

Jimmy Molina Interview

Tempe Historical Museum

OH/Tape #: 339 (Side A)

Date of Interview: August 18, 2008

Interviewer: W. James Burns

Transcribed by: Alex Mollon

Begin Tape 1 of 1, Side A:

WJB: It is Tuesday August 18th 2009 and this is James Burns, I'm here with Jimmy Molina and we're at the Pile Adult Center and we're here to talk about some of your experiences in Guadalupe and Tempe today. Can you just start out by telling me when/ where you were born?

JM: I was born in Tempe. November the first 1943

WJB: And when did your family settle here in Tempe? How long have they been here?

JM: I've never lived in Tempe. I have lived in Guadalupe all our lives.

WJB: OK. And had your parents and their parents been there before them?

JM: I never knew my grandparents. My parents... I didn't know my dad, my mom and dad separated when I was an infant I guess. But originally they both were born in Tucson, Arizona and they moved to the valley and I think they moved around for a while before settling in Guadalupe. But by the time I was born, I'm the last in the family, they were already separated.

WJB: Do you know why they came here from Tucson?

JM: I have no idea, probably because of economic situations I would think. My dad used to work... well I guess on and off he worked for a while with what is Salt River Project now. I think that was a good time you know they were building canals around here in the valley and they utilized a lot of manual labor. So they would hire people and they would move as they work, sort of being like nomadic, as the canals were being built they were moving their tents around. And I don't know, but probably Salt River Project has a better documentation than I would. I don't know who provided the... Well it was probably tents or some other primitive way of living.

WJB: Do you remember him talking about any particular experiences he had working with them?

JM: No. Like I said I never knew my dad so the information I have comes from my mom. Then again, I think mostly from labor work as the valley developed.

WJB: What did your mom do?

JM: She was basically a farm labor, and brothers and sisters. I think that's the only, well it might not have been the only work available but at the time it was most practical I guess.

WJB: Do you remember what kind of crops she worked with?

JM: Cotton picking, thinning cotton, cleaning cotton you know they didn't have the technology they have now where you know you plant cotton and there is no weeds grow anymore. So my picking potatoes onions, my brothers used to work in watermelons and melons, I mean cantaloupe, lettuce... At the time there was

more work, more farm labor work available and the subcontractors who would make the arrangements to take people they would have the trucks or the means to take the workers to the field. So you weren't very concerned about getting to work.

WJB: So would they just bring the trucks to Guadalupe and pick everyone up and take them out to the farms?

JM: Some of the contractors or the labor contractors would live there, others came from either Phoenix or Tempe and they would... You know they knew who the workers were so they would go around and pick up the people at their home like the school bus, you know the same system. It doesn't happen anymore you know now the only people on the side of the streets waiting for work are illegal aliens you know because Americanized people don't stand on the side of the road looking for a job. The only ones on the street are the panhandlers and the people bumming off money off other people... So that has changed. Its surprising because I guess Joe Arpaio still doesn't get it, you know, anyone who is on the side of the street, I would say 99.9% that percent is here illegally... He wanted to make an impact all he had to do was pick up those people and take 'em in. But he needs to make a huge fanfare and all that.

WJB: So, did you live in one house the whole time you were growing up or did you move around?

JM: We just lived in one house. We had no utilities you know. When I was a... I cant remember how old I was but we didn't have electricity, inside running water, or you know, well really nothing... We had a wood stove, an ice box, which don't

exist anymore and kerosene lamps and we had a dirt floor for a while finally I guess my mom was able to accumulate enough money to have a concrete floor.

WJB: So there were no city services provided at that time by Tempe at all to Guadalupe?

JM: I mean in a sense we were isolated... I guess when you're a kid this doesn't seem like a lot further and you know... We were totally isolated from the city of Tempe, well Tempe only came up on the way to past Juarez. What is it Southern and Broadway? And from then on it was all farms. So that big break in between that kept us away I guess. Well it didn't keep us away you know because we were not confined but we were separated. And Phoenix only went up to 40th St. and Broadway, its about where it ended. So in between it was all farm land.

WJB: How did your family spend its leisure time? What little you probably had...

JM: Well (haha), really you know when you're poor and very poor, I guess you don't consider leisure time part of your life. We had... there was no TV's, I think we had a radio that operated on batteries but it wasn't on all the time like nowadays. I know when I was a kid we did a lot of swimming because you were allowed to swim in the canals. Now that's gone. And when we were kids we'd go up to South Mountain and play around there. Now I think back because my wife will not allow our grandkids to leave and be playing on the streets and I think either my mom was negligent or she was so confident. You know we'd go up all the way to the end of the Guadalupe Road, that's not close. You know, a bunch of 6 to 7 kids got together and we'd walk there in the middle of the summer, you know, no water no hats no nothing. Either we were quite durable or we were just

fortunate. We didn't dehydrate, we didn't have heatstroke. Things I guess, you know part of the changing times children are more... Well I call them weak, the weaklings because they're only in the sun for a few hours and dehydrate, you gotta take them to the hospital and you get sunburn so bad that they need some special care.

WJB: Did you have any traditions, special holidays, any events that your family celebrated?

JM: Not that I remember, you know, I don't remember ever having birthday celebrations or special holidays because I guess we could afford anything special. I know Christmas came around but there was never any exchange of gifts because there was no gifts to give.

WJB: How about more traditional holidays related to your cultural background?

JM: Well despite the fact that I'm Yaki, we're not involved in the Yaki's festivities or their culture because we were raised Presbyterians and we never got involved with the actual Yaki culture.

WJB: Did you have any toys, any games that you played with, any games you made up?

JM: No. We played cowboys and Indians up in South Mountain but using sticks or other imaginary toys. We were very limited to what we you know, having access to what toys are you know now I see kids and they don't play with toys anymore they throw them around and break them. I thought "boy I wish these toys existed at the time when I was a kid." It seems kids today don't, I guess they're so used to having everything in abundance they don't really appreciate what they have.

WJB: Can you tell me about a member of your family who was and is active and involved in the community in Guadalupe? It could be anything maybe politics, a faith based organization, maybe a community activist?

JM: I don't think I have any family members, we are actively involved, well more me than anyone else. You know church, I'm part of the group that runs or that makes the decisions in our church. I get involved in a lot of recreational issues regarding improving the park or other things in the community that I think the town council needs to focus attention on.

WJB: Which park?

JM: Well there's two, Bean park is one and then there's another park, well it's a dirt park but its in front of the Catholic plaza or open space they have in front of the church.

WJB: Can you tell me an interesting or unusual story that's been past down through your family?

JM: Such as?

WJB: It could be anything that you find interesting about your family history.

JM: I don't think we have much, you know nothing, we're not highly accomplished or something very extravagant or you know a big thing that has happened within our... I was the first mayor of Guadalupe but you know people just see it as you know ho-hum, so what you know?

WJB: Well we'll talk a little bit about that. What schools did you attend?

JM: At the time there was, we had the Guadalupe school that today is called Vita B. Frank I think it basically, at first it was up to eighth grade, I can't remember

whether it was kindergarten through eighth grade or when it started because...

And then I attended Rural School which was here on rural and Southern

WJB: And was that for what grades at Rural School?

JM: I think it was 5th through 8th grade.

WJB: So do you remember what years you were at each of those schools?

JM: Probably from 1955-58 because I graduated from Rural School in '58. I guess before that I was in Frank School.

WJB: And did you go on for any education after that?

JM: Just high school, I graduated from Tempe High in 1962.

WJB: Did you have a favorite teacher?

JM: No. I don't think so we had a sixth grade teacher which was very... Everyone said she was the meanest teacher around, can't remember what her first name was you know 'cause at the time we didn't think teachers even had first names, we just.. her last name was Kick, Mrs. Kick, I guess when you're there its different from when you mature and she was a teacher that was one of the most influential in the sense that she made you learn. Whereas other teachers just taught you know, she made sure you were learning everyday... you were either paddled or thrown out of the room, you were slapped around. So it was either physical abuse or learning and I found out its easier to learn than accept the kind of punishment that we got during those years. And then the other one, the eighth grade teacher, he was Hispanic his name was Carlos Jimenez. He, looking back, he was a fair teacher not an exceptionally good like Kick but he always emphasized the fact that, because I guess... well I was so stupid I can say that without being ashamed at...

Segregation existed but I didn't know if somebody said "do you know you are segregated?" I would have said "what does that mean?" I would've never known. It was all Hispanics or Mexicans or Yaki Indians and totally separated from the Anglo society you know in the sense of schooling. And they would always say you know when you graduate and you go to high school you will be competing with Anglos, but just remember if you want to be at the same level that they are you have to be as good in school as they are... so that always stayed in my mind. One of the things that I made up in my mind during those years was, you know, if I'm going to be in an Anglo society, I'm going to learn the language as well as anybody, good as them or better. I think I've done fairly well in that area. When schools were finally desegregated or integrated, however you want to call it, I was strongly opposed to that because the school board was the same and the only reason that the Tempe elementary schools were segregated, well specifically Frank school at the time, because that was the only one that was segregated. They wanted to make it a magnet school and then say that it would be better for the children and all this. Tempe elementary schools had the same school board and I strongly believe that if a person thinks in a certain way, it doesn't change overnight unless you have a vision or a life threatening experience where you're whole life flashes before you and you say "you know what this is not a good idea." But it needed to happen for them to change. And I guess that was my opposition to having Frank school segregated, I mean desegregated. The same school board was saying there's going to be benefit, well if it was going to benefit why did they wait so long? Because they didn't desegregate until the late '60's

early '70's when they started bussing children out of Guadalupe and bringing children in from Tempe and the surrounding areas. Now you know its still the same, I think there's elementary schools in Guadalupe go to, well part of them go to different schools in Kyrene school district and I think there's Guadalupe's, I think about six different places that they go to school. I don't know whether that's healthy or not you know the way things have changed. I don't think we needed to have any children being bussed in and out, because now all the kids by the time they go to school they speak more English than anything else. When I started school I had no knowledge of the English language, I'd sit in the class and all the kids were in the same boat. We didn't know what the teacher was talking about because we didn't know English. The only thing I knew was my name in English and that was about it. And I will think back and think that bilingual education would have been a blessing from heaven at the time. Unfortunately, bilingual probably didn't exist at the time. Either at Frank School or anywhere else.

WJB: So you learned English at Frank School?

JM: Gradual yea. It probably wasn't called Frank School. I think about my third year in school I started getting the idea of what it was all about but it took a long time. Not until I went into sixth grade, it was that teacher you know, we already knew more English, but that teacher had an impact on... forceful learning. Like I said it was either some sort of punishment, and you didn't stand in the corner you got paddled, you got slapped, you got thrown out of the class.

WJB: What were your experiences like if you had to compare the Guadalupe School, Rural School, and Tempe High?

JM: How do you mean experience?

WJB: In terms of where you had the most friends, where you learned the most, where you felt the most accepted... or some bad things that might have happened too.

JM: I don't think I had any bad experiences during school, I enjoyed school, I probably was one of the kids that enjoyed going to school. You know when you go to school and its all people that you're growing up with, the same kids that started first grade or kindergarten... I don't know if there was kindergarten or first grade because I don't even know if they had kindergarten at the time and like I said I was so dumb in that area that I wouldn't have know the difference between kindergarten and first grade... but that same group just kept progressing and progressing and through the elementary school system. So you knew everybody and everybody knew you. You knew where they lived and you knew family and everything else and not until we got into high school did we started separating ourselves. Out of the twenty-some kids that graduated eighth grade with me, only about fifteen went to high school and then out of those most of them dropped out. So the only small group that we hung together, we didn't really have any close Anglos or black friends. But as we stayed in school you know, we made other friends from other Hispanics from Tempe... because that was the first time, like I said, hanging around white students for the first time, I didn't see anything different but they were not smarter than I was. Some were, some were not, I was always surprised that some white kids had a very hard time reading. When I thought that's you're language, something's wrong here. Maybe they needed special ed for all I know, but you know special education didn't exist at the time

either. So whether they needed it or not, it was surprising to me that some Anglo kids were really struggling through school.

WJB: Did you feel like you were treated any differently by teachers or administrators than the Anglo kids?

JM: I don't think so. I didn't see... I don't think there was a such a thing as discrimination at that level probably because there was so few minorities, you know you could count the black kids in the whole school probably under twenty, Hispanics were probably under fifty. Because we were so diluted I guess the teachers didn't see us as any different.

WJB: What about the teachers at the Guadalupe School and the Rural School, were they all Hispanic or Yaki, or were there Anglo teachers?

JM: They were all Anglo except for the Carlos Jimenez, he was the only Hispanic that we knew of. I ran into a few student teachers later on in seventh and eighth grade that were Hispanics but not teachers, actual teachers. They were all, most of them, they seemed like old people because they must have been in their 40's or 50's but when you're young you see people. It was always surprising when a student teacher came around and they were young, like in their twenties, and I would think "aren't they too young to teach?" Because I was so used to just seeing old, old teachers.

WJB: Were you involved in any kind of extracurricular activities like sports, or did you receive any special awards?

JM: In elementary school I don't think there was such a thing. We didn't have any intramural or we never competed against other schools in elementary school. It

was just playground, playing. In high school I was in track, I was in football, and baseball for a year just to learn the sport, not because I was any good at it.

WJB: So what subjects did you have at Guadalupe School?

JM: I think they were just basic you know, reading writing arithmetic, basically a little bit of science. It wasn't the style of teaching that exists now, the same teacher taught everything.

WJB: And when you went on to Rural School and to Tempe High, did you have other subjects like maybe music and art?

JM: The only thing that was added at Rural was music and nobody liked sitting, you know music because you had to sing. Sixth grade teacher, Mrs. Kick was the music teacher and she made you sing. So rather than get slapped around, it was probably one of the deterrents as to why you'd want to stay away from music was because you know, you dislike the teacher because of her forceful way of teaching. It was mandatory, you couldn't say I didn't want music. But in High school you had the choice, you could go into band, you could go into glee club, you could go into physical education, there was other options.

WJB: Do you remember how Mrs. Kick's name was spelled? Is it like it sounds k-i-c-k?

JM: K-i-c-k, yea.

WJB: And then you said beyond high school, did you have any sort of continuing training or education?

JM: I took a few courses at MCC but it didn't amount to anything. And then I used to be at Maricopa Technical College, I don't know if it still exists or not, I took a

few commercial art courses there, but nothing to brag about other than I just wanted to learn things that I didn't know anything about.

WJB: Did you want to go on for more education or was it just not an option at the time?

JM: Given the choice I would've jumped at any kind of education when I came out of high school unfortunately I had no financial means to continue. By the time I graduated from high school, it was my mom and myself living at home.

Throughout high school I was on social security because of through my father which had passed away. That was the only income but was I reached 18 it ended, so there was really nothing coming into the home at the time other than from labor employment.

WJB: How many brothers and sisters did you have?

JM: We have four brothers and two sisters.

WJB: And did all of them graduate high school?

JM: No, I have a sister who graduated before I did, she graduated in 1958 because I was graduating from elementary school and she was graduating from high school. After she graduated, she went into the Army, I think WAC or something like that. She left and she never came back, she lives in Buffalo, NY now.

WJB: Oh, wow.

JM: Outside of Buffalo, she got married out there and comes and visits us once in a while. We go over there, but she stayed there

WJB: So after high school, you got a job, or maybe during high school you worked?

JM: I was basically a farm laborer because that was the only thing available not having a vehicle or the means of transportation. When somebody comes and picks you up in front of the house, you know, why not? You need to survive.

WJB: And so you continued to do farm labor after high school?

JM: Yea for a long time, for a long time.

WJB: How about after that when you stopped doing that?

JM: I worked with South Pacific Railroad, you know, maintaining railroad tracks for about 6 to 7 years. But it was always nomadic employment, you went with the job. We had trailer homes that you would call a camp and they would move with you as you work. We'd spend a few months around Maricopa and then they would move the camp out about fifteen to twenty miles west and then set it there for a while. They'd just keep moving around. When my youngest daughter started going to school, I decided I didn't want... It was too reckless, I told people if I would've stayed with Southern Pacific I'd, well for one thing I'd be divorced, for another either I'd be dead or I'd be a veggie because it was too reckless. We were young and thought we were invincible at the time or so we think, we think we can do and get away with anything. Some of the friends that worked with me passed away either from alcoholism or auto accidents because they were always running on fumes you know, not having enough sleep. I guess in that sense it wasn't my calling.

WJB: What did you do after that?

JM: I got jobs, I worked with the Maricopa County Community in programs for a few years. Then I worked at a manufacturing company here around west Chandler.

WJB: What would you say was the greatest success or accomplishment of your career?

JM: Probably trying to educate my kids so they'd be better off than me. We have 4, three out of four are doing ok. One's, the youngest, is a school teacher and my daughter works here with the city of Tempe in housing. One of my sons works in irrigation, the other son is a drug addict so he's you know. Not because of us but because of his choices because we try to have everybody be successful, or not successful, but at least better than we were. Didn't work out.

WJB: Two girls, two boys?

JM: Yes.

WJB: You must be very proud.

JM: Well yea, except for I don't take the blame for my son becoming a drug addict but you know it happens.

WJB: Could you describe the relationship between Guadalupe and Tempe when you were a kid versus now?

JM: Because Guadalupe is basically looked upon as a poor community you have to I guess, you know I never heard negative comments on people saying "you're poor, you're dead poor." I never heard negative comments whether they were said when I wasn't around I do not know. It always seemed like that living in Guadalupe made you a different person because you would be poor and you look and the homes in Guadalupe, you look at the homes in Tempe and I say "wow." At the time, I thought everybody in Tempe was rich you know because of their homes, their vehicles, the way they dressed and everything else. In regards to being labeled whether it existed or not, I cant say.

WJB: Did that relationship between the two change over time, has it gotten any better?

JM: I think most people living in Guadalupe that are fairly successful, I think they just see, a lot of people live in Guadalupe by choice, its not because they can't move out. There's a lot of very successful young adults in Guadalupe right now that are professionals in one area or another, a lot more college graduates and they don't see any kind of barrier. A lot of people in Tempe probably don't even know that Guadalupe exists. You say Guadalupe, they say "where's that at?" I say we're over there. I've met people and they say "where do you live" and I say Guadalupe and they ask "is that out in a reservation?" and I say no its just adjacent to Phoenix and Tempe. And they say "oh I've never heard about it."

WJB: So, when you were growing up most of the people in Guadalupe worked either with SRP or as farm laborers? Anything else?

JM: I think gradually they started finding employment in factories around Phoenix. Tempe didn't have much of an economic base at the time so you really couldn't work for Tempe. You either got a job at a factory or some other, in Phoenix it was construction too. Basically everybody worked as farm laborers.

WJB: You mentioned that you were the first mayor of Guadalupe, when was that?

JM: I don't know like thirty- some years ago. I don't keep very good track of time.

WJB: And how long were you mayor?

JM: Just a few months, originally when Guadalupe decided to incorporate, they had an election and the majority of the town voted for incorporation. I guess because we were barely incorporated the County Board of supervisors appointed the first town council. And I was one of a bunch that were appointed and then the council

made the decision of who the first mayor... They selected the first mayor and the vice mayor and after everything was settled, they had a regular election where the people elected a new town council and a new mayor. Well the council would select the mayor and I decided not to participate after that.

WJB: How come?

JM: I think I thought it was better for the community because it changed like, I had been labeled by other people as being too controversial and too negative in a sense of the way some things that I think or do. And then there was that fear that I had too much power which I wish I had you know? I tell my wife all the time, if only I had that type of power that people envisioned that I had. I could be another revered Jones and have everybody drink kool-aid and stuff like that.

WJB: What was your greatest success as mayor?

JM: I don't think I accomplished anything other than having the title of being the first mayor. I don't brag about it when they mention that I do I just say "yea, that's it."

WJB: What do you like most about the blending of the Yaki and Hispanic cultures in Guadalupe?

JM: I don't think there's any blending and there's a lot of Mexicans who do participate in the Yaki culture, but I enjoy the festivities they have, their rituals and all this. My wife doesn't, she doesn't even get close to it. But I guess people have different ways of looking at it. I don't believe the way they believe because they mix religion with their rituals, I have a totally different view.

WJB: So does that make it more interesting to live there than somewhere else do you think, that diversity?

JM: Well having the religious ceremonies they have, makes it unique because there's not too many. I guess it would be like the Hopi snake dance up in Northern Arizona. I was reading the paper and it was saying that non-Indians were going to be barred from those ceremonies for whatever reason, I guess for their behavior. Then I guess it makes Guadalupe unique, especially because we're so surrounded by this metropolitan area we live now. When people have processions, you know, I always wonder what kind of cultural shock Anglos get because they drive through Guadalupe and see a man running around with a mask or doing other things. They say "what's going on here? Did we make a wrong turn somewhere and are in a different country?"

WJB: Does Guadalupe have different neighborhoods with different names?

JM: They exist but it's only... We're one square mile but they got subdivisions.

WJB: How has development of Tempe and Chandler and Phoenix, you're surrounded now by them, how has that changed life in Guadalupe?

JM: I think about the only thing it has given the younger generations the opportunity that they can find employment closer to home. Other than that, well with that comes improvement like the sewer system, better streets, streetlights, and everything else. The shopping, we have access to supermarkets and just about anything else that we need.

WJB: And does Tempe provide those services?

JM: The city of Tempe provides the water system, that's run by the city of Tempe and I think so is the sewer system. But the electrical comes from Salt River Project and the natural gas from, I don't even know who provides it.

WJB: What role does faith or spirituality play in your life?

JM: I guess I am one of the few persons that enjoys going to church on Sundays. I can't really say I'm very religious because I don't behave like I am a religious person. People always ask me how come I go to church every Sunday when I am the kind of person that I am, and I say well because I am the way I am I need to be closer to God. I don't know, its one thing that I enjoy... When I don't go to church on Sunday because I am out of town or other reasons, it just seems that there something is missing in my life. Like something didn't happen during that week that should have happened.

WJB: What's the name of the church that you attend?

JM: Guadalupe Presbyterian Church

WJB: And how long have you been going there?

JM: I guess ever since I was born I guess. I grew up in the church

WJB: So are there any special things you've been involved with at that church that you're particularly proud of?

JM: I did throughout the years, not as an individual, but as a church we have had a major impact in the community and for a while the first head start program was held in one of the church's buildings. First senior citizens center was held there in the same building, it was vacated by one group and occupied by another one. There's a health clinic that operates there on the property that we were instrumental in assisting in developing it. AA, the only AA group that meets in Guadalupe, meets in the old church. So even though we are a very small group, probably we average about 20-25 people in the congregation, I think people see us

as being quite instrumental in some of the social issues that have been in Guadalupe.

WJB: When was the health clinic developed?

JM: I can't say, well a long time before I was born there used to be I guess a doctor by the name of Ellis set up a clinic there in Guadalupe. And I don't know whether it was free or how it operated because I was too young to know that but there used to be that clinic there, it still has the same name, the Ellis building. I don't know whether he was a real doctor, not a real doctor or anything like that. You have to talk to somebody older than me (chuckle).

Begin Tape 1 of 1, Side B:

WJB: Ok.

JM: Being part of the decision making group you know in the church we can decide whether we wanted that or not. I guess as a group we decided that it would be a good idea to allow them to exist there and charge them minimal rent which is a dollar a year or something like that.

WJB: So they came to the church and wanted space?

JM: Mm hmm. Well the building existed there and was vacated by the Maricopa County health department, they moved somewhere else. So the building was there and my nephew, Dr. John Molina, was the one who came up with this idea initiating, trying to operate a free health clinic in Guadalupe. But lately I think they have been having financial problems because its just about the funding sources are drying up like everything else. But its still there and it still exists.

WJB: And what kind of services do they provide?

JM: I think they just do basic things, nothing too complex. Like you have sores or injuries and probably flu and stuff like that. If they can't do it they always refer it to someone else.

WJB: What kind of community recreational activities did or do you participate in?

JM: Well in Guadalupe there's really, Guadalupe is the only town that doesn't have a recreation department. Lately there's been a very large participation in young girls, women, in a softball league and they have men's baseball and senior baseball. But I don't participate in those, I still play ball but I don't play in Guadalupe, I play with the city of Tempe and the city of Chandler but not in Guadalupe because they don't have men's leagues. Softball leagues

WJB: But you mentioned being involved with a couple of parks in Guadalupe.

JM: Well lately I've been approaching the town council to improve the park facilities. The lights are bad, there is no drinking fountain in the parks, they had playground equipment that needed maintenance and instead of fixing them, they knocked them all down. Now I feel bad because I was out there looking at the equipment talking with another guy to see if there was a possibility of having them repaired. The next thing I knew, all the playground equipment was knocked down and I asked one of the workers "how come you knocked all the equipment down?" He said "well they said that you were out there looking at it" and I said (giggle) "so what does that have to do with it." And he said "I don't know he told us to knock it down." Like I say I wish I had the kind of power that so you know I can knock that building down, or say "do this, do that." But I don't and it was a bad move on the town, they say they're looking at funding sources to replace it, I don't know if

they will or not, hopefully they will because right now there's no playground equipment at the park, and there's no drinking fountains. There's other things that need repair and maintenance, the backstop, the grounds. I'm trying to stress on the town council that there's a lot of things that can be maintained and upgraded without too many expenditures. One of the, I think his title is community development, he is looking into a funding source that he might get several million dollars for upgrading the parks. I told him, some of the things need to be done now, you're looking at moneys maybe a year or year and a half from now or two years. In the mean time there's other things that shouldn't cost too much money to maintain or upgrade and this is what I'm putting an emphasis on right now.

WJB: What businesses or events that are in Guadalupe, or maybe nearby in Tempe, do you feel contribute most to the community? This can either be now or in the past, maybe places you shopped at or frequented or ate.

JM: People I guess are quite diversified, Arizona Mills is right across Baseline from us. I know there's a lot of people that shop there, there's Walmart about a mile away. Where they eat, you know, I have no idea.

WJB: Growing up, where would you shop?

JM: There used to be a Safeway here where the police station is right now. I remember coming over here shopping. What used to be Smitty's is long gone I guess, there's 16th street and Buckeye but when we were recently married we'd come and shop probably once a week or every other week to either Tempe or Phoenix because it was really the closest place we could go. Guadalupe had markets, you know, but they were more expensive than these other ones.

WJB: We've talked a little bit about your involvement with the church and your work as mayor, are there any other civic, social service, political, or economic organizations that you have been involved in that made a difference in the community?

JM: Not that I can think about.

WJB: How about any of your family, friends, or neighbors?

JM: No, not that I can think about

WJB: You mentioned your nephew John Molina and his involvement with the clinic? Anything else?

JM: Not at the moment

WJB: How do you define your culture or your identity? What's important to you?

JM: I've never dwelled on it. People see me as an Indian or they see me as a Hispanic, whatever you want to call me doesn't bother me and it doesn't matter. The trend lately has been that a lot of people being part Yaki was way derogatory or if you were Yaki you were lower class. But I guess it's a trend that lot of people that did have some part Yaki are trying to come back and to be part of the Yaki culture again. I don't know because of the benefits due to the casinos or because they just think that they're missing out on something and they want to become part of that. But my self, you know, the way I evaluate myself is I see myself as equal to everybody else. I've categorized other people in two categories, the ones that are better educated than I am, they know more than I do, and the ones that are financially better off than I am, and they have more money than I do. Or financially they're better off than I am. But in regards to being... They're better

off financially, that doesn't make them a better person. Being educated doesn't make them a better person, it makes them better educated. I see everybody at the same level and anybody that is not as well off financially or somebody who is less educated, I see them as equals because I don't see myself better than they are in any sense and I see everybody else the same and I feel comfortable, I'm one of the few persons that feel comfortable in any kind of environment because, I guess because of that attitude. I can walk into a room and everybody's wearing tuxedos and I'm not. They say I'm better dressed than you are, I say "so what?"

Somebody says, "you know I got a BMW? What do you have?" I say, "I have a bicycle." But I don't see myself any different you know, and I can't hide my identity because it's a dead giveaway. People see me as either Hispanic or an Indian, most people think I'm an Indian. And the Mexicans or Hispanics think that I'm an Indian and I don't know how to speak Spanish and they talk to me in English and they're surprised I can speak Spanish. Because Indians normally don't speak Spanish, they just speak English.

WJB: So you grew up at home before school, you grew up speaking Spanish?

JM: Well when I went to school I didn't know one word, well one word my name, in English and that was it. I mean we were totally one language at home, my mom was never educated... she probably went to a few years of school. Because of the separation, we were not influenced by the Anglo culture. My kids, my great grandkids, and my grandkids, hardly any of them speak Spanish, they speak English. But then you know you have the influence of music, the television,

computers and everything else so by the time they go into school, they're quite fluent in English whereas I wasn't. I was totally dumb in the English language.

WJB: Are any of your kids or grandkids interested in their Yaki heritage?

JM: No, I'm always joking with them that they have to go into this society or that other society and they look at me and next thing you know they are like, "what are you crazy? I'm not participating in that." Totally separated from... they have no interest in it.

WJB: To what extent when you socialize or go to community gatherings, to what extent are those gatherings inclusive of various kinds of people from different cultures?

JM: I think nowadays there is no distinction between Yakis and Mexican Americans and plus there's quite a few intermarriages now. Blacks, Hispanics, Mexicans, Anglos, you know, in a sense its been more of an interracial acceptance now. It used to be you saw an Anglo in Guadalupe and think "what the hell is he doing here?" And now you see Anglos, Blacks, and just take it for granted.

WJB: And do they live there too?

JM: A few live because they've got the townhouses, public housing, and some of us have moved in that are Anglos and blacks and... well there's no Chinese I don't think but there's Indians from India that run one of the supermarkets.

WJB: In what ways did you feel either included in or excluded from certain neighborhoods or activities in Tempe?

JM: I don't think I ever felt excluded or included but then again because of the lack of closeness, it never interested me to be involved in other extracurricular activities other than sports. Like clubs or outings or anything like that, and I don't think it

was a sense of not being accepted, I think it was just a lack of interest because we didn't grow up in a socially active home where we celebrated the fourth of July or Christmas or Thanksgiving. Because of the economic situation birthdays and stuff like this, when you've never had it you never miss it.

WJB: You said there's never been a time that you felt excluded or marginalized in Tempe or in Guadalupe?

JM: No

WJB: Has there ever been a time when you felt unaccepted or maybe misunderstood when someone maybe made an assumption about you that you found hurtful?

JM: No, I've never felt that way even though I guess, I went to this wedding where the couple had gotten married and we played softball on the same team as them and they invited me. And when we got there we didn't know they had special seating or anything like that, its not in my brain to think that they have to have special seating. And the bride and the groom met us and they said "where are you sitting," and we said "we just got here," and he said "well sit over here." We sat with two other couples that were Anglos, we were the only Hispanics or Indians there and the first thing they asked was "Why are you here?" And I said "we know the groom, and the bride," and then the man started asking me about economic situations and other issues within Guadalupe and I think he was more surprised that I am because I could answer every question he was asking. I guess he didn't expect me to know anything because I think people are more surprised to realize the person they're talking to is quite knowledgeable in a lot of areas. Its not too brag, its just curiosity, I always tell my wife "I'm going over there to this

meeting or I'm going to..." and she says "why," and I say "so people won't tell me, guess what happened? I'm gonna be there so nobody's going to tell me, I can say I was there." I read a lot simply because I'm curious to see what's happening around the world, around the valley. Just about every issue that's happening I try to have some knowledge on it.

WJB: How do you think attitudes toward cultural diversity have changed in this area and when do you think that happened?

JM: I'm not good at that I don't think. They have been more accepted because they are more exposed like when they have the Mexican dances and all this, and they find it quite colorful, quite entertaining. For the people that have never seen it, you know that's something different that exists and they find it pleasing. Negative, I don't think so, positive.

WJB: Of all the things that we've talked about, or maybe something that we haven't talked about, what contribution have you made to the community that you are most proud of achieving?

JM: I don't think I have any major contributions. I would say that if anything its more of a negative attitude that people have towards me because of the certain fear that I will bring about such radical changes that it will affect other people. For example, cultural, for a long while people always thought that one of my goals was to eradicate the Yaki land ceremonies. It was quite fearful that it would come about that I would find a way to say, you know, cease. Even if I would've had that power, I would have never done it because I am one that enjoys going to the ceremonies. Not participating but being there and meeting a lot of friends, for me

its more like a reunion of old people, old friends that you haven't seen for a while. I think I'm not a great leader in Guadalupe, I'm just a known person and I think people see me as being too radical to accept some of the things that need to be changed. That's one of the reasons why people ask why I don't run for council member anymore and I say "well I don't think people would elect me because my ideas are too radical for them to accept." Even though, I always think I am maybe a little ahead of my time and for my own good to say, this should happen or this should come about. I always think I have good ideas to bring about but most of the... Like I used to tell the company that I was working for, I'd say that I have some very good ideas to improve productivity but they all cost money and the company is not willing to spend it. And the same thing with Guadalupe, there's a lot of programs that could be initiated, new programs or different programs, especially focusing on youths. I think youth pregnancy is a major problem in Guadalupe. Somebody should be working with that, but you know, money is a factor. And other programs... and people are always going to say "that's none of your business." Eventually someone might come around and say this is something that should be looked at.

WJB: What is your fondest remembrance of your life in Guadalupe, maybe an experience or memory that really stands out for you? It could either be significant in your life or in the development of the community.

JM: I guess growing up nothing beats swimming in the canal so freely. No worries, no nothing, when you're a kid you never think about where your next meal is coming from or how you're going to pay your bills. Nothing like that, just happy-go-lucky

kid swimming in the canal. Whether it be contaminated or not, you know, who cares, its cool water and at the time not having electricity or fans or A/C. Nothing like this, now I look back – and I still don't have A/C at home but – I thought we existed with so little and now everybody's complaining about their A/C is broken or I can't stand the heat, I think I'm going to move up north or something. Then when my daughter graduated I think it was a very satisfying day that even though I'm not the student who had to put in all the work to accomplish that, we were instrumental in allowing that to happen because my daughter could have taken a wrong turn. But every time my kids accomplish something that will upgrade their living and it makes me feel good.

WJB: So this was graduation from college?

JM: Yea, from ASU.

WJB: And this was which daughter?

JM: My youngest.

WJB: Jamie?

JM: No, Jamie is the oldest. My youngest, her name is Tabitha and she's the only one who is not married. She is in her third year teaching.

WJB: Where does she teach?

JM: I think its Alhambra Elementary school district in Phoenix. She's teaching elementary school and its gratifying to me because if I would have had that opportunity I would have taken it whether it be a school teacher or not, I can't say. I won't dwell on what could have been, I just dwell on what is happening

now. And even with our grandkids, we can make it possible for them to attain their goals and that will be very gratifying to us.

WJB: You mentioned the canals, how did they look different than from now?

JM: Well they had no concrete sides and there was, just about every canal had a lot of trees on the sides. Cottonwood trees and other trees and the sides always had a lot of, I guess Bermuda grass or some other kind of grass, it was just dirt canals. You could swim freely, no one would say get out of the canal. I always thought it was so sad when they stopped allowing people to swim there because when you don't have a swimming pool that's the only way you're going to learn how to swim.

WJB: Right, or when you don't have A/C.

JM: Yea

WJB: So do you have evaporative cooling at home?

JM: Yea

WJB: Do you remember when they stopped allowing people to swim in the canals?

JM: I think it was probably around the 1970's because even after graduating from high school, we would still go and swim in the canals and it was very cooling and when you don't have a good home and you don't have the luxuries of right now, you'd rather be in here than be swimming in a canal for sure. And now you know with all the focus on pesticides and unclean water you might think its unhealthy, but at the time it was legal. We swam and we drank the same water and we're still alive. Seems like it didn't have any kind of impact on us, and even when we were working as farm laborers, especially towards the end of summer, we were picking cotton and the crop dusters would defoliate the cotton fields. Whether people

were working or not, they'd spray everybody. I say isn't that the same way they were defoliating the jungles in Vietnam, now you know, we think... and maybe a lot of people did die. At the time when somebody died you'd say, "what happened?" and they would say, "I don't know, he just came home from working in the fields and laid down." And whether it was poisoning, we'll never know. Sometimes they'd spray us with, when you were working on the lettuce fields, they'd spray it with dust or either dee dee dee or some other kind of chemical. I would think back and wonder either people were more resilient to chemicals or we were just fortunate. For a few years they were spraying the fields over here in Chandler and some of the chemicals of the air... I guess a breeze took them into a subdivision and they brought in the EPA and they had those bunny suits checking everything out. Those people haven't seen the worst of that, you should have been out picking cotton when you got all misted with the defoliant. And nobody ever really thought about it, even the water we drank, we all drank from the same beer can that was used as a cup and the water in the barrel that they had would be in there for days or weeks. We never gave it a thought whether, hey maybe this water is not good for drinking but I guess we're still alive and I'm not the only one who is still alive. There's a lot of people who don't have any kind of deformities or health problems.

WJB: So you were working as a farm laborer into the 1960's?

JM: Yes, I think past... Eventually farm work started, not becoming obsolete but scarce. The cotton picking machines improved so the cotton picking was out of the way. We used to harvest potatoes for two cents a bag and we used to pick

onions and cut the roots and the stems for fifteen cents a bag. We used to load watermelons for twenty-five cents a ton, and they had to be good watermelons, if they were broke they were not counted. Talk about cheap labor... backbreaking too.

WJB: And that was in the days before Cesar Chavez was fighting for farm workers, right?

JM: I think it was Cesar Chavez came after the fact. He should have been around probably in the 50's. If somebody would have been doing that, it would have had much of an impact because conditions were different.

WJB: If you could change one thing that would help the diverse populations in this area to come together to form a more cohesive community, what would you change?

JM: I don't know. I don't have any ideas right now that would overlap because there so close now that I don't see it as a barrier like when I was growing up. When you talk about Guadalupe... "oh, it's way over there at the base of south mountain" And now it's a five minute, ten minute drive.

WJB: It sounded from the way that you were talking, it was almost more—In your opinion anyway—that the physical barrier was greater, the geographic barrier between the two, than there was a cultural barrier.

JM: Well in the sense yes so much because the lack of communications or exposure wasn't as it is today. If something happens, its on the internet as its happening or sooner. At the time you know, we were just, like when we were going to high school, the Anglo students didn't make fun of us because we were from Guadalupe, they just looked at us as "oh you're from over there." We were no

different but in a sense I guess we stood out because we were not from Tempe, we were from some little poor town somewhere out there. Now because of the closeness of everything, its hard to distinguish students. If you're from Guadalupe or in areas or Jr. Colleges or High School, you don't stand out because there are so many. When there were so few, it was like the black kids, I think that when I was going black kids were less than Hispanics, we all knew they came from somewhere on 40th Street and Broadway... What their upbringing was, we didn't really know. They were very limited as compared to the Hispanics which because we had Hispanics from Tempe and Guadalupe—even though Guadalupe didn't have many students come—probably the biggest reason was because of economic situations. Its better to be making twenty-five to forty dollars a week than be in school. You needed the money more than you needed the education.

WJB: Do all of your kids and grandkids live in Guadalupe?

JM: No, my daughter Jamie lives over near Baseline and McClintock and my other son lives over on Mesa Dr. and Southern in Mesa. My daughter lives with us.

WJB: Is there anything that you'd like to add, anything I didn't ask you about?

JM: I don't think so, I really didn't know what to expect at this meeting.

WJB: (giggles) How was the experience for you?

JM: Well, I didn't know what to expect and I don't know what to make of it because I don't know what you're going to do with the information.

WJB: OK, well we'll be using some of this information in a new exhibit that we're putting together. It will be the new permanent exhibit for the museum which is under renovation right now and so there will be a component of that that will...

Its called living together and it will be talking about the stories of the many different people that make up the Tempe area, including Guadalupe. That's something that we didn't have in the old exhibit, so we'll be telling as close as we can get, everybody's story now. So hopefully when you come to visit the new exhibit you'll be able to hear or see your stories there in the museum.

JM: Probably, you should contact Salt River Project and see what, how they... I think it used to be Arizona Water Users, something like that... I think they would be a good source and you could have their input on how they utilized the manpower from Guadalupe to develop the canals. I knew some of the workers that were working with Salt River Project at the time, they worked over at the Roosevelt Dam, and probably other dams around the area. They would have some kind of information, 'cause the truck, I remember a truck driving into Guadalupe picking up all the workers that would work with them. They had camps throughout the Valley where they provided for the workers and before then, I'm sure they had those mobile camps where they were building the canals other people participated in.

WJB: Well thank you very much, I appreciate your time.