States. It takes two to work, for a household. Some of them have three or four jobs, you know. These people that come from out of the country, they don’t mind work.

GR: Has your religious faith gotten easier or harder to accept while in Holland? Has Holland been an influence?
SC: Easier. All my friends, Dutch, where I work not everyone is Protestant and in every part there is a mix of people, Anglos that came from the South, and then most of them Mexicans. The Dutch were very nice. But when I moved to H.E. Morris, which is Morris Hemco now, it’s a different owner, my friends there started talking to me about religion. Sure they were there. They never asked me to change religion, but because that’s when I get mad, when they tell me to change. I don’t care what religion you are. America’s freedom of religion is one of the good things. But they never asked me, so they knew how to do it. They started me on getting Protestant, Christian Reformed from Holland, which started me on the Bible. I am reading the Bible now, but I don’t understand it because it is a hard thing for somebody from the background that I came from. But I understand a lot of it and it is very nice. It is very good.

GR: What is your viewpoint on the bilingualism in the school system for the non-native speakers of English in Holland? How have you seen that change, if it has at all? Do you think bilingualism has gotten more prevalent in Holland over the years, from when you first came here? Are there more people speaking both English and Spanish in the schools?

SC: Oh definitely. Especially these missionaries that went to Mexico and Guatemala and all those South American and Central America. I’ve got neighbors, she’s Dutch and he’s Italian, and when I talked to them…one day I was talking to her when we first met. We started talking and we were talking English. And all of a sudden in the middle of the conversation, she started speaking Spanish, and better Spanish than I
was because I didn’t learn Spanish in school. We’ve got a lot of them (people speaking Spanish). We’ve got a lot of Dutch, a lot of women. We can talk about them because we know there’s a lot of them now. The same things happened in Texas. In Texas they didn’t speak Spanish. We said, "Hey, Gringo." We said things about them. But now we can’t do it, not even in Texas. No. I don’t what the problem is with these people today speaking nothing but English. But look at trade. A lot of people make a lot of money just because they’re selling their products to the Mexican poor from Texas and from Chicago, or wherever they come from. And all that is good for the country. I told my Dutch friends, I said, "Why don’t you talk in Dutch? What are you doing talking English?" They said, "No. They didn’t teach us Dutch, we’ve always spoke English. That’s wrong. And a lot of them agree with me. What makes this country great, no matter where we go in the world we can get somebody that can speak the language of that country. They used it in World War II with Indians that we treated so wrong out here in the USA. In World War II, in the Philippines, the Japanese were too smart. They knew everything about the Americans. They knew the language as well as the Americans. But then some Americans said, "Let’s put this on the radio." We’ve got an Indian over there and an Indian over here. Then they talked Indian and the Japanese went down. And that’s an American idea to do that. We have a lot of things about them that are not written in these libraries, that don’t come out in newspapers. It comes out in the movies. I’ve seen it in the movies once. But we knew about that for a long time because I was in the service when that was happening. I was service in the Untied States - I
never went overseas. It's good to have people who speak a different language. Like you speak French. That's good for you. If you can learn other ones, learn it. But these people make a big deal about speaking English. Naturally, if I go a somewhere that nobody speaks Spanish there and they speak English, I don't want to change their ways: you got to go learn Spanish. No, I better learn the English before I want them to understand me. Do you know what I mean? But no, we have all these people, all these wonderful people that are working out of the United States in Mexico, in Central America. They know how to speak Spanish. The kids know how to speak Spanish. Education, even though it's taken away from us, that doesn't mean that we can't come back to it, to speak the language again.

GR: That is the end of the oral history interview with Savas Chavez.