

Much of my time as oral historian was spent looking into the history of agriculture in what has been, historically speaking, a predominantly rural county. Many hours were consumed interviewing descendants of pioneer farming families, people living on Century Farms, and old-timers discussing all the various aspects of their livelihood. However, one soon discovers rather quickly that these landowners did not do the farmwork required on a day-to-day basis themselves. Throughout the years, the Chinese, hired help, neighbors, seasonal workers, and children have all worked out in the fields. However, during the last decade or two, on many a farm, the migrant laborer has been picking the strawberries, pole beans, and cucumbers. With the coming of the Chicanos, Latino-American<sup>s</sup>es, Mexican-Americans, and Mexican aliens, the human problems of poor housing, hunger, lack of education, and shades of racism have followed.

As a member of the museum staff, I did not wish to pass any moral or ethical judgments but to acquire an historical background into the arrival and life of the migrant worker in Washington County.

On April 13, 1978, I went down to Oregon Rural Opportunities (ORO) in Hillsboro and talked with Mrs. Connie Bustos. She turned out to be a most active, involved, and thoroughly pleasant woman. The organization is dedicated to assisting migrant workers and especially migrant children in learning English, acquire a quality education, and finding other career opportunities other than agriculture. In our conversation of the migrant question as a whole, she painted quite a grim picture of the camp conditions in operation even today.

In addition, I contacted several other people including farmers, social workers, and former migrant workers. Due to time restrictions, I had the opportunity to interview and record only one person concerning the migrant workers. His name is Daniel Garzo. Originally from Texas, he and his family migrated to Oregon during the early 1960-s in hopes of work and better opportunity. His story can be considered fairly representative of other migrant workers. At the time of the interview, Mr. Garzo was volunteering his time at "Centro Cultural" assisting newly arrived migrant workers to find housing, provide medical and legal services, and other social needs. I feel that the interview is a good one for he can look back on his experiences with a certain amount of objectivity, wisdom, and magnanimity.

The migrants and Mexican -American issue will most likely not disappear from Washington County and state of Oregon. Indeed, Hispanics, at 20 million people, are fast becoming the largest minority group in the United States today. A good historical understanding into the lives and events of these people will facilitate cooperation and undersanding for the future.

Also available are the writeen transcripts of interviews conducted by Clyde Keller for a movie he produced and Washington County Community Action sponsored. The film, about poor people in the county, is entitled Portraits. Some very insightful comments are made by migrant workers about conditions in the camps and the quality of life in general.