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Professor Pedro Castillo: Historian, Chicano Leader, Mentor

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Santa Cruz

University of California, Santa Cruz

University Library

2013

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Introduction

Pedro Castillo was born in 1942 in Phoenix, Arizona, the son of two immigrants from Mexico. His mother received a fourth grade education in Mexico and labored in the cotton fields in Maricopa County. His father attended public school in Phoenix and worked at a salesman at a furniture store that catered to the Mexican-origin community. The family lived in South Phoenix in a mostly Mexican-American neighborhood. They spoke Spanish at home and Pedro, who was called Peter at school, spoke English in the classroom. In high school, Castillo developed an interest in history. He recalled the history curriculum of the 1950s: . . . It was history from George Washington to Eisenhower, but it was more political, economic history. There was no talk of African Americans, except slavery and abolitionism. After Reconstruction, African Americans just disappeared; you didn't see them. There was no talk of women, just nothing. Nothing. And there was clearly no talk of Mexican Americans, Latinos, except the U.S.-Mexico War. But that was a couple of pages in the 1840s: the U.S. won; Mexico lost. And then you move on to the 1850s, the Civil War."

Castillo was to become a teacher and scholar who would join in transforming that history curriculum. He attended Phoenix Community College and then transferred to Arizona State University, with the goal of becoming a high school history teacher. There he met Juan Martinez, a professor of Latin American Studies who became his first mentor. Martinez later became a major actor in the battle to establish ethnic studies at San Francisco State. Castillo

recalls Martin Luther King coming to speak at Arizona State and the growth of the civil rights movement, which in Arizona in the early 1960s was defined as a black movement that did not encompass Chicano rights.

After graduation, Castillo apprenticed as a student teacher at Camelback High School in North Phoenix under Ted Moate, a high school teacher, antiwar, and civil rights activist, who ultimately was penalized by the school district for his radical socialist politics. Moate was targeted as part of a deepening conservative white Republican trend in Arizona.

This conservatism impacted Castillo as he began to search for positions as a high school teacher in the Phoenix area, where he was unable to secure a job, or even an interview. He attributes this experience to racial discrimination. By 1963, Castillo had met and married his wife, Shirley. Realizing that he was probably not going to be hired as a teacher in Phoenix, Pedro and Shirley moved to Flagstaff, Arizona, where Castillo pursued his master's degree in history at Northern Arizona State University. He then was hired by Riverside City College in Riverside, California to teach U.S. history in an interdisciplinary social studies department. There he became involved with the United Farm Workers grape strike. He and some of his students participated in picketing supermarkets in the Coachella Valley. At the grape pickets as well as at rallies in support of antiwar activist Eugene McCarthy who ran for president in 1968, Castillo met Professor Eugene Cota-Robles. Cota-Robles was then teaching biology at the University of California, Riverside. Castillo was to encounter him again at UC Santa Cruz a decade later.

Cota-Robles inspired Castillo to pursue a Ph.D. and introduced him to Jesus Chavarria, a Chicano professor of Latin American history at UC Santa

Barbara who was active in the growing Chicano movement. Castillo applied to UC Santa Barbara and entered the Ph.D. program in 1970. Chavarria hired him to teach a year-long Chicano history course, so he became a graduate student and a lecturer at the same time. As a graduate student he focused his dissertation research on the Mexican-American history of Los Angeles.

While he was still finishing his dissertation, Castillo was hired by Yale University for a three-year appointment as an assistant professor who would teach Mexican-American history, among other courses. He and his family moved to New Haven, Connecticut. At Yale, Castillo joined an emerging body of social historians whose research and teaching integrated race, class, and gender.

Castillo brought this approach to social history when he was hired by UC Santa Cruz's history board, where he arrived in 1976, and affiliated with Merrill College. When he arrived, his old colleague Eugene Cota-Robles was vice chancellor of UCSC. At UCSC, Castillo collaborated with professors in other disciplines in interdisciplinary team-teaching small seminars such as *Studies in the American City*, which in 1977 focused on Chicago and Los Angeles, and an oral history course documenting social, cultural, political organizations in the nearby working-class and primarily Latino city of Watsonville. These courses exemplified the intimate and creative learning atmosphere of UC Santa Cruz in the 1970s. Castillo was also an early affiliate of UCSC's American studies program and served as its chair in 1984.

This oral history is part of the Regional History Project's University History Series and also of a series of interviews documenting the experiences of Chicano/Latino faculty and staff at UC Santa Cruz. Castillo provides a detailed narration of the history of UCSC over the past four decades, particularly the

development of the history and American studies departments and Merrill and Oakes College. He was also one of the first Chicano/a professors hired at UC Santa Cruz and is now the one with the longest tenure and memory of the institution. He explores those memories in this oral history, describing the climate for Chicano/a and Latino/a faculty, staff, and students at UC Santa Cruz from the 1970s through the first decade of the twenty-first century. He discusses faculty appointments, changes in the curriculum, and student activism. In his long career at UCSC, Castillo served as a mentor and inspiration to many UCSC students, especially Chicano/Latino students, who found him accessible, attentive, and encouraging.

It is worth noting that Castillo arrived at UCSC only a few years after a group of Chicano representatives of the nine counties served by UC Santa Cruz filed a complaint to the Office of Civil Rights in 1972, holding that UCSC was failing “to provide equal educational and employment opportunities to ethnic and racial minorities.” At that time, the students, staff, and faculty of UCSC were primarily white. At this writing in 2013, the campus is considerably more diverse, although there is still much ground to be gained. UC Santa Cruz is seeking to become a Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI), a federal designation from the U.S. Department of Education. Universities that have been awarded the designation are eligible to apply for competitive federal grants to expand and support educational opportunities for low-income students, particularly those who are Chicano/Latino. In 2013, applications from California Chicano/Latino high

school students amounted to 33 percent of the total¹ but the number of undergraduate students has still not quite reached 25 percent. Castillo challenges the university to not only meet this goal, but to go further by hiring more Chicano/Latino faculty, who are still underrepresented at UCSC, and to increase student representation to match the demographic makeup of California, which in 2011 was 38.1 percent.²

In 1990, Professor Castillo and literature professor Norma Klahn cofounded and codirected UCSC's Chicano/Latino Research Center (CLRC), with funding from the Office of the President, among other sources. For many years, under a series of rotating directors, the CLRC has been a dynamic and creative research institution, supporting graduate student and faculty research with mini-grants, hosting lecture series and organizing conferences, and mentoring undergraduate students in learning to do research. The CLRC is closely connected with UCSC's Latin American and Latino Studies department, which Castillo also played a part in developing, and it is currently being revitalized after suffering recent budget cuts.

From 2002 to 2008 Castillo served as provost of Oakes College. He and Shirley lived in the Oakes College provost's house and enjoyed the direct contact with students, where they hosted students, staff, and faculty. Shirley retired from her career as a social worker administrator. As provost, Castillo was in charge of the Oakes Core Course, *Values and Change in a Diverse Society*, working with a committed staff of lecturers to develop a curriculum that encompassed reading

¹ <http://news.ucsc.edu/2013/01/undergrad-apps-2013.html>

² <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/06000.html>

James Baldwin, Toni Morrison and many other diverse American voices. Castillo characterized his term as provost of Oakes as the “highlight of his tenure at UC Santa Cruz.”

More so than most UC professors, Castillo has stepped beyond the academy and become involved in the local communities of both Santa Cruz and Watsonville, where he has lived for many years. He served on the Parks and Recreation Commission in Santa Cruz, helping to implement the Heritage Tree Ordinance. Later he served on the Planning Commission, the Library Commission, the Pajaro Valley Community Health Trust in Watsonville; the Steinbeck Center in Salinas, and the Community Foundation of Santa Cruz. He has also worked to support candidates for city council and other offices in both Santa Cruz and Watsonville. He is now writing a comparative political history of electoral politics in Watsonville and Salinas, California.

Castillo’s political and cultural work extended beyond Santa Cruz County. In 1992 and again in 1996 he was chosen to be a Clinton delegate to the Democratic National Convention. He was a member of the National Council of the National Endowment for the Humanities from 1999 to 2004 and the California Council for the Humanities from 1999-2000. He shares his perspectives on these experiences in his oral history.

Somehow in the midst of all of these activities, Castillo also found time to give lectures in both English and Spanish throughout Latin America and in Europe, speaking on topics such as “The 2008 U.S. Election and Latinos” in Spain. He also held several visiting professorships in Mexico, and Bogota, Colombia and directed UCSC’s Education Abroad Program in Mexico City from 1988 to 1990. He has also been active in the Organization of American Historians and the

American Studies Association, among other professional organizations. Castillo concludes his oral history with some thoughts on his somewhat unlikely trajectory from a working class Latino growing up in the barrio of Phoenix to his career as a professor of history at the University of California.

I am a former student of Pedro Castillo's. I took Chicano history from him in the late 1970s when I was an undergraduate at UCSC. Much later, in the early 2000s, I entered UCSC's graduate program in history and studied with Professor Castillo again. It's been my pleasure and honor to help him tell his life story. I conducted three interviews with Castillo, on January 22, January 29, and February 20, 2013, all of which took place in a room at McHenry Library on the UCSC campus. The interviews were transcribed verbatim and lightly edited. Castillo carefully reviewed the transcript for accuracy. I thank him for the generosity he brought to this endeavor.

Copies of this volume are on deposit in Special Collections and in the circulating stacks at the UCSC Library, as well as on the library's website. The Regional History Project is supported administratively by Elisabeth Remak-Honnef, Head of Special Collections and Archives, and Interim University Librarian, Elizabeth Cowell.

—*Irene Reti*

*Director, Regional History Project, University Library
University of California, Santa Cruz, August 2013*

Early Life

Reti: Today is January 22, 2013 and this is Irene Reti. I'm here for my first oral history interview with Pedro Castillo. So, Pedro, let's start by talking about where you were born, and when, your early life.

Castillo: Okay. I was born in 1942. I was born in Phoenix, Arizona. My parents are immigrants. It's a beautiful story about my parents, if I can talk about my parents for a couple of minutes.

Reti: Yes, please.

Castillo: They met in Phoenix. They were both working with their families. My father's family had moved from the state of Chihuahua in northern Mexico. They then went to El Paso, and then they were en route from El Paso to Los Angeles and two or three of the brothers stayed in Phoenix, one of whom was my father, and the other family members on my father's side went to Los Angeles.

Now, my mother's family—and there were nine in my mother's family—half of them were born in the United States and half of them were born in Mexico. It depended where my grandfather and grandmother were working. Sometimes my grandmother would be up here working with my grandfather—and an aunt or uncle would be born in the U.S. At other times they were back in Mexico, so an aunt or uncle or my mother would be born in Mexico.

So my mother was up here working and met my father, and there was a romance.

They were going to get married. But in the fine tradition, the Mexican tradition, my mother wanted my father to ask my paternal grandfather for my mother's hand before they could get married. By that time, the family had returned to Mexico. So my mother went with the family and my father had to go by himself back to Mexico, in an area that he didn't know. And he went by train. And at that time—this is in the late thirties, early forties, the trains were very slow. I remember as a kid, when we went to visit relatives, it seemed to me like it would take days, maybe a week or ten days, to get from the border of Arizona and Mexico all the way down to Guadalajara. And then from there we would take a bus to go to this small community where my grandparents lived and had some property that they farmed.

Reti: Was there a town there?

Castillo: Yeah, the name of the town is El Fortín de Las Flores. It is halfway between Sahuayo, Michoacan and La Barca, Jalisco. It's in Michoacan but it's closer to Jalisco, it's closer to Guadalajara. So the bus ride from Guadalajara to El Fortín is about two hours, two and a half hours, to Sahuayo. And then from Sahuayo you had to take a local bus down to this little community, El Fortín. When I started going down there as a child I remember it had no sidewalks, everything was dirt, no electricity, there were outhouses. No running water—you had to go and get your water.

So this was a community that my father took the train and then a couple of buses to get there, finally shows up, goes to my grandfather's house to ask for my mother's hand. And my grandfather said no.

Reti: (gasps)

Castillo: My mother is the oldest of nine children, a woman, the favorite, I suppose, of my grandfather, because she is the first, and then a woman. (laughs) So my dad hung around for about a week and came back. And the answer was still no. So he went back to Arizona.

Then a week or so later, two weeks later, my mother, with some of girlfriends made up a story that she was going to spend a few days with a couple of girlfriends and stuff like that. That was a cover story. She got on the bus. She went to Sahuayo, got on another bus, went to Guadalajara; she took the train. She met my dad, my father, on the U.S. Mexico border, on the U.S. side. Then from there they took another bus to go to—the border town was Nogales, Arizona—from there you would take the train to Guadalajara and then it would continue to Mexico City.

My father waited for her there and then they took the bus to Phoenix and they got married. This is in 1940, 1941, before the outbreak of World War II. In March of 1942 I came into this world. About six months later my grandfather was back in the U.S. working and he came to our house. Everything was forgiven and pardoned as soon as my mother brought the grandchild—that was me—the first grandchild in, you know, a beautiful baby and everything was forgiven.

Reti: (laughs)

Castillo: One of my cousins has been doing some family history. You would think that I would do it but maybe I'm too close to it. But one of my cousins, the

youngest of one of my uncles, has been doing some family history. My paternal grandfather died in Phoenix, Arizona. He was hit by an automobile. It was a hit and run in 1945. So he died and he was buried and she found out which cemetery he was buried in. It's the same cemetery where my father is buried and my mother is buried.

It's a Catholic cemetery in Phoenix, Arizona. In a number of communities where you have a large Mexican-origin population, in polite terms the Catholic cemetery was often the Mexican cemetery, but instead of saying "the Mexican cemetery," they would say "the Catholic cemetery," and that was a little bit nicer. But everybody knew Mexicans are buried there. So he's buried there. My grandmother passed away in Mexico, my maternal grandmother, and she's buried in Mexico. My paternal grandmother and grandfather—they passed away in Los Angeles and they're buried in Los Angeles.

Of the nine children in my mother's family, I just have one uncle and two aunts that are alive. On my father's family, there were also nine children and there are two aunts and one uncle that are still alive, that all live in Los Angeles. They lived in Los Angeles. On my mother's side (real quickly), the uncle lives on the U.S-Mexico Border in Calexico near San Diego. One aunt lives in Los Angeles, and another aunt lives in Mexico, in Sahuayo. And she is the one who handles the land.

My maternal grandfather was in the Mexican army in the 1920s and received some land in the 1930s when Lázaro Cárdenas became president and he begins to distribute the land. So he got some land in Michoacan. And that land went to

my grandfather, and then when he passed away it went to my grandmother, and then when she passed away she gave a third to one uncle, a third to another uncle, and a third to an aunt. The two uncles have died but their children have the land and then my aunt has one third of the land. So she kind of is there in Mexico and makes sure that the land is worked and she gets the proceeds from whatever crop they harvest. So there is still that connection to that *ejido* that was distributed and given to my grandfather in the early 1930s, like '32, '33, when Cárdenas came to power. Because my mother's family were not from Michoacan. They were from Jalisco but the land was in Michoacan. So the family moved—after my father left the military, left the army, they then moved to Michoacan with this plot of land. This small community, El Fortín de Las Flores, now has a nice church, paved streets, running water, sewers, a central plaza. It's still a small, little town but it's surrounded by agriculture. It's an agricultural community. It's interesting because they used to grow—it used to be wheat—but now recently it's been more cash crops like strawberries. Strawberries are grown in Watsonville, or in Oxnard and Ventura [but in] the last twenty to twenty-five years the state of Michoacan [has also become] known for strawberries. So oftentimes the strawberries that are grown in Santa Cruz County and Ventura County compete in the world market with those that are grown in Michoacan. And some of the growers have even gone into Mexico, some of the Santa Cruz County growers have gone into Mexico.

Reti: So they can do year-round strawberries.

Castillo: So they can do year round. And have leased lands. Some of them have even tried to buy lands. At one time you could not buy land in Mexico. The land

belongs to the state. But about twenty years ago one of the presidents changed that a bit. So now you can lease land; you can buy land—all you need to do is get a lawyer and you can buy it through a Mexican lawyer. There are some arrangements to kind of loosen up— That has been interesting because it went from kind of self-sufficient agriculture in Michoacan to more cash crops and strawberries. Strawberries from Michoacan are sold all over the world.

Reti: There's a lot of money in strawberries.

Castillo: There's a lot of money in strawberries. I remember once my wife and I were in Paris and there was an open-air market. We went in, and sure enough, there were Driscoll strawberries from Watsonville with the crates from Driscoll.
(laughs)

Reti: (laughs)

Castillo: I said, wow, you're never that far from home.

Reti: So when your parents came to Phoenix—

Castillo: Yes.

Reti: —what kind of work were they doing?

Castillo: Well, my mother was working in agriculture. And at that time, before the cotton picker, they would pick cotton. That was one of the biggest crops in Phoenix, in Maricopa County and the surrounding area. My mother—her education was equivalent to maybe a third or fourth grade education, but it was in Mexican schools. She knew how to read and write in Spanish but she didn't go

to schools in the U.S. My father—they moved up here to the United States at an early age. So he went to the public schools in Phoenix before my grandparents left and moved to Los Angeles. So he went to the public schools, so he could read and write in Spanish but he could also read and write in English. So he was more like a blue-collar worker.

Eventually, he worked at a furniture store. He was a salesman, because he was bilingual and they catered to the Mexican-origin population. So he was a step up from being an agricultural worker. But he was still blue collar, manual labor. He delivered the furniture but he was also a salesman. He was a salesman who would go out to the smaller communities and sell furniture, primarily to Spanish-speaking people, who for some reason couldn't come into town or didn't want to come into town, or just bought furniture from this salesman. So my dad would do that and then he'd deliver their furniture. So he had a little higher level and higher income in Phoenix.

There was the big house that my father's parents owned and then there was a small house. So we lived in the small house. And then when my grandparents moved to Los Angeles, we moved into the big house. We went to the public schools in Phoenix. But language was very important and Spanish was very important. We would use Spanish at home and then English at school. This was way before bilingual education. At home we would just always speak Spanish, especially because my mom—her English was very broken. The more we lived in the United States, the more we grew up, she got better with her English. But everything was done in Spanish—conversation at the home. So I grew up in a Spanish-language household and then went to school, where we used English.

I just have one brother. He's younger than me, a couple of years younger. So there were just the two of us. Which is interesting, because both of my parents came from families of nine children, which does not count the miscarriages. But then my mother and father decided just to have two children.

Reti: So when you were going back and forth between speaking Spanish at home and English at school—or, were you allowed to speak Spanish at school? Was that forbidden?

Castillo: I don't remember anyone telling me, "You can't speak Spanish. You're in school." Some of my friends and colleagues, growing up they remember being told, "You can't speak Spanish," and being spanked or being with hit with a ruler on the knuckles or something like that. I don't ever remember being told that. But it was almost automatic. You were in school and you switched to English in the classroom. But I would speak Spanish in the playground, or when we were walking to school with my friends, or when we were just goofing around or doing something outside of the classroom, we would speak Spanish.

Reti: Was the school integrated?

Castillo: The elementary school was primarily Spanish surname. It was not until I went to the high school— We lived in what I guess would be called South Phoenix. South Phoenix was more Mexican origin; North Phoenix was more Anglo American; and West Phoenix was more Anglo American, but it was in a period of transition, becoming more Mexican. African Americans tended to live in South Phoenix. So I grew up in a neighborhood that was predominantly Mexican origin, but there were African Americans there.

So that in high school, when I went to high school, it was an integrated high school. I started high school in 1956. This is right after Brown versus the Board of Education.³ So in my high school there were about a third Mexican origin; a third African Americans; and a third whites. Very few Asians, but there were some Asians as well. That was not the case in elementary school. Kindergarten through eighth grade was elementary school. And then ninth grade to twelfth grade was high school. There was no middle school—like today we have middle school that's seventh, eighth, ninth—there was no middle school. So from eighth grade, you'd then go on to high school.

The high school was very integrated: a third, a third, a third. I was involved in clubs, athletic events, and other extracurricular—I knew African Americans and they were our neighbors. I always wondered why, because there was a high school there, which was Carver High School and we used to walk by there before I went to high school (because I went to high school in '56), but in the early, middle-fifties, where African Americans used to go. But public education was segregated until Brown versus the Board of Education in 1954, so there were African American schools in Phoenix, which is kind of weird because when I think of segregated schools for African Americans it's like, well, that's in the South.

Reti: Right. That's the stereotype.

³ Brown v. Board of Education, 347 U.S. 483 (1954), was a landmark United States Supreme Court case in which the Court held that state laws creating separate public schools for black and white students unconstitutional. The decision overturned the Plessy v. Ferguson decision of 1896, which sanctioned state-sponsored segregation—Editor.

Castillo: Or maybe Texas, which I think of as the South. But that's another issue. Some people say, "No, that's the Southwest." But anyway, it's South. (laughs) But anyway, in Phoenix, Arizona there was an African American high school and some of the people that I knew went there. I had no idea about Brown versus Board of Education. When I got to high school in '56, there were African Americans there. And I wondered, what ever happened to that high school? It just closed down and became—they used it for special education, or I forgot exactly what they used it for.

Also, growing up in Phoenix, there was an Indian school, special schools for Native Americans. That was more on the north side of town. It still is there. It's more like an enrichment school now. It's a charter school or something like that. So there were very few, if any, Native Americans in my high school, because they went to the—it was called the Phoenix Indian School. It was for Native Americans, not just from the surrounding Phoenix area, but they came from throughout the state. It was like a boarding school, elementary and high school. And I don't know how they were selected to go there, to the Indian school.

So elementary was basically—I would say it was about 70 percent Mexican-origin, with some whites, some Asians. Now that I'm reflecting, there were no African Americans in my earlier years. It was only as I was finishing up elementary school (this is after Brown versus the Board of Education) maybe a year when I saw some African Americans. Because by 1956, the Carver High School had been closed down. And since most of the African Americans lived in South Phoenix, they went to Phoenix Union.

Then because the population was really increasing in number of school-age population, they established another high school in South Phoenix, which was even further south than where I lived, where there were more African Americans. So the two schools—Phoenix Union High School, which was the school that I went to, and the other school, which was South Mountain High School, had a large percentage of African Americans. And as a result of that, athletically they did well; they did very well. They were integrated into the student body, into various classes, into athletics, into various clubs. And there were never any issues of—for example, our basketball team had African Americans playing those schools from the north side that had no African Americans. Because some places, like in the South, they just wouldn't do that. They wouldn't play each other.

Reti: You'd have to have your own league.

Castillo: They had their league that was whites only. In Phoenix it was—

Reti: What about in terms of curriculum, in school. Did you study any history of Mexican Americans? When you took history, was it all-white history, or—

Castillo: I started taking history and I became much more interested in history—Many of my friends, because there was the vocational, technical part of Phoenix Union High School—many of my friends took vocational, technical, where they did woodworking. They did auto mechanics. They did electrical work, plumbing, that kind of stuff. For some reason, and I don't know why, I don't know if it was consciously—I just wasn't attracted to that. It really is a case today, when it comes to technology, fifties and sixties technology as well as twenty-first century

technology, I'm all thumbs. I mean, if something is wrong with the car, I take it to a mechanic. I know where to put gas and drive, but that's about it. And I'm probably not that good of a driver. (laughs)

Reti: (laughs)

Castillo: If something happens with the plumbing at our place, I call the plumber. I know they're expensive but if I tried to do something I probably would make it a big disaster.

So I was attracted to college prep, taking English and history. I took—at that time it was Western civilization. Now today it's world history. It's changed a lot. And the focus was on the West, Western civilization, with maybe just a real quick run-through of Latin American civilization and Asian civilizations. But it primarily was Western civ. So I did that and that was my sophomore year. And then U.S. history in my junior year in high school. Then I started getting more and more interested [in] U.S. history—I mean it was history from George Washington to Eisenhower, but it was more political, economic history. There was no talk of African Americans. except slavery and abolitionism. After Reconstruction, African Americans just disappeared, you didn't see them. There was no talk of women, just nothing. Nothing. And there was clearly no talk of Mexican Americans, Latinos, except the U.S.-Mexico War. But that was a couple of pages in the 1840s: the U.S. won; Mexico lost. And then you move on to the 1850s, the Civil War.

But I really liked the teacher. He was very good. And then that same teacher, my high school teacher, did a class, it was an elective on the history of Arizona. My

high school teacher was single, a single guy, had a master's, which you didn't need to teach high school, but he had a master's. And he was a published historian. I later found out after I took the class on Arizona history—I just kept up with him—I found out that he had published a couple of books, more traditional biographies, or the history of a city or something like that. But he was a high school teacher who published some very good histories himself. So I became interested in that. But there was nothing on Mexican Americans, or Latinos, or Spanish. I mean, even when we did Western civilization, the focus was on Western Europe.

Reti: Were you conscious of that [omission] at the time?

Castillo: Kind of. I think I was a little bit conscious of it. Here I'm growing up; we speak Spanish at home. I know I'm Mexican. All my friends are Mexican. My parents, my brother is Mexican; all my friends are. You know, there were always the celebrations of the Cinco de Mayo, the 16th of September, the queens and the parades and the parties.

We followed baseball; my father really liked baseball. And at that time in Phoenix, the late forties but into the 1950s, there was the old—what was it called—it was something like the Pacific Coast or the Southwest Mexican leagues. These were minor leagues, maybe not even the highest level of minor leagues, maybe in the middle. I think the highest level is like AAA. This might have been AA or A. But the teams came from Phoenix, from Tucson, from El Paso, from San Antonio. And some of them were border communities like El Paso, and San Antonio [which has] a large Mexican population. So they had Mexicans on their

teams in the minor leagues. Very few ever made it to the major leagues, maybe one or two. And then they would also play some teams from Northern Mexican cities. So the Arizona Texas Mexico League, or something like that. So I kind of got the sense that there were Mexicans and they were doing stuff, and they're playing baseball. But the big leagues—which I also liked to follow—the Brooklyn Dodgers and the Yankees.

So I kind of had the sense that—I'm taking these classes—well, in Western civ it was Western Europe; in U.S. history it was beginning with the Pilgrims and George Washington and moving up finally to the most recent president, and doing the wars—the traditional U.S. history. But I enjoyed it. Even before this, when I was in the seventh or eighth grade, I used to love to go to the library. The school had a library. And they had a whole series of biographies for middle-school kids, for sixth to eighth grade, that I started reading. I think I read all of them. They were like one hundred pages, big print—on Thomas Jefferson, on George Washington, on World War II—primarily the famous men, white men's history. But I devoured it. I really liked it. I would go to the library and she'd say, "No, Pedro—"

Well, no, I wasn't Pedro. One other thing that happened. My birth certificate says Pedro. My parents called me Pedro at home. My brother called me Pedro. But when I went to school, it became Peter.

Reti: Ay.

Castillo: So when I was at school, I was Peter, and that's what the teachers called me. I went home, my parents called me Pedro. It didn't develop any—I mean, I

was able to internalize stuff. I'm Pedro at home. I'm Peter over there.

So the librarian told me, "No, Peter. You've read all of them. There's none left." And there was a series of them, like thirty books: you know, Thomas A. Edison, who was part Latino. It's Thomas Alva Edison. Back in his family, there was a grandfather who was Latino, Mexican.

Reti: I didn't know that.

Castillo: In this book it said nothing about that, just when he grew up and where, and all the inventions that Thomas A. Edison did and the experiments. So I read them all and I really got interested in history. And I got to high school and did Western civ in the sophomore year, U.S. history, which is required. And then my senior year, it's civics and government for one semester and then economics for a second semester. But they had this elective, this semester class on Arizona history that, as I said, I took.

I think subconsciously I was like—you know, where are the Mexicans? I mean, where are people like my parents? There's got to be some. I think it was there but not really something that I would verbalize. It's not something that I asked my high school teacher, "Hey, how come we have all these people and they all look like Jim over here. But none of them look like me. What's going on?"

Reti: So was someone encouraging you to apply to college?

Castillo: My mother, who had this third-grade education in Mexico. Here I'm finishing high school, and I'm what, 18? I certainly didn't want to go into the military. I didn't want to do that at all, although my brother did.

Reti: This would have been during the Korean War?

Castillo: (pauses) No. That was 1960, so it's after the Korean War.

Reti: So it's the beginning of the Vietnam War.

Castillo: Beginning of the Vietnam War. My father—one way that you would get your citizenship—I don't know if he thought about it in those terms, but he was still not a U.S. citizen—he volunteered during the Second World War, and was sent to Europe. And upon finishing and getting out, I don't know when it happened, but he got his U.S. citizenship as a result of that. But he served in Europe from about '42, after I was born, until about '44, something like that. He was antiwar. He told my brother and I, as he saw some escalation in Vietnam, Vietnam was heating up—he never wanted us to join the military, to have anything to do with it. My brother, I don't know why—he had nothing to do and he thought, I'll get out of town, and maybe the recruiter told him, “You join up, you see the world,” or whatever. I don't know.” (sighs) He joined. But he never left the United States. (laughs) He was always stationed in—

Reti: (laughs) He never saw the world.

Castillo: He never got to Vietnam. I'm glad, in those early years. And he never saw the world. He stayed in the United States. I just never had any interest in joining the military.

So here it is, I'm finishing up in high school, and my dad said, “Well, once you graduate I can get you a job. I know different people and I can get you a job. You can start out as a dishwasher or cleaning bathrooms and then you can move

yourself up.” My mother said, “No. I think you should go to college. You should look into it.”

Reti: Gosh.

Phoenix Community College and Arizona State University

Castillo: It was from her. So then I applied to a community college there in Phoenix and I went there and then transferred to Arizona State University. I still didn't know what I wanted to do. But when I was at Arizona State University—so now this is '62-'64—I met a professor, Juan Martinez, Chicano, Mexican-origin, who was a professor of Latin American history. I took all of his courses. He would do Mexico; he would do Latin American history. He kind of mentored me. I became more and more interested in history and the teaching of history. He leaves Arizona State University and he goes to San Francisco State after I had graduated. And he becomes very much involved in the student struggle and the antiwar movement and the African American and the civil rights movement at San Francisco State. He's radicalized. Because when I first met him he dressed in suits, gray ties, button-down shirts. I mean, he was just like my imagination of how professors would dress at an Ivy League school, male professors with suits, coats, ties. He goes to San Francisco State and he takes off the coat and tie and becomes radicalized.

Reti: (laughs)

Castillo: And he's involved and he's tenured. He was battling Hayakawa, who was president of San Francisco State. And he was very instrumental in

establishing ethnic studies at San Francisco State. I saw him after that. He had tenure but I don't know what happened. He left San Francisco State and then had some type of administrative position at UC Berkeley. I don't know if he's still alive. I modeled myself—in terms of, here was a Mexican who was a professor at Arizona State University, maybe one of the few, the only one that I knew. In high school, there were no Mexican American teachers. There was just one guy that I knew and he was Coach George. He was teaching driver's training. He had like six periods of teaching driver's training. That's how I learned to drive and that's how I met him, through driver's training, and got to know him. He was very encouraging of finishing high school and stuff like that. But he didn't have a position where he taught English or Spanish or history or biology or anything. He taught driver's training. I don't know the details of how that happened. Do you get hired to teach driver's training at a high school? Obviously, George did. So he didn't become a role model but at least I knew a Mexican [teacher] in my high school. Maybe the only one. Who taught driver's training.

So when I finished and Juan Martinez was my professor I said, "God, that's what I want to be." But before that, I met my wife, and we got married in 1963. I was just a junior. We met at a Catholic youth organization dance and we got together and fell in love. We got married. Her parents wanted me to finish college, which probably would have been the best thing to have done.

But we got married and I had one semester to go. But at that time I wasn't thinking of a Ph.D. I was thinking of teaching at a high school, teaching history at a high school. So I decided to work on my credentials. So I stayed in Phoenix and

worked on my credential. I did my student teaching. The master teacher was a teacher who taught U.S. history, Ted Moate. I still remember him. He was one of the most radical professors of the whole district. He was very much involved with the American Civil Liberties Union. Later, he recouped—he becomes the president of the ACLU for all of Arizona. He has done this because he is so outspoken against the war in Vietnam, supporting civil rights, that he is reassigned from the classroom teaching U.S. history and teaching social studies, and he is given six study halls. That was his job.

Reti: (gasps) Wow. Totally punitive.

Castillo: And it was all political. It was all political. In the high schools—one of your five or six classes was study hall. You went in and there were thirty kids and it was one hour and you were supposed to study, read, whatever.

Reti: So he was kind of babysitting kids.

Castillo: Yeah, babysitting. He had six of these classes. This happened after I had left because when I did my student teaching with him, he was still in the classroom. So this happened as Arizona becomes more and more conservative. Arizona has a progressive spirit and progressive politics in the 1930s and 1940s. It begins to change in the fifties. More and more folks from the Midwest, from the South, begin to move into the Phoenix area. So politics begins to shift. Out of there you have Barry Goldwater. You have the John Birch Society that is very strong, that felt that there were communists everywhere. But it was also interesting that at the same time the African American nationalist radical organizations came out of Phoenix. Before Malcolm X there was Elijah

Mohammed and the Nation of Islam. Elijah Mohammed, the head person, had a home in Phoenix, Arizona. And there was a mosque there where they had services. So at the same time that you have this [activism], Phoenix is moving more and more to the right.

So three or four years after I finished and did my student teaching, he was reassigned to six study halls. Ted was a socialist, to use that term. He was a civil libertarian, progressive socialist in the 1950s and 1960s. So that's where I got my political, progressive influence.

Reti: Fascinating.

Castillo: From Ted. After a few years he got tired of going to school everyday, Monday through Friday, and babysitting from eight until two in the afternoon. So they kind of drove him out of education. He was an excellent teacher. And he taught in North Phoenix, where the kids were white and they were more conservative. Which is probably where they needed him. If he had been in the high school where I went, they probably would have left him alone—that's just Mexicans and blacks, let him do his political stuff there. But his students, where I did my student teaching with him, was Camelback High School. This is in North Phoenix. 95 percent if not 98 percent of the students were white Republicans, conservatives. And after a while they must have just driven him out, those study halls. So he got out—he resigned, went to law school, got his law degree, then became chair of the American Civil Liberties Union, or president—I don't know administratively how that's done.

So that's politically I think the influence. And then the university professor at

Arizona State University.

Then I get married, start[ed] looking for a job, because I thought, God, I'm married. I want to teach, eventually at the university, but for that I need a Ph.D. So I think I want to teach at a high school. I couldn't find employment, couldn't find a job, not even interviews at any of those schools.

Reti: Do you think that was because of racial discrimination?

Northern Arizona State University

Castillo: I think so. This is in the early sixties. So that's when I decided to go to get my master's degree at Northern Arizona University—

Reti: Wait. Can I just stop you for a second and backtrack for a little bit?

Castillo: Sure.

Reti: So when you were at Arizona State getting your BA, were you active in or were you aware of a Chicano movement?

Castillo: There was nothing like that going on on campus. This is 1960 to 1964. What I do remember was Martin Luther King came—it must have been in '63 or '64—to give a talk at the football stadium. My wife and I went. And my wife's parents thought I was a communist for doing that. They were Mexicans but more conservative than my parents. And my parents were not big liberals. But by that time I had been politicized by Ted Moate. I had been politicized by taking classes in Latin American and Mexican history from Juan Martinez. I had been

politicized from friends of mine that I grew up with, many of whom never made it out of high school, very few went to college. (pauses) I was interested in the civil rights movement. There was no Chicano student movement. There were no Chicano organizations. There were some Chicanos on campus at Arizona State University, but no student organizations at that time.

Reti: It was too early.

Castillo: It was too early.

Reti: I wasn't sure because in California it might have been a little different?

Castillo: In California it was different. Things were already organizing in the early sixties in California. Nothing like that was happening in Arizona. But the issue becomes more and more the civil rights movement. Martin Luther King came and we heard his talk. Very inspirational. And also, there is beginning to be an antiwar movement. These are the people that I was attracted to, the ones who were in civil rights and the ones who were antiwar.

Reti: But civil rights was seen as a black issue.

Castillo: Yes, civil rights was a black issue, right, not as a Chicano issue.

Reti: Yes.

Castillo: So then I went to Northern Arizona University. I think I had gone there in the summer. I wanted to get a master's but I wanted not to go to Arizona State because I'd gotten my BA there. So Northern Arizona.

Reti: That's in Flagstaff.

Castillo: Flagstaff. Not that far from Phoenix. I think it's two hours by car. So I started taking classes. I met some of the professors. And I did well. I took two or three classes in the summers. Anyway, then they said, "Why don't you apply?" I said, "Well, it's kind of late to apply to get a master's." They said, "No. Don't worry about it. And we'll give you a TAship and everything." It was all there. Then I came back and told my wife, "Guess what?" (laughs)

Reti: (laughs) We're moving to Flagstaff.

Castillo: And she's pregnant now with our first child. I said, "What about moving to Flagstaff?" My wife and I thought it was great. But it was my parents and her parents who were like, "Are you guys crazy, moving to Flagstaff. When are you going to get a job and work? Now your wife is pregnant." But anyway, we went and spent a couple of years. I got my master's with the idea that with a master's I was going to be much more marketable getting a job at a high school. I was still thinking of high school.

Reti: Like your teacher.

Castillo: My teacher had a master's. I was still thinking of that, and the historian at the high school.

Teaching History at Riverside City College

But there was a job at Riverside City College to teach U.S. history. So one of my professors said, "Why don't you apply?" But I was not thinking of higher

education. Sure enough, I applied and they wrote back to me. They said, “We’d like to interview you. But we can’t pay (this was a community college) for you to come.”

Reti: Riverside Community College, as in Riverside, California?

Castillo: Yeah, out of LA. I don’t know if you’ve been to San Bernardino?

Reti: Yes, I know where Riverside is. I just hadn’t heard of that particular college.

Castillo: So. (sighs) I had never interviewed. Because for high school [jobs] I would apply and I’d just get, “Sorry,” and nothing. Not even interviews, just nothing. So I applied and they contacted me with letters and they called me to come by for an interview. I drove down and we did the interview. I think I stayed overnight and they paid for the hotel. But they didn’t have funds for transportation. But I remember that I drove. I didn’t fly. I don’t know if from Flagstaff to Riverside—you’d probably have to go down to Phoenix and—

Reti: Still.

Castillo: And then fly to LA or something. But I was thinking, I’ll just drive. I stayed overnight and it was a one-day kind of a thing. So I said, “We’ll be in touch.” I came back the next day and within a couple of days I got a letter and they called me and said, “You got the job.” To teach at a community college.

Reti: For history?

Castillo: For history, yes. It was a social science studies department. So there were people who taught politics, sociology, anthropology, and history. There

were three or four people who taught history.

So then I finished my MA. And then we moved. By that time we had our first child. A friend of mine helped me move. I had gone first and taken everything in a U-Haul. And my wife and son went to Phoenix and stayed with her parents. And I found a place. It was an apartment. And then my father-in-law drove my wife and my son to Riverside. Because from Phoenix to Riverside it's eight hours, or something like that. So I started teaching at Riverside City College. And this is when I met Eugene Cota-Robles.

Reti: No kidding!

Castillo: He was at UC Riverside. He was a biology professor at UC Riverside. We worked on the grape strike and we supported Chavez and the farm workers. We would go down from Riverside to the Coachella Valley, the grape growers. And Blythe and Indio and those places. And picket the supermarkets, the Safeway not to sell grapes, and that kind of stuff. So this is '66, '67, '68—something like that.

But I had forgotten, and I was reminded of this—Gene Cota-Robles passed away last year, and there was a memorial for him here. His wife came and she's Swedish, Gun Cota-Robles. And she reminded me that no, I met Gene at a Gene McCarthy rally. He was supporting Gene McCarthy and I was supporting Gene McCarthy in Riverside. We were probably the only two Chicanos supporting Gene McCarthy. (laughs)

Reti: (laughs)

Castillo: Because he was like a real leftist progressive. That's where I first met Gene. We started talking. Another Mexican, you know.

Reti: Yeah.

Castillo: He's at the university and I just go there and I'm at the community college. I thought that was a pretty big deal. Because at the community college there was me, and there was another Latino there, who was in the Spanish department, on the faculty.

Reti: And that was it.

Castillo: Frank— I forget his full name. He taught in the Spanish department. A really nice guy. We got to know each other and our families got to know each other. Politically, we were very different. He was more moderate. I was supporting Gene McCarthy (laughs) and going out and picketing with Cesar Chavez. He never would do that.

So that's where I first met Eugene Cota-Robles. He was very supportive. He thought teaching at the community college was great. He was in biology but he was involved in doing stuff in the community and with the Chavez and McCarthy campaign. So I think he was also another influence and mentor [saying] there's more than just teaching and doing your research and publishing. Gene had this idea, this notion about community service and getting involved in social change. He's the one who kept me thinking about, well, teaching at a community college is great. I said, I really like it. The staff was terrific. The students were great. I taught five classes a semester.

Reti: (whistles)

Castillo: It was three U.S. history and then one government class, kind of a lower-division government class, and then what was at that time, and I think they still teach it at community colleges: History of the Americas, which is supposed to be a history of Canada, the U.S., and Latin America. I made it kind of a Latin American history class. I kind of ignored Canada. I said very little about the U.S. It was predominantly Latin American history. And the dean of instruction thought, oh, that's great. And these History of the Americas [courses]—that comes out of Herbert Eugene Bolton, who taught at UC Berkeley in the 1920s and 30s who had this notion about—you should view the Americas comparatively and you should teach History of the Americas. Those courses were very popular in the community colleges in the fifties, sixties, and seventies. I think some community colleges still might have them on the books. But now it's more like U.S. history, Latin American history—not this kind of comparative Americas.

It's interesting. That's kind of come back in the last fifteen years, where they're doing more stuff like comparative Americas. Beth Haas here teaches a class on the Americas and has a seminar. It's comparative. Just kind of coming around from what Bolton tried to do in the twenties and thirties. It became fashionable in the forties and fifties. And in the sixties and seventies people said, "Oh, let's do more national history." In the 1990s and 2000s and into the present, people are doing more with the Americas.

So that was my fifth class. Eventually I got rid of the government class. I did

three U.S. history and then two Latin American history [classes].

Reti: In terms of the texts, what was available to you to use in the classroom at that point?

Castillo: On Latin America? Very little. I mean, this is a community college, so you basically would get either a textbook or two monographs, or something like that. The expectation was not that students would read a lot. Now the books that are available are just tremendous. I think there was a textbook on the history of the U.S. and then history of the—I think there was a history of the Americas textbook.

Reti: So you would use that.

Castillo: Yes, so I would use that.

So Gene—we kept working together and we met socially—his wife and him and my wife and myself. Politically, we continued to work and continued to do things together. But he always continued to remind me, “If you’re going to teach at a university, you’re going to need a Ph.D. So he put me in contact with a Chicano professor at UC Santa Barbara, Jesus Chavarria. He said, “Apply.” I applied and I was accepted.

By this time I’ve got a couple of children. So I spent three years at the community college. If I had stayed there I would have gotten tenure, or security of employment. It’s three years. All the reviews were very good and positive. When I told them that I was leaving, they wanted me to stay. But I said, no. It wasn’t that I was going to another place for more money. I wanted to get my Ph.D. They

could understand that. That was no problem. But I'll never forget the three, they were men, who were at Riverside City College—the chair of the Social Studies Department, who didn't care that my name was Castillo. He really wanted me to teach there. He wanted to diversify and do more with the social science faculty. They were all white and they were all men. There were no women in that department. So this was '66, '67, and '68. So there were six or seven white guys, and me. (laughs)

Reti: And you were pretty young.

Castillo: Yeah, I know. And we're all males. Women? The dean of instruction was a woman. I remember her because she was real bubbly. I don't remember her name but I remember her personality. Faculty members? Clearly not in the social sciences. There was a guy who taught sociology. He was Jewish. And he came from New York and here he is in Southern California.

Reti: (laughs)

Castillo: He didn't drive.

Reti: He didn't need to in New York.

Castillo: He would take taxis. Eventually he did learn how to drive. But he grew up in New York and Brooklyn. So he taught sociology. There was another guy who taught anthropology and the three of us who taught history.

I kept in touch with those three guys. The chair of the department—he passed away. But I always remember him because he gave me a chance. He took a

chance on me. He saw something. He wanted to do something different. He wanted to build up. And he encouraged me. He said, "Do Latin America. I know this is the Americas but if they want U.S. history they can take a U.S. history course. Do more on Latin America."

Reti: That's great.

Castillo: So there was no problem with him. "Canada," he said, "Forget about Canada. Some other time somebody can do Canada." (laughs) So he was very supportive.

Reti: Did you have students who were Latino?

Castillo: Yeah, I had a few students who were Latinos and they kind of got interested in Latin American history. But what I really liked about it was that the classes were small—twenty, thirty students, one-to-one who were interested. Very few, if any, were going to major in history. I had nursing students, other students who were going to go into engineering or going to go to law school. And then other students who really needed help with their writing. It's a community college so you get everybody.

There started to be a Chicano organization. Primarily it had to do with the farm workers. So that's when we got a group together. It was a farm workers support group but not all of them were Chicanos. There were white students. There was a large Mexican-origin—and there still is today in Riverside—a large Mexican-origin population, but a large white population [too]. And on the city council there was a Mexican American, on the Riverside City Council, which I thought

was very strange.

Reti: That's amazing for that time.

Castillo: Yeah. This is kind of the late sixties. But I did meet him and he was single. He was gay. I later found out that he was gay. He never came out. He was Mexican in Riverside.

Reti: That was hard enough.

Castillo: Later he comes out, but not until he's no longer on the city council. He was a lawyer. I got to know him and he supported us. He came to our club activities. It was not a club. It was just a group of people who did UFW support. We would go and picket. Gene was very supportive because he was doing that with the students at UC Riverside and I was doing it at Riverside City College.

Reti: So it would have been the very early years of UC Riverside, as well.

Castillo: Yeah. So we get students to go picket the Safeways and go to Blythe and Indio. And there in Riverside also—don't buy grapes—as well as to try to get people into the McCarthy campaign. That was even much more difficult. (laughs) To do that.

Graduate Studies and Teaching at the University of California, Santa Barbara

Reti: (laughs) So then you went off to UC Santa Barbara.

Castillo: Yeah. Then I went off to Santa Barbara and that became much more politicized, much more active. So I'd been accepted to the Ph.D. program. And

here I am talking to Jesus Chavarria, who was an assistant professor who did modern Latin American history. He did his Ph.D. at UCLA. And he did his dissertation and book on a Peruvian nationalist leftist intellectual. So I'm telling him, "Well, I've got a wife and she'll probably look for a job. And I've got two kids."

Reti: Was your wife an academic?

Castillo: No, Shirley was not. She went to a Catholic girls school in Phoenix. I went to the public school. Her family was very Catholic and her father was involved in the Catholic fraternal order of the Knights of Columbus. So he was real high up in the administration of that. They would go to conferences. He always wanted to get me into the Knights of Columbus and I was never interested. (laughs) He was like the head, the vice president or president of the Arizona chapter. They have different terminologies and I forgot what it is, the headmaster, or something like that. They wear capes and they have swords. It's a fraternal organization, Catholic, the Knights. So they're very Catholic so she went to the Catholic girls high school. But she went to the community college. And then she decided that she didn't want to continue anymore. So she went to work and she became a keypunch operator. Before computers there was the keypunch. She would punch things on the computer. It's like a clerk typist. They don't use that term anymore, do they? Clerk Typist.

Reti: A word processor.

Castillo: A word processor. That's what she would do. And with that, you could get a job almost anyplace. So she did that when I was going to school, when we

got married. And then she had to stop that when she got pregnant. And she was at home in Riverside, because I was working.

So now we're going to go back to graduate school. So she got a job doing that. But it was the night shift; she would go in like at 4:00 pm and work until midnight, or something like that. So I would watch the kids from 4:00 and then they would go to bed at 7:00 or 8:00. Then I could read. Then she'd come home at midnight. So she had a job.

So anyway, then I talked to Jesus Chavarria, who's the guy who's helping me and supporting me in doing all of this stuff. And then he's the one who says—so this is 1969 or 1970. He'd been very involved in the Chicano movement. I think he'd probably been involved in working with [Leon] Panetta.⁴ There was a lawsuit here, but there was also going to be something statewide. He said, "What we really need is a Chicano history class." I thought, that's great, but I've been teaching U.S. history and Latin American history at a community college. I have a BA and an MA. I've done no research on Chicanos.

So he said, "We're going to propose it and you're going to be the lecturer."

Reti: Oh, my gosh. (laughs)

⁴ April 26, 1972 "Letter from Leon Panetta of Thomas, Panetta & Thompson to Chancellor Dean McHenry," which reads in part: "As you know, representatives of the Chicano Community of the nine counties being served by the University of California, Santa Cruz made a formal complaint to the Office of Civil Rights, Department of Health, Education, and Welfare in the latter part of February, 1972. The complaint alleges violations of both Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Executive Order 11246 in that the University failed to provide equal educational and employment opportunities to ethnic and racial minorities. We believe the facts clearly establish a pattern of discrimination by the University against all minorities but particularly against the predominant minority in this area—minority students." See University / Archives Ephemera Collection (UA70) in UCSC Library Special Collections, Folder 10 "The Chicano Complaint."

Castillo: So I had the whole summer to put a class together.

Reti: And you were also at the same time going to enter the Ph.D. program.

Castillo: Enter the Ph.D. program at UC Santa Barbara. And I was also going to be a lecturer there. But they couldn't call me a lecturer. They gave me another title. Because I was a grad student, but I was not a professor or an assistant professor. In between is something, it's lecturer but—the UC has all of these teaching titles.

Reti: Because you already had a master's.

Castillo: Yes.

Reti: So you could teach.

Castillo: So I could teach. It was like a lecturer but it was some other title. The secretaries in the history department had a difficult time with me. I was on the faculty. I was teaching a class. So do I get an office? Well, graduate students don't have offices. They might have a cubicle in the library. But no offices. So that became an issue. I got an office. And then when I went in, I needed some legal pads for notes and so on. Well, "Do you get this? You're a grad student. Grad students don't get supplies." So there was always an issue. They always had to check with someone. But I'm teaching the class. And I signed off. I gave the grades. So that was one of the things. But after a year of that, then they figured, okay, fine, he's part-time faculty, lecturer, something. But he's also a grad student. But okay. But the staff had a hard time with that. (laughs) "Can I use the phone?" "Well, faculty have an allowance on telephones, but you're a grad

student.”

Reti: A borderlands experience.

Castillo: Yes, right. And then all the other grad students had TAships and research [positions]. I never TA’d. I TA’d in my master’s but never in my Ph.D. Because I was this lecturer. And it was fine. It was really great. So I worked and put together this course. And the appointment was for a year. And Jesus and I had it worked out so that for Chicano history, fall would be the nineteenth century; B would be twentieth century, in the winter; and then spring I could do a seminar on Chicano history.

Reti: Wow, a whole year.

Castillo: A whole year on Chicano history as a student. And then you could do your own work. I also had to carry two seminars each term and do my graduate work. But I got more than a TA. But I didn’t get the assistant professor [title]. So we were able to manage that [financially] and my wife worked at that time, which was okay.

It was great. I knew that I didn’t want to do Latin American history although I liked Latin American history. I was very interested, by that time, in what is now, or what was, urban history. That attracted me. So I went to one of the professors, Alexander Callow. Who had written on urban history and had written on the corruption in cities and crime in cities. He was very interested in that. I told him, “I really want to study the city. I want to study Los Angeles and I want to study the role of Mexican Americans.”

Reti: Ah. So that's where this begins.

Castillo: Yeah, that's where it begins.

Reti: And he said, "Well, I don't know a thing about Mexican Americans. I know you. You're Mexican American." (laughs) "But if you work with me, I will teach you everything about urban history and the role of minorities in urban issues. And then you can teach me about Mexican Americans." So it was a great relationship. So he was one professor. There was another professor who did California and the Southwest. And then Jesus Chavarria was my outside person and we did twentieth century Mexico with him. And then the fourth person on your committee has to be somebody who is outside of your department. So I got this guy who is an urban historian. He's no longer in Santa Barbara. He left and he's back east or something. But interestingly enough, he was one of the professors—when Candace West in sociology [at UCSC] got her degree at Santa Barbara, I didn't know her there. I met her here when we started talking. But her major professor at Santa Barbara was Harvey Molotch, who was on my committee. Small world, academics.

Jesus was very much involved in the Chicano movement and very active. So he was denied tenure. A first-rate academic. His research was there. He was not the greatest teacher but not the world's worst teacher. He was a good teacher. His community activities were just outstanding. The department ruled against him. He sued the University of California, Santa Barbara but it didn't go anyplace. This is years before those suits started to bear some fruit for people who were denied tenure for political reasons or because they were women or gays or ethnic

minorities. Or just leftists, you know—

So Jesus then started a magazine. He tried to raise money and there was a lawsuit against the University of California. And it didn't go anyplace. He then started a magazine that is now very influential. It's called *Hispanic Business*. It's really out of context. Because here's this Marxist nationalist progressive historian who happens to be a Chicano (although he did Latin American history) who is now doing a business magazine. He writes about business, Wall Street, politics. A more moderate--the audience is the business community.

Reti: And using the word "Hispanic."

Castillo: And he uses the word "Hispanic, not "Latino," not "Chicano," and not "Mexican American." We never talked about this, "Like, what happened to you, Jesus? Did you sell out?" I still see him every once in a while. We still call each other about something or other. And both of my mentor professors have retired but every once in a while there's a note or a phone call or an email from them.

So I'm doing this work there and teaching. We stay in Santa Barbara for two years. And then the third year we moved to Santa Monica because by this time I'm doing the dissertation, so I want to be in LA, get closer. We lived in Santa Monica. I'm still commuting to Santa Barbara to teach. I got it down to twice a week, and then for the seminar, just once a week, the third year. My wife is a word processor. You can get a job anyplace. She got a job in Santa Monica, working, doing the graveyard shift.

I get a phone call from Yale University, "Are you interested in applying for a

position in Mexican American history and then doing other things depending on your interests?" So I applied.

Reti: How did they find out about you?

Castillo: You know, I don't know. There was a guy who taught there in sociology but by the time I got there, he was at UCLA, Rudy Alvarez, a sociologist. I think knew Jesus and I think that he had contacted different people. But to this day, I don't know if they had interviewed other people or if I was the only one. I never asked. I should have asked to find out.

Teaching at Yale University

So anyway, they flew me out there [to Yale]. We were in Los Angeles now. I was finishing up the research, maybe had a chapter or two done. They told me, "Fly into New York. La Guardia is better. There's a shuttle from La Guardia to downtown New Haven. We'll pick you up and take you to the hotel." I'd never been in Connecticut before. So I flew into La Guardia and sure enough, there was a shuttle that runs every two or three hours or something. So I got on the next one. And there's an office where they drop you off. I think they even dropped me off at the hotel. It's downtown New Haven and there was somebody there from the history department and we went out and had coffee. The next day some students came over and took me to the university and did the interview thing. They show you everything and then you give a talk and you meet with the faculty. There were Chicano students there and they were the ones who were very active. They were the ones who worked with the central administration

because they wanted Chicano faculty. This is Yale University.

Reti: Which had been completely white ten years earlier.

Castillo: Right. Exactly. And since Rudy Alvarez had left—I think he left a year or two before I got there—there was no one. And there were some grad students and then a lot of undergraduates. Yale University—I think when Rudy was there he started doing this—he started proposing to the admissions office that they should recruit Chicano students, Latino students from the Southwest and from the Midwest. So recruiters went to Chicago and the Chicago schools. They went to Texas and San Antonio, to El Paso. They went to Arizona, to Phoenix and Tucson. They went to New Mexico, to Albuquerque. They went to Denver, Colorado. They went primarily to Southern California—LA, San Diego—but also they came up there to Northern California. Because when I was there, there was an incoming student from Watsonville. But he was incoming and I was leaving, and I didn't really know the connection yet between Watsonville and Santa Cruz. I mean, I just had the names of the students and he was coming but I never did meet him.

So they had a good number of Chicano/Latino students, but they were from the Southwest and from the Chicago area. So I met them and they were the ones who, once Rudy left, they talked to the dean and the president about getting Chicano faculty there. So they hired me and they hired this other guy, Juan Bruce Novoa, who passed away. He was at UC Irvine and had cancer and died about a year and a half ago. [We were] young assistant professors. Juan got his degree at the University of Colorado. And I was finishing up.

Then I told my major professor I was going to go for the interview so we had a mock interview. He worked with me before I went. He was very excited. Someone from Santa Barbara going to Yale. That's big time! You know.

My wife—Where's Yale? My parents. My in-laws. God, you know—(laughs)

Reti: You had gone all over creation by this point. Kept moving.

Castillo: Yes, my wife referred to us as academic migrants. When we got to Santa Cruz (I'm getting ahead of the story), but when we got here she said, "This is the end of the line." (laughs)

Reti: (laughs) I'm not doing this again.

Castillo: This is the end of the line. And this is when she went back to school. She went to Cabrillo and finished up. She then applied to UC Santa Cruz. She was really attracted by the Community Studies Department. It took her a year to finish up at Cabrillo College because she already had some credits from Phoenix College, when we were both going there. Did some stuff at Cabrillo. Came here and this is when she first met with John Laird. She was doing her field placement and she worked with John, who was working for the county of Santa Cruz. Shirley did her field placement on the issues of family planning and she worked with Planned Parenthood in a clinic that had just been opened in Watsonville. John was her supervisor. John Borrego was in community studies. Bill Friedland

was on the faculty.⁵ She took a class from Bill. A woman who is no longer here—Mike Rotkin was already here, so she did some stuff with Mike Rotkin. So she got to know these folks before I even got to know them. And then she finished her community studies and then she went to San Jose State and did social work and she became a social worker administrator who was working in the areas of alcohol and drug abuse, and was the assistant to the director in Santa Cruz County. And then she became the director in Monterey County. So that's how she finished her—

But anyway, she said, "We're academic migrants and this is our last stop," when we got here to Santa Cruz.

So going back to New Haven, I was interviewed and got back. And then I got called that they were making me an offer of assistant professor. I had not finished my dissertation yet. So that was difficult. So went back—and this took a lot of planning—we were in Santa Monica. So I had to fly down there and I went ahead and found a house in one of the surrounding areas, not in New Haven but in North Haven. The furniture, what we had, our household items were going to be shipped. So I had to find a place before the movers got there. So sure enough, I did that and the movers got there with our stuff like two days before Shirley and the kids were going to get there. By this time I've got three, two boys and a girl. And they flew into New York. I went to pick them up in New York and

⁵ See Sarah Rabkin and Irene Reti, "Community Studies and Research for Change: An Oral History with William Friedland," (Regional History Project, UCSC Library, 2013). Available at <http://library.ucsc.edu/reg-hist/friedland> —Editor.

drove them to New Haven.

And there's a real interesting story—I drove back from Los Angeles to New Haven in a car. So the car had a California license plate. So when Shirley and the kids got there and I went to pick them up, it still had the license plate. So the movers had been there, and two or three days later Shirley and the kids arrived and I went to pick them up. So we're home now, with the movers, boxes all over the place. It's a two-story, really nice place in north New Haven. There was a knock on the door. Wow, who could that be? I went to open the door. And it was our across-the-street neighbor, Mr. Lipscomb, a big man who owned the flower store in downtown New Haven. Jewish. I said, "Hello." "Hello." "How are you?" "Good." "Good." And then he says, "I notice that you're from California by the license plate." I said, "Yes, I've just moved. I'm going to be teaching at Yale University as an assistant professor in the history department." He says, "Well, welcome to America."

Reti: (laughs)

Castillo: (laughs) Which is a kind of New England attitude of, "*This is America!* You're coming from California. That's a foreign country."

Reti: (laughs) Totally.

Castillo: Totally. Later we found out we're the only Spanish speakers in the neighborhood. And once the neighbors find out we're Mexicans, they're so relieved, because we're not Puerto Ricans. So Puerto Ricans are even worse than the Mexicans. (laughs) Shirley finds this out later from the neighbors. "Oh,

you're not Puerto Rican. Oh, you're Mexicans. Oh, okay." I know. We're going through all kinds of stuff.

Reti: Was it hard on your kids?

Castillo: It was so different for them, so different for them. I mean, there's snow. A lot of New England is so insular. Culturally, it's very different. They grew up in California and the sun. It's much more open. There're different peoples and different colors. We lived in North Haven. Later, we found out the Puerto Ricans live in New Haven and downtown New Haven, in kind of a segregated community. But in the suburbs, in North Haven, it's all whites. The name of the street is Apple Tree Lane. That should tell you something, okay? (laughs)

Reti: (laughs)

Castillo: Okay? And the neighbors had lived there for years. They knew each other. The only reason that this house was available was that the guy who was leasing it—it belonged to his mother, she passed away and they didn't want to sell it. And there was nobody else to live there. The children had their own houses. So they were going to rent it or lease it for a while. It was a good deal. It was three bedrooms, two-story, a huge basement, a yard that just went on forever. A huge yard. Oh, and on the side it had a screened porch, where in the summertime's in New England, in August when it gets so hot and muggy you sit outside and just drink lemonade and just spend the evenings. And it's not outside, so you don't get the mosquitos because of the screens. Two years of New England was really interesting.

Reti: So you were there two years?

Castillo: Two years. As soon as I got back there and started teaching. My classes were to do Mexican American-Chicano history. They wanted me to do other seminars in U.S. history. They were intrigued by a course that had to do with race in the city and ethnicity and immigration. Yale had never had this stuff. So I would look at Jews in America, Italians in America. But I also did African Americans and Chicanos. And within the context of the city. So a little bit of urban, a little bit of race, a little bit of ethnicity. And bringing different groups together. Then I also started throwing in the whole issue of gender, the few things that were on gender. So it was race, ethnicity, gender in the American city.

Reti: So how did you end up becoming interested in gender?

Castillo: I just thought, these are the people that are not in the textbooks.

Reti: So you were noticing that omission.

Castillo: Yeah, race, women, and the cities are not in the textbooks. All we get are the presidents, and the secretaries of state, and the wars—you know. I didn't want to talk about that. (laughs) You can go down the hall to get that. Which is very interesting, because years ago I remember Dana Frank, even when she first came here [as a student] she said, "Pedro, I'll always remember you. You were the only professor, when I saw your syllabus, you were the only one who was talking about women and race. Everybody else did very few things on gender and very few things on race. And you tried to look at the issues of class and race and gender." I said, "Yeah, this started at Yale." There at Yale, just like here, you

can teach whatever you want to. They thought those classes were great. I started with a seminar. I had twenty students. The first time I offered this seminar with twenty students (I still remember this) there were eighteen women and two guys. And the two guys, one of them was on the football team and the other guy was going to go to law school. It was a great experience for them. They were always intimidated, because here were eighteen women. (laughs)

Reti: So this was the class on race in the American city.

Castillo: Yeah, race in the American city, something like that. I don't know what I called it but it was like Race, Gender, and the American City, something like that.

Reti: So "gender" was in the actual class title.

Castillo: Yeah.

Reti: This would have been in the mid-seventies.

Castillo: Yeah, this was '74, '75. I did that as a seminar, did the Chicano history class, which was one semester, because they were on semesters, and did a seminar. So first semester, the lecture course; second semester, the seminar. And then the seminar on race, class, and gender in the American city.

And I did the class on urban history. So it was two and two, two classes each. So I'd just been there. I was just about to complete my first year when I get a call from the history department here [at UC Santa Cruz]: would you be interested in interviewing for a position? So I tell Shirley. She didn't hate it.

Reti: She didn't mind going back to California.

Castillo: "Yes! Go through the interview." But I wasn't looking. Because the appointments there at Yale are two, three-year appointments. And they told me, they said, "You can write twenty books or no books. We want you to teach. There's no tenure here for you. When we bring someone for tenure, it's a world-renowned person. So there's no tenure. We have assistant professors who do the lower-division work with students." Some of their professors do teach undergraduates but they do more with graduate students. So I said, fine. I had no problems with that. They were very upfront with me. How the Ivy League schools used to work, and I think they still do that, is they bring in a lot of assistant professors. Although one of my friend's colleagues did get tenure at Yale. He started as an assistant professor. And he's doing Mexican American history, Steve Pitti. He did the book on San Jose.⁶ But he did get tenure, which is amazing. After I left, there were three or four people who came by and taught Chicano history. They did their three to five years and then they would go other places.

So I got called for the interview [at UCSC] and told Shirley. She said, "Yeah, go interview." So I came here and interviewed. By this time, Eugene Cota-Robles is vice chancellor. He's here on the campus. I hadn't seen him because Gene leaves Riverside when I was in Santa Barbara, and he goes to Penn State and he's chair of the biology department. And then from Penn State he comes here and he's

⁶ Stephen J. Pitti, *The Devil in Silicon Valley: Northern California, Race, and Mexican Americans* (Princeton University Press, 2003).

academic vice chancellor. And he was in the middle of that whole crisis when Chancellor Christensen was asked to resign. I don't know the details of that but [Gene] was involved. So Gene took a lot of criticism for not jumping on the bandwagon to get rid of Christensen. I don't know what the issues were. So I get here and that has all kind of blown away, I think, by this time, and Gene is vice chancellor. Did they have an interim person?

Reti: Angus Taylor came in after Christensen and he was acting chancellor, for probably a year, and a year and a half.⁷

Castillo: And then they brought Sinsheimer. So when I came in 1976, Taylor was chancellor and Gene was vice chancellor. So I said, wow. So I interviewed and went back. Same thing here. There were Chicano students very much involved. And they were looking for someone to do Chicano history. Peter Kenez was chair of the department.

They made me the offer but I told them, "I've got to finish the year at Yale. I've got a contract." So I went to the provost's house at Yale. Their provost is different from here. The provost is like the vice chancellor for academic affairs, but they call them provosts. I said, "I've got this offer." And they said, "Well, we can match the money. No problem. We can give you an upgrade." And at private schools there are no—like, at the University of California there are salary scales and they're public. The same one for Berkeley and UCLA. Not that they do the

⁷ See Randall Jarrell, Interviewer and Editor, *Angus E. Taylor: UCSC Chancellorship, 1976-1977* (Regional History Project, UCSC Library, 1998). Available at <http://library.ucsc.edu/reg-hist/taylor>

same thing. Private schools, there aren't any—

Reti: Wait, I'm not following you. Do you mean that Yale wanted to keep you and not have you go to Santa Cruz?

Castillo: Yes! Not go to Santa Cruz. So they said, "We'll match whatever you . . ."

Reti: But there was no hope of tenure at Yale and it was a temporary position.

Castillo: Yeah, well they said, "We'll give you a year's leave with pay also. You can do that the third year. For assistant professors we usually do that in the fourth year, after we reappoint them, but you can have it in the third year." And then I said, "Well, it's a tenure track position." And that was the end of the discussion. They didn't want to engage in that. It was very amiable. So I thanked them.

Reti: So we've gotten you to Santa Cruz. We're at the point where I think we should probably stop for now.

Castillo: Okay.

Castillo's Early Years at the University of California, Santa Cruz

Reti: So today is Tuesday, January 29, 2013. This is Irene Reti. I'm here with Pedro Castillo for our second oral history. Today we're going to focus on your first decade or so at UCSC. Last time we had just gotten to the point when you arrived at UCSC. Now, were you associated with Merrill College at that point?

Castillo: Yes, when I arrived. At that time when I was hired and when I arrived

in 1976, the academic positions, at least in the humanities and the arts and social sciences, were split between a college, and at that time it was called a board of study, departments now. I had a difficult time when we went to departments—changing [nomenclature] from boards of study to departments. But anyway—the teaching load in the humanities was five courses a year and you were expected to do at least one of those courses for the college. Oftentimes it was a core course, or else you could come up with your own course and teach it as a college course. All of those things changed in 1979, with one of the many, many, many reorganizations at UC Santa Cruz. But this was one of the earliest ones. And at that time, people were hired and reviewed and evaluated by departments. So initially it was the college and the board of study—history.

So I was at Merrill College. And there was a developing group of people interested in American studies. There was me and there was Michael Cowan, who was at Merrill College. He also, later, after I got here, became provost of Merrill College. So there was a group of us that were moving in that direction. John Dizikes, but he was one of the founding faculty of Cowell and he wanted to remain there. Paul Skenazy in literature. Jim Borchert, who was in history and community studies. Those are the ones who come to mind, that were gravitating towards what later becomes the American Studies Department, first a program, then a department. And then now as we know, as we are reflecting in 2013, a department that's been disestablished, which means it will no longer exist on this campus. So there were a number of students who went through there as independent majors and then when it was a program.

So I think I taught in the [Merrill] core course once. Another time we did this city

course with Michael Cowan, Jim Borchert, who was a historian of the city, and myself. And then the class—we wanted to limit the number of students, so the class met once a week on a Friday in the afternoon, like from 2:00 to 5:00, and that limits attendance in a class, whenever you do that. We were looking at the city from the literary, the historical, the ethnic-racial, the geographical perspective. I really enjoyed it. Reflecting, it's one of the few times that I can say that UC Santa Cruz, and the goal of Santa Cruz—interdisciplinary team teaching—really worked with students. We had a small group of students. I think it was twelve, thirteen students. I think we offered it in the spring. So one of the things that we did was to go to a city. And instead of going to San Francisco, we went to Los Angeles. We got in three or four cars. We drove down. Students stayed with friends or relatives, including the faculty. We stayed a long weekend. I think we left Friday and came back Monday. We visited different parts of Los Angeles. It was really enjoyable. A small course, very stimulating because of the students. Out of that course there was a student who wrote the final paper on freeways in Los Angeles. He graduated from here. He then got a job in the planning department in Los Angeles and then he wrote a book. It was a book on freeways in Los Angeles.

Reti: Fascinating!

Castillo: So it was a great class and I really enjoyed it.

I taught my classes in the history department. I taught Chicano history. At that time it was two quarters. One quarter was nineteenth century and the second quarter was twentieth century. And then the other courses were my senior

seminar. And then later, not the first year, but maybe the third year, we did a team teaching introduction to U.S. history course with just historians. It was myself; it was Larry Veysey, who retired and passed away a few years ago. He was in the history department. Larry was an intellectual historian. Barbara Epstein, who was in the history department; she was a colonial U.S. historian, so she did early American history. Later, she then moves to history of consciousness, where she continues to teach in the history of consciousness program. She was involved and interested in social movements. She moved from Colonial period social movements and has been doing recent work on Jewish social movements in the United States. And Jim Borchert, the historian, who left here and went to Cleveland State. I lost touch with Jim. I don't know if he's still teaching or not. He did a book on African Americans in Washington, D.C. He was from the Midwest. The issue with Jim was, his wife was an academic. She was a sociologist. Buying a house—they eventually bought something in San Jose. They could just afford San Jose. And then I think he got tired of the commuting. And they both got jobs at Cleveland State.

Again, there was another interdisciplinary attempt, team teaching efforts, this time in the history program. It was the two-quarter course of the United States from George Washington to whoever was president at that time. So there was more of an emphasis on that in the early years.

So then, [I] got to Merrill, and this reorganization meant, not only giving more power to hire and promote to the departments—we begin to see the deemphasizing of the colleges to take away their academic clout. They no longer hired. Those college courses then became departmental courses. And we didn't

have that flexibility to do a course like American Cities that I did with Michael Cowan and Jim Borchert, a seminar, ten to fifteen students.

So with this reorganization it also meant that some of us who were doing courses on the United States moved to Kresge College. So in history it meant that I went to Kresge College; Jim Borchert went to Kresge College from history; John Dizikes always remained at Cowell, the whole time he was a faculty member here. I think Barbara Easton (at that time it was Barbara Easton not Barbara Epstein) went to Kresge, but I'm not really sure. In literature, it was Michael Cowan; it was Paul Skenazy; and it was Forrest Robinson that went to Kresge College. They began to develop the program that eventually became the program in American studies.

Reti: So then you were dual-affiliated at that point between American studies and history?

Castillo: It was a program, so there were a number of us who were affiliated. But it wasn't a department, so none of us had an appointment in American studies.

Reti: I see. Because it was interdisciplinary.

Castillo: Because it was an interdisciplinary program we all contributed to the program.

I stayed at Kresge. And then in the early 1980s, I want to say it was '81, '82, that there was another movement shuffle, reorganization, and probably another dean. What was needed at that time was more faculty at Oakes College. So those of us in American literature and American history went to Oakes. In literature, Dizikes

(laughs) remained at Cowell. Paul Skenazy decided to stay at Kresge. So it was Forrest Robinson and Michael Cowan in literature that went to Oakes; myself in history. I don't know if Barbara Epstein was still in history. I want to say that she had [moved] to history of consciousness, which was fine because history of consciousness also went to Oakes College. I think by that time Jim Borchert had left. Larry Veysey had retired. There was a real issue in the history department because at one time—and this is the mid-1980s—I was the only tenure-track faculty member that did U.S. history.

Reti: You're kidding!

Castillo: Veysey had retired. John Dizikes had gone completely to American studies. By that time it was a department. Barbara Epstein had gone to history of consciousness. Jim Borchert left and half of his faculty position went with him. That was in history. This is when we begin to hire some new people.

It was during the 1980s that we hired Beth Haas, first as a lecturer and then there was a position, so she was hired as an assistant professor to do nineteenth century. Later we hired Alice Yang to do Asian American and twentieth century U.S. history. And then after that, especially because Barbara had left history, we hired Lynn Westerkamp to do colonial history. So by the late eighties, we had myself, David Anthony, who was hired to do African American and U.S.; Beth Haas; Lynn Westerkamp, and Alice Yang. So we were up to five people.

It was [during] at those times at Oakes that American studies became a department. And as soon as we got to Oakes and as soon as I got tenure, I became chair of American studies. That's when Michael Cowan was dean. So he

asked me to be chair. (laughs) That's what happens around here. You get tenure; you get a promotion, so then they put you in an administrative position. So I was chair of American studies while we were there at Oakes College. It was still a program and not until after I left being chair does it become a department.

And then when (we can come back, but I'm describing all of my moves on this campus) and then when Gary Lease, who was with history of consciousness, became dean, he wanted to reorganize. There was a plan to then send us back to Merrill College, to get history there, closer to Latin American and Latino Studies, that was just developing. Some of the politics people. But it was just history. I think he needed some bodies and tried to bring history closer to where the other historians in the department were. The European historians were at Stevenson and Cowell. So maybe Gary Lease figured bringing the U.S. historians— And then there were some scattered historians at Merrill College, who stayed there, who did Latin America. David Sweet, who did the Middle East. Terry Burke, who did India and Asia; Dilip Basu. So there was some movement to try and bring the historians together. So there had been some movement to bring the historians together.

Reti: So there had been a schism developing between the U.S. historians and the Europeanists? Or is that too dramatically put?

Castillo: (pauses) Not a schism. The European historians had always been in Stevenson and then a couple at Cowell. Even Larry Veysey was there. But when reorganization came in 1979, Barbara and myself and Jim Borchert were going to Kresge. So Larry said, "Fine. I'll go to Kresge too." But he was a longtime

Stevenson faculty member.

Reti: So it was more of a geographic split.

Castillo: It was more geographic, yes.

Reti: So it left the Europeanists at Stevenson: Peter Kenez, Jonathan Beecher; Buchanan Sharp. Gary Miles was at Cowell. So was Bonnie Kingsley, who was another of the ancient historians. Mark Traugott was still in sociology.

Reti: Mark Cioc wasn't here yet.

Castillo: Mark Cioc wasn't here. Cindy Polecretti wasn't here yet. So historically, Stevenson and Cowell has been the Europeanists. And the U.S. people—we kind of just bounced around—from Merrill, and then to Kresge. There was that concentration at Kresge. When we moved to Oakes, Larry Veysey stayed at Kresge for a while and then he retired. But the numbers had dropped. And then when we were at Oakes, the number started to increase. Again, we began to have that critical mass of U.S. historians. So we moved to Merrill. And then once the new building, Humanities I, was built, then we moved again. And most of the historians are in the new Humanities I Building, except for the Europeanists who remain, or the new appointees—they appointed two new people who arrived this year—and they're at Stevenson College. And it has to do with space.

Reti: Interesting. So that geographic split is still being perpetuated.

Castillo: Yes, still being perpetuated.

So beginning in '79, with reorganization, that's when we begin to see more and

more departments—and some of the earlier departments welcomed this [reorganization]. Anthropology, for example, was one of the earlier ones who went into a building; all of their faculty went into a [centralized] building. As I mentioned last week, the scientists—they were affiliated with colleges, but they really didn't do much with colleges. There was the fraternity of being in a college and they would go to the functions. But they had their offices on Science Hill, whether you're biology, or chemistry, or earth science. And they had their laboratories there. So you didn't really see the science faculty. Most of the people who kind of mixed were the arts, the humanities. And this is before any of the arts buildings. So oftentimes you had someone from art history or in different colleges. So '79 is a clear—to me, anyway, it was clear that we're moving to a traditional model of a department being in one building, everybody together.

Reti: So how did you personally feel about the [changes]? Originally being part of the college, the pre-reorganization period, were you disappointed when the model changed in 1979?

Castillo: I really liked being in a college. There were more possibilities for team teaching. You could participate in the core course and work with first-year students, which was terrific, or you could come up with a course yourself. And this was a possibility, to do more team teaching, more comparative, more interdisciplinary. You could still have a small seminar. Back in the mid- to late seventies, a large class was forty students. That was a large class in history. Now a large class has a hundred, two hundred students. So that has dramatically changed. So I really miss the college. It was being there, having an office, having your neighbor be someone from anthropology, someone from Spanish literature,

or a politics professor—to really continue that interdisciplinary dialogue. Students would come and go. You’d see students. There’d be a coffee shop so you could get coffee; you’d run into students; you’d run into faculty; you’d run into staff, and you’d begin to talk.

So as time went on and on, we then moved to the Humanities I building. And it’s just another building with different floors. History is on the fifth floor and literature is on the sixth and third floor. Writing now is on the main floor. Feminist studies is on the third or fourth floor. And so forth. There’s no coffee shop there. Students, generally speaking, don’t get there because you’re on the fifth floor or the sixth floor. So it really has become more impersonal, more traditional, more bureaucratic.

I think it was really a mistake to go there. I know that the university has changed. I think we now have over 16,000 undergraduates. Probably, if you add graduate students, so that it makes it about 18,000, 19,000. When I came here, there were probably 5,000 students, 6,000 students. But it’s taken that—unless you really work on it—that kind of interdisciplinary team teaching aspect away.

Not that it can’t be done. It’s being done in history. Alice Yang and Alan Christy teach a course on World War II, where Alice looks at the internment, looks at the U.S. And then Alan, a Japanese historian, looks at Japan. So they’ve been able to do that.

Before the 1940s effort by Alice and Allen, some of us, I think it was four or five of us in history who got together and did a class on the City in the World. It was myself doing the U.S. I did Los Angeles; David Sweet did Mexico City. Alan

Christy did Tokyo. Gary Miles, I think he did Athens. And there was a European city; I forget who did it. I thought it was great. But we just did it one time. Because everybody else: “Well, I’ve got teach all my classes. This is one class out of my four or five, so if I do this it means that I won’t do Roman history or Mexican history or Chicano history, whatever it might be.

I thought it was good. I think the students enjoyed it.

Reti: It sounds fascinating.

Castillo: The criticisms were kind of mixed. It was the first time we’d done it. So you know, the first time is usually the trial run. I wish we had done it at least two or three times to take out the kinks. But there was an interest.

Everybody is so busy with getting tenure, with publishing that book, with teaching their courses. And so forth and so on. We never did it again. But it can be done. But there’s not the support for it that I think there was back in the seventies when I first got here. Now people expect: these are the four courses you do. The courses are interesting in all departments, I think. But we are missing that.

Another team-teaching effort that has been sustained for a while, and interdisciplinary, is the class on the Holocaust, taught by Peter Kenez, a historian, and Murray Baumgarten, from literature. So there we have two people—

Reti: Yes, that’s gone on for decades.

Castillo: Yes, that’s gone on for decades. It’s a big course. There’s a lot of interest.

And here's another example of someone from history and literature coming together and doing a course on the Holocaust. I think a lot of these things could be done but there's always a lot of pressure on faculty to do this, to do that, to get tenure, move up the ladder, publish this, publish that, remain busy in the profession. As well as their own personal, family, and all the other pressures on faculty members. But there is that move away from the emphasis—someone would say, "I'd like to do this class on the city." "That sounds great! Let's do it." And two or three people would get together and do it. That doesn't happen.

Reti: And what about the Merrill Core Course. What was it like to teach that?

Castillo: That was really interesting because one of the emphases was on—at that time it was called The Third World. So there was a lot of emphasis on looking at Africa. The provost was the Africanist, John Marcum. On looking at Latin America—David Sweet was there. And then looking at Europe—Terry Burke was there. Looking at Asia with Dilip Basu. So there were some efforts to link what was called "The Third World" at that time, the developing world, with the United States, to try and bridge Africa, Latin America, Europe, Asia with what was going on.

The two colleges that were the most diverse when I got here in '76, were Oakes College and Merrill College. And it's probably still the same. The student bodies were very diverse. African Americans at Oakes College. I think that had a lot to do with the provost, J. Herman Blake, an African American sociologist who put Oakes together with Ralph Guzman, a Chicano who was in politics and community studies. And they heavily recruited in Oakland, San Francisco, and

Los Angeles to increase the African American student body. There's still a concentration of African Americans, I think, at Oakes College.

The Latino-Mexican origin—but that's also changed. When I came here in '76, you could probably say that 95, 98 percent of the Latino students were of Mexican origin. That has changed dramatically. It's now become more Latino. I don't know what the percentage is—but more Latino, especially Central American. Or kind of a mix. What I found in my teaching for over thirty-five years, is that oftentimes the parents of a student—one parent would be Mexican; the other one would be Salvadorian. And the student would be half and half, let's say. So more and more of that over time.

Oakes College, for historical reasons, had a large number of Latino students. They continued to do that. And Merrill College, because of the emphasis on Latin America, Latin American Studies—it was Latin American Studies then—it was a program, also. So that was attractive to some of the students. Also, Ralph Guzman became provost after I left Merrill and was at Kresge. He became provost of Merrill College. And he did more recruiting, trying to get Latino students.

So it was interesting to teach in that core course at Merrill, because of the student body and because of the interest on the subject that was taught.

Reti: Do you remember which part you were teaching?

Castillo: Well, the course itself—we had lectures. Once a week everybody would meet to get a lecture from, either one of the faculty members or invited guests, or

to see a film. And then each faculty member who contributed, who was part of it, would teach a section of it. So we had fifteen to twenty students. Now most core courses are taught—I don't know if you have any regular, ladder faculty teaching in core courses. Cowell, for a number of years, continued that tradition. So you had someone like John Dizikes still teaching in the Cowell core course, and someone like Gary Miles in history teaching in the core course, and other Cowell faculty.

But that kind of drifted away as the faculty becomes much more traditional, as the departments become more traditional, as there's the deemphasizing of the college courses. So after '79, a lot of faculty didn't do that anymore. So I was just one of the section leaders. I did the same thing when I went to Kresge. At least for the one year, I taught in a core course.

So I would say that from 1976, when I first came here, to about 1980, the departments were willing to say, "Okay, well, we still hire and promote you but you can do one course for the colleges." But after 1980, most departments said, "We want you to do all your courses for history." '79, '80, '81 is when we begin to see fewer and fewer ladder rank faculty teaching in the college core courses. And it became part-time lecturers who then teach in the college core courses. Now I would say that I'm sure there's probably a 100 percent of the instructors in core courses are just lecturers, some through the Writing Program, others are just lecturers. It's a college course but it's become more of a writing course, a writing intensive course. The faculty are at the college but it's not regular faculty. So that's another thing that we no longer have.

The Climate for Latino/a Faculty

Reti: Right. So what was the climate like for Latino and Latina faculty when you came?

Castillo: Well, very few. I mean, Ralph Guzman probably was the most senior when I came. He was here for a couple of years and then he went to Washington, D.C. He was in the State Department in charge of Latin American affairs. This was in the Jimmy Carter years. Jimmy Carter was elected from '76 to '80, and then he was defeated for reelection in 1980 by Ronald Reagan.

So Ralph Guzman was there. And he was in the State Department primarily working on Latin American issues. This is when, in 1979, my wife and I and family got a fellowship to go to Bogota, Colombia and teach. It was for one semester, which was three months, from August to December, I think it was. To teach a class in topics in U.S. history to graduate students studying for the master's in history at a university in Bogota, Colombia. I know that from talking to Ralph later, he was very concerned, because it was not as dangerous as it is today, but Colombia was beginning to be dangerous in the late seventies. And taking my family there—what was I thinking, was what Ralph was thinking. (laughs)

Reti: (laughs) Right, he had a lot more information.

Castillo: He had more information but he couldn't tell us. The guerilla movement was beginning to mobilize. Tensions were rising. And the Communist Party was involved in a lot of guerilla movements in Colombia itself. But it was

enjoyable. Our family went. We lived in an apartment. They took classes in Spanish, and in Colombian culture and history. I taught my class. It was just once a week. So we had a chance to travel around Colombia. We really enjoyed it. It was a good experience, I think, for me and for my wife. Our children still think about that, still think about their experiences. Nothing happened. We would walk. We would take buses and maybe knock on wood that nothing serious happened. Nobody was kidnapped, or things that by the 1980s, 1990s, the whole drug issue, the whole kidnapping, violence was just—it made Colombia a very, very difficult time.

So being a Latino faculty member—there was myself, there was Ralph, there was John Borrego in community studies. There was Gini Matute-Bianchi in education. John is retired. Ralph Guzman passed away. Gini left the university. There was another guy, another Chicano, Mario Davila, who was in community studies and anthropology. He left. He went to Europe and I don't know whatever happened to him. (pauses) This is before Aida Hurtado and Pat Zavella.

Reti: What about Eugene Cota-Robles?

Castillo: Eugene Cota-Robles was here. I have an interesting history with Eugene Cota-Robles. He passed away last year. When I was teaching at Riverside City College, he was at the University of California, Riverside.

Reti: We talked about that last time.

Castillo: We talked about that. He was a professor; I was an instructor. He was one of the people who got me to think about going on and getting a Ph.D. So

then from Riverside he goes on to Penn State to chair their department and then he comes here and is a vice chancellor. So when I came here in 1976, he was a professor of biology and vice chancellor of the university.

At that time there were four Latinos, Mexican-origin Chicanos in biology: Gene Cota-Robles; Frank Talamantes, who later becomes graduate dean; Victor Rocha, who was a provost of Oakes College—and then he left and he went to the new campus of California State University in San Marcos as a dean. He's still there. Frank retired. And Leo Ortiz, he was in biology. So there were four, which was like half of the Chicano faculty were in biology. (laughs) And Gene was clearly very involved. Frank and Victor were very involved with Oakes College and with Oakes College coming together to what it is now. And Victor was a provost.

Reti: So Frank Talamantes was also involved with Oakes?

Castillo: Yes, he was also involved with Oakes.

Reti: I didn't realize that.

Castillo: Yes. And they were the ones who taught courses. At one time there was an Oakes Science Center, and it was equipped so they could do their experiments. They had labs. So they would do courses. That changed as the university becomes much more traditional after 1979. Again, there was pressure on the biologists and on the science faculty. George Blumenthal was another of the founding faculty members at Oakes College and he would do his astronomy courses at Oakes College. The chemistry courses would be done by Frank and Victor and some of the other chemistry faculty, who have now since retired.

They used to do their courses at Oakes. And there was a science center and it had all of the apparatus and machines that scientists need.

Reti: Dave Kliger was over there.

Castillo: Dave Kliger was also there. He was a chemist. He was a chemistry person. And then that changed from being the Oakes Science Center and became the Oakes Learning Center. And they took away all of the laboratory equipment, washbasins, everything that they used.

So by the time I—and that happened during Victor's tenure, I think, that transition from the Oakes Science Center to the Oakes Learning Center. Again, part of this reorganization. Now if you want to take a science course, you go down to Science Hill, you go to the biology department and take a biology class over there. Or take a chemistry class. There are the labs and they've got all the equipment and so forth.

So it was very interesting coming here and having half of the Chicano/Latino faculty as scientists and one of them as a vice chancellor. And then after he was vice chancellor, I think Gene then becomes provost of Crown College, which at one time was a science college. I had a lot of students that I met when I was at Merrill who were Chicano students who were science students—pre-med, health sciences and so on. And then after that Gene left for the Office of the President. Frank remained here. So did Victor, and then after a while Victor went to San Marcos. And Leo Ortiz retired a couple of years ago.

And the other Chicano faculty—the hires that started happening were in the

early 1980s. That's when Aida Hurtado was hired in psychology; Pat Zavella was hired in community studies.

Reti: And Katia Panas. Was she a counselor?

Castillo: Katia Panas was a counselor. I first met her when she was at Merrill. And she was at Merrill for many, many, many years. There was some kind of reorganization in the counseling services department. She stayed most of the time at Merrill and then in her last few years here before she retired she was at Porter College. But the bulk of it was at Merrill working with Latino and Latina students. Counseling had some counselors of color. Katia was at Merrill. And then at Oakes was Josie King, an African American woman, and Dino Espasa, a Chicano faculty member. Dino passed away a few years ago. I don't know what ever happened to Josie. So anyway, they had two, a Latino and an African American, a male and a female. So there were some attempts in the counseling department.

There was another faculty member here in psychology, Manuel Ramirez, a very senior, very distinguished Chicano in psychology. He was at Oakes. He was one of the people that Herman Blake hired. He was from Texas. And then after a few years, I want to say in the early eighties, he got a job at the University of Texas at Austin, where he went and he's probably retired. He was a little older than some of the other faculty. Dick Valencia in education was hired. It was interesting because I knew Richard Valencia as an undergraduate student at Santa Barbara when I was getting my Ph.D. but I was also an instructor. And then he got his Ph.D., I think there in Santa Barbara, and then he got hired here. He came in the

late seventies, early eighties. And he stayed five or six years and then he also got a position at the University of Texas at Austin.

Reti: So you're describing a pattern here of a lot of people coming and then leaving.

Castillo: And then leaving, yeah. Not as a group of Chicano/Latino faculty who would stay for a long period of time, with the exception of myself, I guess, (laughs) for thirty-five years. Frank Talamantes—Frank was already here before I came here and he stayed his thirty-five or so, or maybe forty years, and then was graduate dean. And then when he stopped doing that he retired and he moved to El Paso. The University of Texas at El Paso was trying to put together a medical school and he was working with that effort there.

But you're right. People would come here and either move someplace else or would not get tenure. Or for a number of reasons would leave. Yeah, I never thought of it—with the exception of Frank, who stayed here until he retired and myself, who stayed here the thirty-five years and then retired, some of the people would stay here ten years, get tenure and then move someplace else. Or not get tenure—like Mario Davila didn't get tenure and then he went to Europe and got a job at some university in Holland, I think.

The group after that would be Pat Zavella and Aida Hurtado, who were hired in the early 1980s. Then there begins to be more of a hiring of Latino faculty. So to some extent, the hiring that has happened since the 1980s, that pattern has shifted a bit and more and more of those folks have begun to stay here a longer period of time.

The person who didn't stay here for a long period of time was Lionel Cantu, the young faculty member in sociology, who passed away. I think he would have stayed here. He got sick and then he passed away after just being here four to five years. Terrible. He would have gotten tenure and I think he liked the community. The department really liked him and he was very much involved with the community, and very much involved with gay and lesbian issues on this campus.

But from that earlier period of the Chicano/Latino faculty who were hired early on this campus—and there were even some who got here before I got here in 1976, who were hired but then either left or didn't get tenure. There was a guy in psychology, a guy in sociology, a woman in Spanish, and in the language program who didn't get tenured and they left. So [the pattern in] the early period is that people would come here but then they wouldn't get tenure and would leave after six or seven years.

And then we begin to see, by the 1980s, more stability in the Chicano/Latino faculty, so much so—I mean, I can just think of one person in the last ten years who has left, and that was Manuel Pastor. He came here and he made a big splash. He helped to organize Latin American studies. He helped organized a research center. I knew Manuel even before he came here. I knew that from the—not that I'm this wise person who can forecast the future—

Reti: (laughs)

Castillo: —but I knew that he was just here for some time, that he would eventually go back to Los Angeles. That's where his family is and his research.

Sure enough. He came here. He did well. He stabilized Latin American Studies and got it going, brought some other people here, established a research center. And then went to Los Angeles. He's at the University of Southern California. He's still doing great work. He's got his own research center there. It's a private school. His two children are in Los Angeles.

But I think some of the other people—Lourdes Martinez-Echazábal, Juan Poblete in literature both came and have been here a while. Norma Klahn in literature. I mentioned Aida and Pat have been here for a while. Kip Téllez in education. There's a young person that they've hired in education, [Eduardo] Mosqueda. Feminist studies with Felicity [Amaya Schaeffer] and Marcia Ochoa. She was in community studies and when community studies was done away with, she was incorporated into feminist studies. She just got tenure. They had another young Chicano in community studies who does film, but he went to film and digital media. And then there's another Chicano in film and digital media, Vasquez, who does more of the technical part of film and digital media. He's in San Francisco and he commutes, so he's going to be here until he retires.

In the sciences, all of those four Chicanos and then we brought in a Chicana, Martha Zuniga, who's been here a while. She'll probably stay and retire. In the humanities, I've talked about the ones in literature and history. They are recruiting for someone [now] to do Chicano and Latino history. There's no one in feminist studies. American studies has been disestablished, so the woman who was in American studies went to Latin American and Latino studies. So Latin American and Latino studies has a good representation of Latino faculty. So there is more stability in the last ten to fifteen years. The pattern has shifted.

Reti: I can imagine a person asking, did all these people leave in the early years—I know there are tenure battles, and that's always been an issue, and was certainly very much an issue in the early years of this campus.

Castillo: Yes.

Reti: But beyond that, do you think that this pattern was any kind of a sign of it not being an easy place to be Latino faculty?

Castillo: I think—one reason is not getting tenure, so that's why you leave. The other thing is that possibly there's not a critical mass of Latinos in the community growing up in Santa Cruz. Which could be the case, much more so for African Americans. In the African American faculty, going back to the Panetta lawsuit of 1972—where I think it said that there were four African American faculty members, back in '72. Well, there can't more than ten, I don't think, now. I was just talking about this with some other people a few days ago. I made the statement, and I think I'm correct—we have only one female African American faculty member. One passed away last year, in psychology. One retired in histcon, Angela Davis. So the only one that I can think of is in feminist studies, Gina Dent. Of the whole faculty.

Reti: Yes, I know. It's dramatic.

Castillo: (sighs) And of the male faculty, African Americans—there's David Anthony in history. There's Eric Porter in histcon and American studies, and when he comes back from his sabbatical he'll be in history and in histcon. There's, in sociology, Herman Gray. I think there's someone in education; I think there's

someone in art history. And there might be two or three others.

Reti: But few and far between.

Castillo: But there can't be more—and I don't have the statistics and I'd like to find out—there can't be more than ten African American faculty members on this campus. That's going from four to ten in forty years.⁸

Now, the Chicanos, I think that report stated that there were, I don't know, six or seven. And there are more now. But it's a much different picture when you are talking about Chicanos and Latinos. And it's not just Mexican origin. Juan Poblete is Chilean. Lourdes is Cuban. Maria Elena Diaz in history is Cuban. Hector Perla in Latin American Studies is Salvadorian. So, in other words, I think you are getting more of a mix. I think the early pattern was to leave, instability. But I think that changed in the 1980s, so there was more stability and more people remain here.

Reti: Was there any kind of formal or informal gathering of Chicano/Latino faculty in the first fifteen years or so that you were here?

Castillo: We used to meet as a group. Also, during this time, is that when Robert Sinsheimer becomes chancellor—and I know that he was here in 1979—

Reti: He came in 1977.

⁸ As of July 1, 2012, 2 percent of UCSC's senate faculty were of African American background. Eight percent were of Latino background. See: http://diversity.ucsc.edu/diversity/images/faculty_demo_2012.pdf—Editor.

Castillo: '77. He was chancellor when this reorganization occurred in '79, so he's blamed (laughs), good or bad, for that reorganization. I forgot how it happened—maybe it was because of Gene Cota-Robles, or Frank [Talamantes], the biologists, because Sinsheimer was a biologist, talking to him. There was a group of Chicanos that met with him on a quarterly basis. And some of the other faculty members went, "Who are these Chicanos? Who are these Latinos? And why do they meet with the chancellor more than any other group? The biologists don't meet with him, or—" So there begin to be some questions; how much influence— One of the recommendations that we had for Sinsheimer was that he should hire someone to be in charge of diversity and affirmative action. This is when Julia Armstrong was hired.⁹ It was in the early 1980s. It's funny, because I just saw Julia a few months ago, at a wine tasting. That was terrific. We sat at a table and (laughs)—we didn't want to talk campus politics because our spouses/partners would probably say, "Oh, no. I thought they were no longer at the university." (laughs) "You get two of them and they talk about it."

Julia Armstrong begins to push more and more for the issues of affirmative action and diversity in her office. She was in the chancellor's office so it was high profile. And she had much more of an input into the vice chancellors for academic affairs and much more of an input into faculty hiring and promotion. That office, after Julia left, [in 2001]—but that office was deemphasized and it became more of a staff person—because Julia has a Ph.D. She's an academic and

⁹ An oral history with Julia Armstrong-Zwart is currently in process and will be published in 2014 by the Regional History Project—Editor.

that's her background. That office now has been—there's a staff affirmative action and a faculty affirmative action. I think now it's Herbert Lee, who's in the sciences or mathematics. I met him once. He's in charge of it but he works under Alison Galloway, so it's kind of a new regime, because Alison has just been executive vice chancellor for two years. That position has been deemphasized. I think when Julia first came here she had more clout and had the ear of the chancellor.

So yes, Chicanos did meet, and we did meet and talk to the chancellor about issues having to do with more hiring, where he should emphasize hiring, things that should occur in the colleges and so forth. And this was an ad hoc group that met with Sinsheimer.

Reti: How responsive was he to your concerns?

Castillo: Well, to some extent he was responsive. I mean, he created the position and he hired Julia Armstrong. What we would hear oftentimes from him was, "Well, look. I have a vice chancellor for academic affairs. He makes all the academic decisions." And then you would talk to the vice chancellor for academic affairs and he would tell you, "Well, you know, it's the deans that make all the decisions." And then you'd talk to the dean and he would tell you, "Well, it's the department that makes all the decisions."

So a department had to put in, as an example, that they wanted someone to do African American history. Then the dean would say it's okay. But then the dean had to go to the academic vice chancellor to get that FTE. So it's complicated. We found that everybody was saying, "Well, go talk to Joe next door. Or go talk to

Alice.” But they were mostly Joes because very few women were in top administrative positions at the university. (laughs) But it had to come from a department. A department like history had to say, “We really need someone to do African American history.” Then they would go to the dean and he would say, “Well, I don’t have any positions but I’ll go to the vice chancellor.” And the vice chancellors for academic affairs would be the ones who would control that, who would say, “Okay, you can have this position.” The chancellor relegates all of those issues to the vice chancellor for academic affairs. So Sinsheimer would tell us—if we’d say, “We really want someone in Chicano sociology,” he’d say, “Well, you’ve got to talk to the vice chancellor and the dean. And the vice chancellor would say, “You’ve got to talk to the dean.” And the dean would say, “Well, if the department doesn’t want it or doesn’t propose it, I—, you know. So that meant going and talking to deans and laying out some of the frameworks.

But eventually it begins to grow and expand, in the humanities, beginning with myself and Maria Elena Diaz in history. And in literature there’s Norma Klahn, there’s Juan Poblate, there’s Lourdes. There’s also Kirsten Silva Gruesz, who does Chicano literature. She’s Chicana, also in literature. There’s no one in linguistics, although Hankamer is very much interested in Spanish language linguistics. American studies had folks but we no longer have that department. In philosophy there’s Dan Guevara, a Chicano in philosophy. They’ve got one person. Feminist studies has got two, Felicity and Marcia and is one of the departments that’s more diverse and is really looking at the issues of race and ethnicity. It’s a small department too but it’s growing. Gina Dent is there. Angela Davis had a relationship with that department. Bettina Aptheker is there.

In the social sciences, Latin American and Latino studies has incorporated a lot of Latinos in their department. I think most of their faculty are Latinos, maybe 80 or 90 percent. They've hired somebody who I think is going to be in politics and LALS, I'm not really sure. Sociology has someone. She left. Olga Najera-Ramirez is in anthropology, interesting because there's some stability with Olga. She's been here now fifteen or twenty years.

Reti: Yes, we're going to interviewing her as part of this series.

Castillo: She's interesting because she was one of my students.

Reti: So tell me about your early memories of Olga.

Castillo: She was in my class! When I first came here, she took Chicano history from me. And she took Mexican history from David Sweet. She did a major in anthropology and Latin American studies, with an emphasis on Chicano history and Mexican history. She was kind of local from the community. It was her and then her brother, Robert, also came here and then did his degree in sociology. So he took a class from me and then did his degree. Then he went on to law school. And then from Olga's family, one of her nieces, Jasmine, who is the daughter of one of Olga's brothers and his wife, came here. So I've seen parts of the Najera family. Jasmine is a social worker who works with juveniles.

So yes, Olga was here and she was very interested and involved in dance. She was part of that group that founded Los Mexicas, and danced with that group and continued to work with Los Mexicas. And from here she went to study in Mexico and spent some time in Mexico, and then went and did a Ph.D. at the

University of Texas at Austin. Then there was a position here in anthropology and she was hired here, which was very bizarre, seeing this young woman who was a student back when I just had gotten here, and then she comes back as an assistant professor and she has done very well. Her career has taken off.

So there's been an increase—thinking of the social sciences—well, in economics there's no Latinos that I know of. Manuel Pastor had a relationship there but he's gone. In sociology there have been people, like Lionel Cantu, who passed away, and then the woman Gabriella Sandoval, who decided she wanted to do something else so she resigned. She's in Mexico. So there is some movement. There are more people. I'd like to see the statistics in terms of Latino faculty members and then compare them to the statistics cited in that lawsuit. The real big disappointment, I think, will be in the number of African American faculty, which has not increased [much] in forty years. Again, not that I know everyone on campus who is of color. There are a lot of new people that I don't know.

But going back to one of the questions that you had earlier, I think it has a lot to do with the communities, how it was in '76. I mean, when we first came here two of our children went to Westlake Community School. That's near the campus. I think they were probably two of the very few Latino students who were at Westlake School. It was kind of an upper middle-class, university faculty sent their kids there and the university was very white, still continues to be very white. It was known as an excellent school.

But that has changed. Now the statistics are that one third of the people who live in Santa Cruz County are Latinos. And 85 maybe 88 percent of the city of

Watsonville is Latino. So that number has changed. But this is the whole kind of, as some people call it, “the browning of America,” or, “the browning of California.” The Latino population is increasing and continues to increase, clearly in California, but it’s something that’s occurring nationwide. So there is a critical mass in Santa Cruz and in Watsonville, of Latinos in the community in all different areas doing different kinds of things. So there is more of a community. The campus is much more open and there’s a lot going on. So I think being a faculty member here has really changed.

Reti: So, taking you back to the 1970s again and the 1980s, what kind of student activism was going on around diversity and particularly Chicano/Latino issues?

Castillo: When I first came here, the Mecha organization was very, very strong. That begins to wane by the 1980s. And what we begin to see by the 1980s, is Mecha is still here, but then there are other organizations that are established, of Chicano/Latino students. There’s one called CHE, Chicanos in Health Education. As a number of Chicanos were going into the sciences, they wanted to do premed or medical school or pharmacies, or public health, there begins to be this organization around health education. Then others who wanted to be teachers—there was a group on education—they came together. Mecha was much more political.

Ethnic Studies at UCSC

And that’s when we begin to see some efforts to establish an ethnic studies program/department. We had no ethnic studies department or program. Many

of the other UC campuses had ethnic studies; they had Chicano studies; African American studies; Native American studies; Asian American studies. Some of the universities had research centers. I know that [UC] Santa Barbara [did] because I came from there, did my graduate work, and UCLA had research centers on Chicano studies. Berkeley had a very large Chicano studies department, a teaching department, an academic department. So there were things going on.

And here, we didn't have anything. We had no research centers. We had no ethnic studies teaching programs. But it was clear that the momentum from the faculty was that we felt it very important and we met to look into this whole area of ethnic studies. I think a committee—you know, you always put together a committee on this campus to study whatever.

A committee was established with Carolyn Clark and myself as cochairs in the early 1980s, to look at this ethnic studies, to talk to chairs of departments, other faculty, and students. And we met and we reported back and maybe there was a report, I don't remember. But the theme of faculty, at least those eighties faculty, some of whom were here in the seventies, but primarily eighties and into the nineties was—we felt ethnic studies was important. But we thought what was really more important is to increase the numbers of faculty of color, that it was more important to have an African American in biology, to have a Chicano in psychology, to have an Asian or Native American in history, or wherever it might be. That was more important than putting together an ethnic studies department. We also felt that some of the ethnic studies departments that were established really didn't have the faculty support, didn't have the financial

support. It was something that was put together very quickly. They hired someone off the street, so to speak, to teach these courses, but it didn't have the clout.

What begins to change during the 1980s and stabilizing the ethnic studies programs is that some campuses begin to talk about having as a requirement an ethnic studies or world cultures requirement. Berkeley did this and Santa Cruz did this.

Reti: Ah. That was the E requirement.

Castillo: That was the E requirement. But it was not ethnic studies. The E requirement that was referred to as the ethnic studies requirement really meant that you took an E course which had to do with a non-Western culture. So it could have been African history. Or it could have been Latin American history. Or a culture in the United States, an ethnic/racial culture. So you could have taken African American history, or African history and that would fulfill the requirement. That was the compromise we did when the E requirement was passed. And I think this was the early 1980s when some of us were pushing for an ethnic studies requirement. But we came to the conclusion, "It will never pass. We don't have the support."

Reti: The ethnic studies requirement or an ethnic studies department?

Castillo: The ethnic studies requirement. Not the department. The ethnic studies requirement would not pass because the science faculty would not support it. I mean, if anything, they said, "You need more biology or math. Forget about

history. And then you want to have us teach Chicano history? No, no, no.”

So how we got around it was with a compromise. And that E requirement, that first requirement, came out of compromise that you could do either the domestic Third World, to use that term, or the international Third World. And then we brought along the arts faculty by having an arts requirement. To graduate from UC Santa Cruz you needed one A course. I think it was called the A. It was an arts requirement.

Now, that all changed four or five years ago when the Committee on Educational Policy changed that to what we have now. I’d have to look at the catalog. But it’s no longer called an E requirement.¹⁰ It’s called a comparative cultures requirement.

Reti: Another footnote.

Castillo: Another footnote. Berkeley did the same thing. They have a cultural requirement but it has to do with the domestic Third World. So it’s not international. This was also a battle at Berkeley, to get it through the academic senate, but it changed there. So some of their offerings, either, let’s say, in African American literature or in Chicano history, whatever it might be, their courses are bigger because students have to take so many classes in—I don’t know what term to use, thing change—in ethnic studies or domestic Third World. But the emphasis has always been: we want more faculty of color. That should be the top

¹⁰ The UCSC Academic Senate passed the Third World course (E) requirement in 1985. Students were required to “complete one course dealing with ethnic minorities in the United States or one course on a non-Western society.” (*UCSC General Catalog*, 1988-89).

priority. We really don't care if they go into chemistry, because there's no such thing as Chicano chemistry, that I know of. But it's important to have that Chicano faculty member in the chemistry department. So the emphasis among the faculty, at least in the seventies and eighties, was on hiring more faculty of color, having a much more diverse student body, than it was on ethnic studies.

The students—they wanted ethnic studies. But for students—I mean, it's interesting. How can I put this? It becomes an issue. And they have demonstrations, they lobby, and then they graduate. And then it remains dormant. Then another group comes. "There's no ethnic studies here. What?" Hearings, demonstrations, a movement, sit-ins, what have you. And then they graduate. Then it goes dormant.

There was more discussion, not this past year but the year before, which was my last year before I retired. There seemed to have been much more discussion—The central administration's line has been, for thirty-five years, Blumenthal is the latest who says this: "It's not my decision. I support ethnic studies but that's an academic decision. The faculty has to decide." And then you go to the academic vice chancellor, you know, "Proposals come to me. I don't decide." Alison Galloway will say, "Yes, I support ethnic studies but I'm not the one to do it." You go to the dean, same thing: "I support it but I'm not the one to do it." Then it goes to faculty. Faculty of color are doing eighty million things. And then you want to put it on *them*?

Reti: Yes. Right.

Castillo: So the faculty member who was one of the point persons, again not

2012-13, so it had to have been 2011-12, was Eric Porter, of doing something. But it was being called critical race studies, not the old ethnic studies. And in 2011-12 there was a lot of interest from students to do an ethnic studies major. They met with some faculty. These were some of the newer faculty, who had been hired in the last five to ten years. We're not thinking of the old model of ethnic studies, but something more comparative called critical race studies.

I stayed out of that. One, I was retiring and I knew of it. Two, I come from the old school and I guess I was at the point in 2011-12 of, "You know, I've been around this issue for thirty-five years. The central administration, the chancellor, whoever the chancellor is at the time, has been saying that he supports it but it's not his decision. The academic vice chancellor has been saying, I support it but it's not my decision. Deans have been saying—(laughs) I've heard this over and over." So I told other faculty members, "You really don't need me there because I'm too skeptical, cynical, old. (laughs) If you guys want to do this, I support you in whatever you want to do. But it's best that I stay away." (laughs)

Yes, students mobilized. There were demonstrations. Now, I don't know what's been going on in this last year. I mean, we've just had one quarter of 2012 and we're into 2013. But Eric Porter is on leave. He's in Spain with Katherine Ramirez, his wife, who is in Latin American and Latino studies. They've got two kids. And we exchange emails every once in a while. Their latest is, it's snowing in Madrid and they posed for a photo. (laughs) I think they're having a great time.

So I don't know what's been happening, whether there's going to be a program, a department. The picture is much better for the University of California's

budget, with the passage of Proposition 30. They're not going to get a cut. There might even be an increase in the university's budget. That doesn't mean that they're going to hire a hundred new faculty members at UC Santa Cruz. If anything, they're going to try and plug some holes which have not been hired— For example, in history we lost four or five European historians in the last three to five years. Only two new ones have been hired. Kenez in Russian history retired. A new assistant professor was hired. Buchanan Sharp retired. A new assistant professor has been hired. Terry Burke retired. Jonathan Beecher retired. Mark Traugott retired. Brian Catlos who was doing Spanish history [left]. It got to the point that European history on this campus was Germany and Italy. Now, some might say, well, that's good enough. (laughs) You know?

Reti: (laughs)

Castillo: It's almost like when I was in the history department and I was the only ladder rank faculty member in U.S. history. And then we started to build. The next big hole will be in French history. Terry Burke used to do that. Jonathan Beecher is still doing it. He retired but he's still teaching. But that can just go so long. He's being called back and after a while they don't call back anymore. Mark Traugott, who used to do French history, is also retired. So I think the next big hire would be in French history. You just can't not have French history.

So in 2011-12 I just stayed away. There was a lot of interest in what I'll call ethnic studies among the students. But again, among the students, it starts up, there's a lot of movement and activity, and then they graduate and it goes dormant. Then ethnic studies is rediscovered three years later. And for faculty members who do

ethnic studies, broadly speaking, for faculty of color and those who are not of color, who have an interest, we have very good people here. They're very busy. They're getting tenure and publishing, or just teaching, all kinds of things.

Reti: Do you think there's more of a burden on faculty of color?

Castillo: Oh, yes, Because whenever they think of ethnic studies, to use that term, they're going to ask me. They're going to ask Eric Porter. They're going to ask David Anthony. They're not going to ask Alan Christy, to give an example, who does Japanese history. So there is that burden. And then the issue is, "Well, if you want a program, if you want a department, you've got to write a proposal."

Reti: The students don't do that.

Castillo: The students don't do that. I mean, they just march, saying, "We want ethnic studies. We want ethnic studies." So you've got to write a proposal and then it's got to go through the Academic Senate, the Committee on Educational Policy. And it's got to go through all of that. It's got to be approved by them. Then it's got to be approved by the deans, by the academic vice chancellor. Then it's got to go to the Office of the President and be approved. That's how feminist studies just got a graduate program.

Reti: It took years. Decades.

Castillo: It took *years*, I mean, years. When I say years, I mean more than two or three.

Reti: It's decades. More than a decade.

Castillo: Yeah, that they've been struggling. And the burden was on those faculty members in feminist studies. So if you want to do that for an ethnic studies program—There was some talk—Michael Cowan had some kind of an idea that in American studies you could do ethnic studies, or part of it could be done under ethnic studies.¹¹ So what begins to happen in American studies is that a number of their faculty members were doing “ethnic studies.” Catherine Ramirez was doing Chicano/Latino; Eric Porter, African American; Reyna Ramirez, Native American; Amy Lonetree, Native American.

Reti: Judy Yung.

Castillo: Judy Yung doing Asian American. And then it just kind of collapsed for a lot of reasons. I mean, that's another story. Forrest Robinson was in that group. Finally, he withdrew from that group and now he's just a professor in the humanities or something like that. He kind of felt that he was not doing ethnic studies and it was becoming ethnic studies. So there have been some efforts. I think American studies was one. And then for a lot of reasons that didn't go anyplace, Latin American and Latino studies—I mean, one could say, given their faculty and their interests, that some of them are doing Latino studies. But that's just Latino studies. It's not the whole kind of comparative, ethnic—they do more with Latino and Latin American. That's where it came together. I mean, one of the deans, Latin American studies was a program. And then when we had

¹¹ For a detailed discussion of the history of ethnic studies at UCSC, see Irene Reti, Interviewer and Editor, *It Became My Case Study: Professor Michael Cowan's Four Decades at UC Santa Cruz*, (Regional History Project, UCSC Library, 2013). Available at <http://library.ucsc.edu/reg-hist/it-became-my-case-study-professor-michael-cowans-four-decades-at-uc-santa-cruz>

Eugene Garcia as a dean and he was going to defund Latin American studies—

Reti: Why?

Castillo: They wanted to become a department and he said he would not support a department. He said, “If you want funding and faculty, I want Latin American and Latino studies.” So then some of the faculty got together and started talking about doing— You can’t understand Latinos without doing Latin America.

Reti: Oh, okay.

Castillo: And Latin America has to look at Latinos because a large percentage of Latin Americans are now in the United States as Latinos, as Latin Americans. So he was the one who did that. Some of us got involved with that. That’s when they hired Manuel Pastor and Jonathan Fox, and they started looking both at Latin American and Latino— Manuel Pastor came from an economics perspective but he looked more at Latinos. Jonathan Fox comes from a politics perspective and he does more on Mexico but he also sees that quite a few Mexicans are in the United States. So they begin to do that. And then they have affiliated faculty, and I was one of the affiliated faculty.

Reti: I see.

Castillo: We started doing Latin American and Latino studies. So they hired somebody like Gabriela Arredondo, who is a historian who does Latin America, Mexico, and Chicanos; Pat Zavella, who does Mexico and Chicanos; a new transfer from American studies would be Catherine Ramirez. Hector Perla, who

does Central America; there's a young woman who does Central America. So there's more of that connection. But I have this feeling that Michael Cowan wanted to see ethnic studies in American studies and they were moving in that direction.

Reti: I think that's right.

Castillo: It was not going to become ethnic studies; it was still going to be American studies. But what American studies has become is to look at issues of gender, class, and ethnicity and race much more so than other professions, much more so than the history or psychology or literature professions. And American studies being disestablished, or community studies also being disestablished—

So the thrust for some of the older, senior faculty like myself was, we just need more faculty of color. In history, to do Chicano history. But if they come in biology, that's great. Or chemistry or whatever, that's great, too. They're important as well because you have Chicano students going into the sciences. And you might not do Chicano chemistry, because, you know, chemistry is chemistry. But they would be influential in getting you into medical school, working with the Chicanos in the sciences.

Reti: Pipeline.

Castillo: A pipeline, mentorships, and all that other kind of stuff that's important. And again, I don't have any criticism of students when they want ethnic studies.

So I haven't heard from students. I'm not on campus so I don't know if there's any movement. The gage on this would be *City on a Hill*, but I'm not here so I

don't read *City on a Hill*. In faculty, I don't know if they've been meeting, I don't know if they've been talking. I guess what I started to say a while ago was when there's a better budget for the university—they're hiring this year and from what I read Alison will have twenty FTEs next year and departments are going to say, "I want to hire someone in chemistry or physics or whatever it might be," I don't know if she says, "Five of those positions are going to be in the area of ethnic or racial studies." I don't know what she's thinking.

And maybe this is not the time to create a traditional 1960s and 1970s ethnic studies department, program. I mean, it could be something called critical race studies. There are a lot of folks who look at race and ethnicity and gender and class on this campus. Immigration. Whether they're going to come together and form a program, I don't know. Whether they're going to come together and form a department— That takes someone saying, "I will write the proposal. I will be the head person." I don't know if anyone's going to do that.

Demands on Faculty of Color

Reti: Right. Well, that kind of brings me to a related question. When I was asking you, was there a particular burden on faculty of color—

Castillo: Yes, I think—

Reti: —but beyond just the pressure for ethnic studies, did you feel that you were asked to serve on more committees and help mentor more students?

Castillo: Yes. You're asked to—we've got all these Chicano/Latino students so

you've got to be a role model. You've got to mentor all of them, not just the ones in history, but all of them. And then, because you are a Chicano/Latino faculty member, it's important that you also work with white students. I mean, you know, half of our student body is white. It's important to expose them, white students, to Chicano/Latino faculty, or African Americans, or women. Whatever it is.

Reti: Yes.

Castillo: So there's that. "We're putting together the committee list and God, we've got five white male faculty members on this committee. We need a woman. We need a gay." You go down the line— (laughs) So there's that, you're being asked to be on Academic Senate committees. I mean, they do want—I take them at their word that they not only want disciplinary diversity but they're also talking about gender diversity, talking about faculty diversity, talking about ethnic and racial diversity. So there's that. You get asked to be on committees.

And you'll always have someone, a high school coming through here and they'll say, "Oh, God. They've come from Salinas so let's have a Chicano/Latino faculty member welcome them. It'll just be five minutes, can you just talk with them for five minutes?" So there's all of these things. So there's that.

If something happens in the community and the university has to go to the city council, "Won't you come with us?" George [Blumenthal] is saying, "Well, we've got to have more students here. And we need more water here because we need to grow. Because if we don't, all these Chicano students will not be able to come here." And I guess I read that the largest number of applicants were now

Chicano/Latinos. Well, this reflects who's in the high schools now. Most of the high school students now are Chicano/Latinos, or a lot of them are. So they're applying to university, because that's who's out there. So one of the university's lines is, "If we don't get the water, we can't have more spaces for students, which means that we can't diversify our student body, so we can't have more Latino students."

Reti: (laughs)

Castillo: (laughs) "Therefore you're being racist by not having us grow." It's one of the lines. I mean, I'm stating it very crudely but they do it much more sophisticated. And God, that's—Don't say that. Just say you want to build, okay. If you want to build, that's okay. But don't—So anyway.

Yes, I think there is an added burden for faculty of color, for women faculty, for gay and lesbian faculty members. I mean, talking to Cantu, any kind of gay and lesbian thing he'd be—because he was out. He'd be invited. "You've got to come and—" "Well, I've got to write this article." "Oh, no. It's very important. Come on. Just five minutes. Just be there." And he did a lot. He really did a lot. But he also did his academic work. He would have gotten tenure. But there are these extra burdens. And some faculty members have just said, "Hey, I'm not. Don't ask me. The answer is no." But most faculty of color will do these extra things, as well as their regular teaching, as well as their regular research, as well as their regular publications. So there is this extra, added burden.

Looking back, I'm glad I did it my way (laughs) and I'm glad I did spend five minutes with that teacher from Salinas who was bringing his twelfth graders to

UC Santa Cruz. I hope they applied and I hope they got here.

Reti: Yes. Did you work with EOP [Educational Opportunity Program]?

Castillo: Yeah, EOP has wanted me because they oftentimes have faculty that—

Reti: Because one of the longtime people who we haven't talked about is Rosie Cabrera.

Castillo: Rosie Cabrera, who was with EOP for many, many years. Now she's with the Chicano Resource Center. I saw something in their weekly newsletter that there's going to be a discussion here on the direction of resource centers.

Reti: Yes.

Castillo: So am I hearing that they want to do away with them?

Reti: There's a possibility of combining some of them. It's a big question right now.

Castillo: So who's in, who's out, who's combined. So if it becomes a Chicano/Native American, who is in charge? All of these questions. So whenever they start doing that, I smell, uh-oh, reorganization. That's very sensitive.

Reti: Did EOP call on you for the Faculty Mentor Program?

Castillo: Yes, EOP called on me for the Faculty Mentor Program and I had students working with me, which was great. It's doing what I really wanted to do, was to work with students. They hate to contact faculty but it's important

that they do contact faculty. Some faculty will say yes more than others. Others will say, no, I'm not interested. Don't call me back. I'm sure EOP has got their list of who to contact and who to stay away from.

The Backlash Against Affirmative Action

Reti: So I think one more question for today because I know we're getting close to that time. It's a big question. (laughs) The whole battle about affirmative action, Proposition 209¹² and Proposition 187¹³—this has been a protracted battle, your entire career. Do you want to talk about how that impacted the students that you were teaching, perhaps starting with the Bakke decision in the late 1970s.

Castillo: The Bakke decision, yeah. It's interesting that a number of students of color, when that decision was made, the Bakke decision, dropped. But then the admissions office and EOP started looking at it another way and started doing other things, started to expand. So from working primarily with students of color, then it became primarily an issue of working with working-class students. So when you change it from students of color—that's an ethnic, race focus—to working-class students, or poor students, or economically disadvantaged, then it's economics, so that includes whites. I mean, the large percentage of those students are going to be students of color. But by changing the terms, by saying

¹² Proposition 209 was passed by the California voters in November 1996. It prohibited state government institutions, including the University of California from considering race, sex, or ethnicity in the areas of public employment, public contracting, or public education.

¹³ Proposition 187 was passed by the California voters in 1994. It prohibited illegal aliens from using health care, public education, and other social services in the state of California.

“poor students,” you are including also whites. So I think the admissions office and the universities have been pretty good at changing, at going through this.

There’ve been drops. After Bakke there was a drop and then it begins to increase slightly. The big drop really came with African American students, especially at the big campuses, after Bakke, Berkeley and UCLA. We had so few that it didn’t really drop that much. It seemed like we’ve always had a 100 or a 120 or a 150 African American students. That number didn’t change much in the last twenty years.

But with Latino students, that number keeps increasing. And now Alison Galloway has talked about, there’s something called a Hispanic-Serving Institution. And that’s when your student body is—is it 15 percent Latino?¹⁴ Then there’s a special pocket of funds from Washington, D.C. and you can then write proposals to get some funding to help Latinos.

Reti: Ah. That’s the incentive.

Castillo: So that’s the incentive. And there’s a committee, that’s as I understand, working on putting this together, working to get that number. Which is great. To me, that number is going to continue to grow. My cynical view of that though is, “Okay, so now you’ve got 15 percent. But the Latino population in California is about 35 percent. So you’ve really got to double that. If you’re serious, you’ve got

¹⁴ A Hispanic-serving institution, or HSI, is a term used for a federal Department of Education program designed to assist colleges or universities in the United States that attempt to assist first generation, majority low income Hispanic students. In order to qualify, an institution must have at least 25 percent Hispanic full-time-equivalent enrollment.

to double that.” And, very important to me would be, “Okay, how many Latino faculty do you have?” of the total faculty. I don’t know the numbers and what the percentage is. It probably is not more than 10 percent, if that much. “That should be like 35 percent. What are you going to do about this?”

Reti: Did you feel like when Proposition 209 passed that there were students who left the university?

Castillo: I think with Bakke, with Prop 187, with 209 the anti-affirmative action. And then the other one, 227—

Reti: That was the anti-bilingual education proposition.¹⁵

Castillo: Anti-bilingual—To me, it’s always been very interesting that institutions have kind of shifted the terminology. Like, they say you don’t have any bilingual education. Well, my daughter is teaching fourth grade in Salinas in the Alisal District. She’s got thirty-one, thirty-three students, and they’re all Latinos. (laughs) I mean, she teaches in the English language proficiency. So these are kids that are learning English. It’s not bilingual. She’s in the fourth grade. There are four fourth grade classes. Two of them are English proficiency. And the other two are bilingual. And I said, “Well, I thought there’s no bilingual education—” She says, “Schools get around it and nobody complains.” If parents want bilingual education, and they can get enough students, they just have to sign a waiver or something like that, or they can petition the school and the

¹⁵ Proposition 227 was passed by the voters of California in June 1998 and required that all public school instruction be in English and established English-immersion programs for children not fluent in English.

school does it. As long as you're teaching English, which you do in bilingual education, you teach English and Spanish.

So institutions have been very resourceful. Just like after Bakke and after Proposition 209, the anti-affirmative action. I mean, we might not have affirmative action but we still have an Academic Senate committee on diversity and affirmative action. All of the campuses have these committees and they make recommendations. We still have in both staff and faculty positions somebody who is in charge of affirmative action. They might call it diversity now. It went from affirmative action to diversity.

Reti: Right, so it's a question of redefining—

Castillo: Of redefining your terms.

Reti: I see.

Castillo: And by moving it to, "Well, we need more Chicano students here." "Well, that's against 209, okay." You just can't recruit—" Or, "We need more Chicano faculty," let's say. "We just can't recruit that." Well, then you move to, "We need more poor, working-class students." You never talk about race or ethnicity. You say "poor." Well, 209 doesn't cover that. You're just talking about working class. This is the poor, white kid from LA as well as the poor Latino from LA, as well as the poor African American from LA. So you can bring them all to make it more accessible. And for faculty, you kind of just, "Well, we're looking for someone in literature but we want someone to do African American literature." Now that might include some white faculty but you know that it's

going to include African American faculty. So, you've been able to move around, you know, to move around.

And there are blips. People did drop out. Students did not apply. And the numbers dropped gradually. And as I said, a lot of Latino students are in the public schools and they're graduating. And they're going to be applying. So that number is going to be pretty high.

Reti: And then, it seems like now more recently there has been outreach to undocumented students, the Dream Act.¹⁶

Castillo: Yeah. We've got the Dream Act, we've got the Dreamers, students who are organized, they meet on the basis— They're raising money. There are committees like the one that Don Rothman was involved with, to provide funds for the Dreamers.¹⁷ Barack Obama, under executive order, provided for these Dreamers to come out of the shadows, so to speak.¹⁸ They're now covered. They can continue to go to school, they can get a driver's license. He's giving a talk on

¹⁶“ The California DREAM (Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors) Act is a package of California state laws that allow children who were brought into the US under the age of 16 without proper visas/immigration documentation who have attended school on a regular basis and otherwise meet in-state tuition and GPA requirements to apply for student financial aid benefits. In 2011, the California Dream Act was divided into two bills, AB130 and AB131. AB130 was signed by Governor Jerry Brown on June 25, 2011, and AB131 was signed by Brown on October 8, 2011.”—http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/California_DREAM_Act

¹⁷ Writing Program Lecturer Don Rothman, “a leading voice for writers and writing during a distinguished 39-year career at UC Santa Cruz,” died in 2012. He was a passionate advocate for first generation and underrepresented students. See <http://news.ucsc.edu/2012/11/don-rothman-remembered.html>

¹⁸ In June 2012, President Barack Obama issued an executive order to the Department of Homeland Security which gave immigrants who were brought to the United States before they turned 16 years old, are no older than 30, have been in the U.S. for at least five years, have been convicted of no serious crime, and have a high-school diploma, a GED, or a stint in the U.S. military, a reprieve from deportation and work-authorization papers. As of this writing a federal Dream Act has not been passed by Congress—Editor.

immigration. There seems to be some movement. It's not going to be easy, but some movement towards legalizing the 11 million, or however many undocumented people there are in the U.S. The sticking point is going to be a path to citizenship. I think that path will be there. It might take forever to get there for some folks. But it's going to be there. That's the tricky part. You can give them a work permit. You can do this, do that. But when you say "a path to citizenship" well, that's going to be much more difficult. Because citizenship means that they can register and they can vote. (laughs)

Reti: Right. A highly political issue.

Castillo: It's highly political. And if over 70 percent supported Obama (laughs) and if they register, you know they're going to be Democrats. They're going to support the Democratic Party. So that becomes, "Why should I as a Republican support that." So it can be complicated.

But I think the numbers of Latino students is going to increase because that's who's graduating and that's who's going to be applying to UC.

Reti: Yes. Okay, well that seems like a good place to stop for today.

Castillo: Okay.

Reti: So, today is February 20, 2013. This is Irene Reti. I am here with Pedro Castillo for our third interview in his oral history.

Castillo: My mother was born on February 29, so she would only have a birthday every four years. (laughs) So February is kind of special because we

celebrate—I don't know if there's a 29th this year or not.

Reti: I don't think so.

Castillo: So whenever I think of February, I think of my mom. We would celebrate on the 28th, but we would kid her and say, "God, you only have a birthday every four years so we should only do something—"

Reti: And then she could be forever young.

Castillo: Yeah. She was 20 when she really was 50. (laughs) Anyway, I'm sorry to digress—

Reti: That's okay. So let's talk some more about your research interests. I know we talked some about your dissertation on Los Angeles but I wonder if you could tell me about what was so compelling for you about Los Angeles as a research subject. You published some other books about Los Angeles as well, besides your dissertation.¹⁹

Castillo: Right. Well, I did my graduate work at UC Santa Barbara, so the proximity of Los Angeles was one thing, as opposed to doing something on San Antonio or Chicago. And there were two or three other people who were doing something on Los Angeles, an earlier study on the 19th century, and then doing different themes.

¹⁹ Antonio Rios-Bustamante and Pedro Castillo, *An Illustrated History of Mexican Los Angeles, 1781-1985* (Los Angeles: University of California, Chicano Studies Research Center Publications, 1986).

Research Interests: Urban History, Los Angeles, Watsonville, Salinas

I think in the field of Chicano history, Los Angeles has been one of the most thoroughly studied cities regarding Mexican Americans. So you can really focus on Los Angeles in the 19th and 20th centuries and there is either a dissertation or a book that covers gender; it covers labor; it covers the economic development of the city. So that was one of the reasons that I was attracted. Other people were doing it and where my study would fit in. Because from there we did a book that would encompass what other writers have done. And we have a book on Mexican Los Angeles that covers the founding all the way up to—remember that book that was published in 1990?

Reti: Yes, I took a look at that. It's got a lot of photographs.

Castillo: Right, with photographs. We wanted to integrate photographs. So by that time, when I finished that, I think I was here at UC Santa Cruz. So then I became very interested in Watsonville, and the surrounding community. And Salinas. Communities that have large Chicano/Latino populations. So I started working on Watsonville and on Salinas, especially the more recent history of those two communities, the 1980s to the 1990s, when both went through political changes.

There was a lawsuit in Watsonville to go from at-large elections for the city council, to district elections. And one of the reasons for this lawsuit was that Chicanos had run for city council, but it was an at-large election, so if there were four open positions, the top four people would automatically win. Chicanos would run and they would come in number five, or six, or seven, and they

would not be on the city council.

So they got a lawyer who had done a lot of work on voter registration, gerrymandering and voter representation at work in Texas, and had moved to Los Angeles. And that's Joaquin Avila. And he started to do the same thing. He met with a group from the community. This is in 1985, 1986. And then there was a lawsuit in 1987. [The issue] was the at-large system for city council elections, specifically city council, was discriminatory because it tended to dilute the vote, in this case, of Mexican-origin people. The same thing had been used in Texas. It had also been used in the South to move from at-large elections—especially on city councils, school boards, water boards, boards of supervisors—to go to district elections. The Watsonville City Council fought this. It was composed of all Anglo Saxons. And they fought this. It went to court. And in 1988, the District Court of Appeals, which is the last court before it goes to the California Supreme Court, sided with the Latino plaintiffs, to go from at-large to district elections.

So they did that. And as a result of that, by establishing these districts now—there are seven in Watsonville—the number of Latinos started to increase. First, there was one person elected, then two, and then three. And now I think there are four. There have been as many as four or five on the seven-person Watsonville City Council. Things have changed. Over 85 percent of the population of the city of Watsonville are Spanish surname. So you can see that change. The mayor has been a Latino. There are four or five Latinos on the city council. The city manager is Latino. You can see a lot of the people who work for the city are Latinos, not just in the kind of custodial groundskeeping, but in parks and recreation, in planning, in various offices.

So when that occurred, Salinas was also tinkering about this as well. And the members of the city council saw what had happened in Watsonville. The city of Watsonville had to pay over a million dollars for attorney fees.

Reti: Whoa. Where did that money come from?

Castillo: From the budget, from the city council budget. So when Salinas saw this, and the city council heard that there was a possibility of a lawsuit, they immediately moved and called for an election. So in Salinas it's different. They called for an election to see if the people of Salinas wanted to go for an at-large election, the city council, arguing that, "If we don't do this, there's going to be a lawsuit, and potentially we're going to have to pay this lawyer, the same lawyer, Joaquin Avila, (laughs) a lot of money."

So the city of Salinas voters approved it. It was a close race but I think they approved it with 52, 53 percent of the vote. And Salinas went to district elections as well. But there was no lawsuit and they did it themselves. They also have seven districts and you saw that in Salinas the number of Latinos on the city council has also increased. And again, they have four or five, I think depending—you've had a mayor who's been a Latino or Latina. The same thing in Watsonville, you've had Latino or Latina mayors off and on.

So I saw this and I thought—I first started working on Watsonville and then I thought, now I'm going to work on Salinas and do comparative [work]. And then the events leading up to the lawsuits and the vote in Salinas, what took place. And then the results of that lawsuit.

Unfortunately, a lot of communities have not gone about this [as a way] of increasing the number of representatives from Latino and Chicano backgrounds, because now with a conservative Supreme Court they have tended to be more critical of these kinds of decisions. So it's tougher to get these things approved because cities or municipalities, cities or counties throughout the United States, will go to court and there's a much more conservative court that interprets the law in a different way.

Reti: So they think, well, we may end up going to court but we're going to win, so we don't need to make this change.

Castillo: Right.

Reti: So is this comparative study the book that I saw on your cv?²⁰

Castillo: Right. I've done a lot of interviews and I've looked at the documents. Hopefully, that will be done this summer. I've been working on it and doing a lot of interviews and going through city council minutes and newspapers. So hopefully that will be done.

Reti: It's a good project.

Castillo: (laughs) So I kind of put aside Los Angeles, although I still keep in touch with LA and still read up and find out what's going on. I wanted to do something more, kind of local. There's been some talk in Santa Cruz over the

²⁰ *A Comparative Examination of Changing Electoral Practices in Two Rural California Cities: Watsonville and Salinas* (forthcoming publication).

years—it comes up every once in a while—that in Santa Cruz, the city council people all come from the west side. None come from the east side. And again, here in Santa Cruz, if there are four vacancies open, the top four people get elected. So there's been some discussion that they should go to district elections. But that comes up every seven or eight years and kind of just— The reasons are different than Watsonville and Salinas. Watsonville and Salinas use the Civil Rights law of 1964, disenfranchisement, the lack of voting by the Spanish surname population. In the South, it was the African American population. So the conditions are really different, but— So there's talk of that every seven or eight years in Santa Cruz and it just doesn't go anyplace. And part of the reason that people indicate is that city councilmembers in Santa Cruz, they all come from the west side—

Reti: Right, so then there's a heavy university influence.

Castillo: Right, a heavy university influence, although these folks live on the west side. So the east side gets disenfranchised.

The Other Side of Main Street

Reti: So [continuing] with your work in Watsonville, I'm aware of a project you did, I think it was in 1979, a student project called *The Other Side of Main Street*.

Castillo: Yes, what happened when I came here, when I started teaching, two things that I did that I'm really proud of in my teaching—one is, the introduction of gender in my classes, to talk about gender in my classes. And even though some of the literature is not as extensive as it is today, I thought it was important

to deal with gender and sexuality, as well as ethnicity and race, when you're teaching a course in American history. So that's one thing that I did.

The other thing that I did is that in my classes I started working with students to do oral histories. This came out of a seminar, a class on California history. It was a seminar on race, gender, and class in California history. I told the students, "We're going to focus locally on Watsonville, and we're going to focus on oral histories, and look at different social, cultural, political organizations in Watsonville, or individuals in Watsonville. So the first thing that I did is that in the class seminars, fifteen to twenty students—I think I had around fifteen—is we went to Watsonville and we did a walking tour of Watsonville, the downtown area, the neighborhoods. We got maps and found out where the different communities are, where different people live—the more middle class, the more working class, the more upper class. The lawsuit still hadn't happened, so we're still talking about—

Reti: A decade earlier.

Castillo: Yeah, no Latinos on the city council. So we got a chance to walk and view the different neighborhoods in the downtown area. And we spent five hours or so doing that. Then I usually would take them to a restaurant and we'd have dinner or something like that. That was cool. So in addition to reading and talking about, let's say, an article on African Americans in Richmond or Italians in San Francisco, to give them breadth and depth on the issues of race and ethnicity. Because there was nothing really on Watsonville except what Sandy Lydon had done. He was doing work on the Chinese and the Japanese of

Monterey Bay.

The class assignment was to do an interview, either of an organization or of an individual. So some of them selected individuals; others selected organizations. But the focus was on oral history. So then I had to do another class or two on oral history techniques, methodology. So this class is getting really big, really unwieldy. (laughs) And I needed more time. So they did this and at the end came with kind of preliminary things—oral interviews that were recorded but not transcribed. People who did individuals, those who did organizations, bit and pieces. So I asked how many of the students wanted to continue under an independent study. I had about ten students who wanted to continue under an independent study.

So the class was fall. In the winter we worked on refining, going back, doing the oral interviews, and transcribing most of the interview, not everything, because they are still junior and senior history majors. And as you know, the transcribing is—that's the work. If you're not trained in that, that's really difficult.

Reti: Yes. And on the quarter system, it's nearly impossible.

Castillo: Exactly. So I wanted them to transcribe certain things. So I thought, maybe if we have ten to fifteen pages—or something like that. Because they said, "Well, how much do you want, page-wise?" And I said, "Ten to fifteen." And then those who were working on organizations would also do the same.

So as we were going and they were doing their work and we would meet once a week, some of them said, "Well, what are going to do with this?" I said, "Why

don't we publish it in a book?" So that was the third quarter (laughs) to publish this as a book, in an independent study. Back in those days, UC Santa Cruz used to do more with independent study. The university has frowned on that since the 1980s and 1990s. I think the number of independent studies classes has dropped and fewer faculty are doing that. So the spring was to put it together, to come up with a final product. So now we're at seven or eight students. Some of the other students couldn't take it or they were going to graduate, but we still had their work.

So we came up with the booklet and I think the University Copy Service did it. It looks like a reader.

Reti: It looks nice. It's bound with a nice designed cover.

Castillo: Yes. We did it twice. We did it one in 1979. One title was, *I would have told it, if I Had a Chance*. The other is *The Other Side of Main Street*. There are two: 1979 and 1980. We printed about one hundred copies.²¹ One we gave to the university, maybe one or two, and they are in Special Collections. Then each student got seven to ten [copies]. We gave one or two to the public library in Watsonville and one or two to the historical society, and maybe one or two to the downtown Watsonville library. Then we gave the other seven or eight to the students. And the students, obviously they wanted to keep one for themselves and then another one to show their parents. But they wanted a couple of copies

²¹ See Pedro Castillo, Editor, *The Other Side of Main Street: A Collection of Oral Histories of Ethnic Peoples: Watsonville, California* (Santa Cruz: University of California, 1979) and *Watsonville: "I Would Have Told It if I Had a Chance": A Collection of Oral Histories of Ethnic People* (Watsonville, California, 1978).

to give to the person that they interviewed. So we gave the person that we interviewed, or the organization, one or two copies or three copies. I still get requests for copies. I just have my one copy of each and I won't let it go. I tell people there's a copy in the Watsonville Library and you can ask the librarian if you can make a copy.

That was really worthwhile. It was labor intensive, as you know, to do it all in a year: the class, for them to have some background on the theme of race and gender in California history, and then to do the interview, to teach them techniques as much as possible in two or three hours. It's not a class on oral history. To come up with a subject, get in touch, find out where he or she lives, or an organization, interview them, and then continue this for a second quarter and then for a third quarter. It was [demanding]. So I just did it once or twice, but it was really nice. I really enjoyed it.

I think after that, in American studies, I think Paul Skenazy and Judy Yung would do a class on oral history. And then Judy Yung retired and then Paul Skenazy might have done it. I don't know if any faculty on campus are using oral history in their classes. Alan Christy and Alice Yang are teaching some—

Reti: Yes, their Memories of World War II course. And there are a couple of courses going on right now on UCSC history, one at Cowell and one at Oakes, that are both teaching students to do oral histories to document the history of the campus, mostly in the late 1960s and early 1970s. And you are absolutely right that the amount of work involved in teaching an oral history course is intensive.

Castillo: It was really great. It would have been nice to have continued that. The

seminar was fun. I taught it. But then the other two independent studies—I had to do that on my own as well as the other things that you're supposed to teach. So after a while it got to be— It would be nice to do that again now, what is it, thirty-five years later? (laughs)

Reti: To go back and do it again. Because Watsonville has changed dramatically. That was before the cannery strike.

Castillo: That was before the cannery strike.²²

Reti: Were you involved in studying that at all?

Castillo: I had some students who were involved with the cannery strike and there were a number of papers that came out of that and some people that are doing more work on it. There was a graduate student at Stanford who did a paper on women in the cannery strike. And then there were some undergraduate papers here at UCSC. But a lot of it was oral history and that takes time, as you know, that takes time to do.

Reti: Right.

Anything else on your research on Spanish language media? You listed that as one of your research interests.

²² In September of 1985, over 1,500 Teamster-organized cannery workers, primarily Latinas, went on strike against the two largest frozen food companies in the United States — Watsonville Canning and Richard A. Shaw Frozen Foods. The strike gained national attention and went on for over 18 months. Workers were successful in forcing a change of ownership at the canneries and were offered a new contract, which they approved. See <http://www.elandar.com/back/www-oct95/andar/cover/cannery.htm>

Demography and Latino Politics

Castillo: I haven't done much with that. I got more interested in the whole issue of demography and the changing population statistics. I've given some papers and some talks on the changing demographics and what some people have called "the browning of America," or the "browning of California" and changing demographics. And it's come up to a recent statistic that just came out this month, I think, or the end of January, that by this summer, in California there are going to be as many Latinos as Anglo Saxons, which is about 38 percent of the California population. They project that in ten years that Latino population is going to increase to 40 percent, 45 percent, and maybe higher.

A lot of this is demographic projections, demographers who are looking at this. What might change these projections is two things: one) the fertility rate is also declining in the United States. It's declining worldwide. And some people are stating that in a number of countries people are getting older and they don't have young people to do the work, like in France and in Spain, and in the United States, also. But zero population growth has really worked in the United States and in other countries. So fertility rates are dropping here in the U.S. They're also dropping in Mexico, which is interesting. And if the largest immigrant population is Mexican-origin, that will have an impact on how many Mexicans come to the U.S., just because there will be fewer Mexicans.

Reti: What are the reasons for that, do you think?

Castillo: People are just having fewer kids, birth control in Mexico, birth control. It has nothing to do with the Church. The Church frowns on that. Mexicans are

still, generally speaking, loyal Catholics. But when it comes to family planning, they engage in family planning. They just ignore the Church on that issue. Abortions are now a possibility in a number of Mexican states. You can have abortions. It's not illegal. So we've seen the increase of the use of abortions and family planning, contraception to limit population, to limit pregnancy. So the population has been declining in Mexico, as well as among the Mexican-origin population in the United States. So that might have an impact as to how fast the Chicano, Mexican population grows.

Reti: Of course, I think people generally are having fewer children because of the unemployment and the recession we've had for the last few years.

Castillo: Right.

Reti: That's affecting all demographic groups.

Castillo: Exactly. It's affecting all communities. There are no jobs. Education is becoming very expensive and people are thinking, "God, if I have five children, to pay for their college it's going to be difficult. So I'll just have one, maybe two. Or maybe none." So that's going to have some impact on these projections.

So some of my talks have dealt with that demography, which has an impact on politics. Let's just say that, I don't know, in California by 2040 or 2050 over 50 percent of the population in California is Spanish surname. Well, that might translate into political power if those folks are citizens, and if they're registered to vote, and if they vote. So much was said in this past election of 2012, that the Latino vote was very important for Obama's victory. Well, it's going to be much

more important in 2020, 2030, 2040, 2050, if that population keeps increasing, not just in California and the Southwest, but in other states, like Nevada, where that population has been increasing and increasing, and in the South, where we've seen an increase in the Spanish-surname population is also occurring. So that's what I've gotten more interested in, not so much to publish, but to do op ed pieces in newspapers, to give talks.

Reti: In less academic contexts.

Castillo: In less academic, more "journalistic" contexts. (laughs) And not historical, but more political-demographic. I've enjoyed that because I've given these talks outside of the United States, in Latin America as well as in Europe, to give a different perspective on the Latino population and politics and contemporary issues.

Reti: Yes, I can well see that there would be a lot of interest in that. It's quite a fascinating historical moment to be living in.

Castillo: Yes.

The Chicano/Latino Research Center at UC Santa Cruz

Reti: Okay, well shall we segue over into talking about the Chicano/Latino Research Center at UCSC?

Castillo: Sure.

Reti: Now we're going back to the early 1990s, when that was founded. What

was the inspiration for founding that center?

Castillo: It was Norma Klahn and myself. I was Education Abroad Director in Mexico City from 1988 to 1990. So when I was gone, Norma Klahn, who was in the literature department, who does Spanish, and, in particular, Mexican literature, she was hired to come here. So I got back in 1990 and met her. And also, at that time there was a visiting professor in history who did Latin American history, who saw that there was no Chicano studies, there was no ethnic studies, and she felt it was important to have a research center that focused on the Latino population. So this was the creation of the Chicano/Latino Research Center.

Also, at that time there was money that came from the Office of the President to the university that was supposed to be used for faculty research. We found out about it because other campuses in the UC system had research centers, in particular UCLA and Berkeley, the two main ones. And we asked around, "Is this money coming from your campus?" They said, "Well, some of it comes from the campus but you can have 50,000 dollars. That's how much each campus is allocated from the Office of the President." "Really?" None of us knew this. So the money was being sent to Santa Cruz and used for other things.

So Norma and I got the Chicano/Latino faculty together with this visiting professor and said, "We'd like to start a Chicano/Latino Research Center that would look at not only the Chicano/Latino population in the U.S., but would link up and would look at Latin America as well, so it would be interdisciplinary and it would be comparative." Because you can't really look at Puerto Ricans in

New York without looking at Puerto Rico. You can't really look at Cuban Americans in Florida without looking at Cuba. You can't really understand Central Americans or Mexican Americans, without looking at Central America and Mexico. So we wanted to combine that and not just make it "Chicano/Latino studies or Latin American studies," but to combine that. So that increased the number of people who were interested, not just people focusing on Chicano Latino studies but people focusing on Latin American history, interdisciplinary.

So we said that and then we wrote to the chancellor and to the Office of the President that basically we wanted that 50,000 dollars. (laughs)

Reti: (laughs)

Castillo: I remember, Jorge Hankamer was the administrator we had to deal with. He's now a professor in linguistics. At the same time, Eugene Garcia was here. He was a professor in education and he was dean. He'd been hired to come here and be dean of the social sciences.

And this is when Latin American studies was also going through some transition. Latin American studies was a program that really survived because some faculty members felt it was important. And they were the ones who offered the courses and did the independent studies and so forth. But it wasn't a department. Gene said, "Okay, if you want to maintain Latin American studies, I'll support Latin American studies and we'll move to make it a department. I want it to be Latin American and Latino Studies, just like the research center that's going to happen." Some faculty that had been involved with it for a long time agreed to this. Others felt very territorial and said, "No, it's got to be Latin American studies. I don't

want to deal with Latinos," for whatever reason.

Reti: Interesting politics.

Castillo: Yes, so there's a whole politics to that.

Reti: And Gene said, "Well, it's either this way or nothing." Latin American studies as a program was on the edge of just dissolving itself. And he said, "I'll put money into it for staff. I'll put money into it so we can hire two people right away and then others later." So this is when the Latin American and Latino Studies Department came about. It integrated some of the people who had been in Latin American studies. I'm thinking of Julianne Burton in literature, David Sweet in history. Those two come to mind. And then others who still wanted to get involved and the dean said, "Once it's a department, you can go into Latin American and Latino studies full time, half time, or whatever, or you can just do classes for them. Either one." The model was American studies that had happened years ago, where some people went to American studies, like Michael Cowan, like John Dizikes, and then others had a relationship, like myself, and offered courses, were part of the executive committee, were part of the participating faculty.

So that happens and that's when we hired Jonathan Fox and Manuel Pastor, and the department came to be what it is today. At the same time the research center was established and we had a relationship with LALS. We got that 50,000 that came from the Office of the President, some legislation that was passed, as well as raising money, getting some money from the social sciences dean, some money from the humanities dean, some money from the Chancellor's

Discretionary Fund, writing grants.

So we sponsored graduate students; we had mini grants for graduate students. We had mini grants for faculty to sponsor their research. We brought in people—we had a colloquium series—to give their talks, people who were going through [we invited], “Why don’t you come here and give a talk on your research?” We had conferences. We had publications. So that really begins to grow and develop.

But with the 1990s and then the economic difficulties of the 2000s, less and less funding came to the campus and [it was harder] to piece things together. It’s still functioning. And Norma Klahn and I did it as codirectors and then after that Aida Hurtado did it, Pat Zavella did it, Olga Najera-Ramirez did it. Gabriella Arredondo is the current director but she is looking for someone else because she’s done it for three years and she’s on sabbatical this year.

So it’s supported graduate research on Chicano/Latino Latin American research subjects. It’s supported faculty research and out of that came publications. And then it put together a mentorship program where a faculty member would work with an undergraduate for the whole year and be their mentors. And hopefully, those students would then go on to graduate school. Some of them did; others did not. Some went to law school. But most of them continued. Even if they didn’t do it right after graduation, they later went on to graduate school. EOP has a similar kind of program.

Reti: The Faculty Mentor Program.

Castillo: The Faculty Mentor Program.

Reti: But that's across campus.

Castillo: This was just for those students who wanted to focus on Latin American and Latino studies. They didn't have to major in Latin American and Latino studies but they wanted to work with faculty that are doing Latino and Latin American studies. So I had students; Pat Zavella had students; Julianne Burton had students; John Borrego—I mean, all of our faculty had students, and we thought that that would just compliment the Faculty Mentor Program. That has continued to work up until, I think, last year, when it was discontinued because of lack of funding. I mean, it's a funding thing. The Chicano/Latino Research Center, I think, is at a critical juncture.

Reti: Right now.

Castillo: Right now. It just might collapse. When Manuel Pastor was here, he was a very important faculty member because he did help, along with other people, create Latin American and Latino studies. And his connections in getting FTE's, hiring more people. Then he established a research center that would complement the Latin American and Latino studies but look at other things. He was more interested in the environment and in health, and in these kinds of issues. So he established the Center for Justice, Tolerance, and Community.

Then Manuel left. He went to USC. The program then was taken over by a professor in psychology, Heather Bullock. And it folded a couple of years ago because of lack of funding. That's what's happened with a number of the research centers on campus. If they don't get funding, or if they don't get support from the Office of the President or from the local campus, they have difficulty.

And some of them have folded.

But it was great. We thought there was a need. Norma and I worked great together. My strength was Latino Studies. Her strength was in Latin American and Mexican studies. We [were]bringing people, doing conferences, doing colloquia involving the faculty, and getting publications. I think we were able to publish, when we were codirectors, I think there's two or three books that were published, which is the strength of a research center. And bringing faculty and grad students together. And then the other undergraduate component, so— That really worked out nice, but you know, the economic crisis and things have to give. So the funding was no longer there from the Office of the President. Fifty thousand dollars will go a long way. The mini grants for graduate students were \$500. That could pay for a plane trip for someone to go to Mexico City to do their research, let's say.

Reti: Sure, for a graduate student—

Castillo: Yes, for a graduate student that's a lot of money. Or a thousand dollars for a faculty person to hire someone to do the interview, or to do a bibliographical search, or to work in the library, or to hire a copyeditor to finish that paper or edited book, whatever it was. So that really helped the faculty members. We had working papers; people would come and present and we had working papers. I think during the nineties and during that period from 2000 to 2010, it was very active. Things have slowed down a bit because of lack of funds. I thought it was a major contribution just like Manuel Pastor's research center was also a major contribution.

Reti: Oh, yes. Absolutely. I was sorry to see that go.

Reti: How come it was called the Chicano/Latino Research Center but there was this Latin American connection that's not embodied in the name?

Castillo: Yes, right. I think it was Chicano/Latino Research Center [CLRC], but it didn't have in the title "Latin America." That came up after we did it—if you don't have "Latin America" people won't know that—

Reti: Yes, I had no idea that was included in the vision.

Castillo: In our publications and letterhead and we also had a newsletter—the title was "Chicano/Latino Research Center, Cross Border Perspectives Linking the Americas." But what would we call it, the Chicano/Latino Latin American Research Center—that's CLLRC? (laughs)

Reti: Alphabet soup.

Castillo: We thought it's got to be four letters. More than that, people won't remember.

Reti: Thanks. It's good to get that history down.

Provost of Oakes College

Do you want to talk about Oakes College? You were provost of Oakes for six years.

Castillo: Yes, I was provost of Oakes from 2002 to 2008. This was after David

Anthony wanted to get back to the history department to finish his book. So he talked to me about it. I was very supportive of David applying. I thought, if you support someone then they won't ask you to be a candidate. So I was one of the earlier supporters of David doing this. (laughs)

Reti: (laughs)

Castillo: (laughs) Because some people had asked me to do it but I wasn't ready for it. David was Oakes provost from 1996 to 2002. I think I was very much still involved with the Chicano/Latino Research Center and wanted to do that and not leave that and do the Oakes thing. So I came out real quickly in supporting David in doing that and talked him into it. He said, fine, and was selected into it.

So I thought, now is the time to do it. By that time I was no longer the director of the Chicano/Latino Research Center, but still involved with it and focusing more on history, and to some extent still kept my fingers in LALS and American studies, but not really involved with it.

So I was interviewed. I've always liked the college. I've known the mission of Oakes College. I've known many of the students. I've known the faculty who are over there.

Reti: Because you first went over to Oakes in the early 1980s?

Castillo: Yes, and remained as an Oakes fellow even when we were then shipped to Merrill. I said, "I still want to maintain my Oakes fellowship." A few faculty members had fellowships in two colleges. I think David Anthony did, because he also went to Merrill. He was also at two colleges. I think Michael Cowan was also

Oakes and then maybe Merrill, because that's where he started. John Dizikes always stayed at Cowell even though when he was in history or American studies they were at Oakes. But he wanted to stay with Cowell forever. Okay.

So I was interviewed and then I was asked to do it and I really enjoyed it. It has a terrific staff and it still does. Some of the issues that came up had to do with the core course. The faculty and the lecturers working with them are doing a great job on the core course, *Values and Change in a Diverse Society*. I think the title's been modified a bit by the current provost, Kimberly Lau, but still focuses on the issues of race, ethnicity, gender, and class in American society. Many of the students, I don't know what the percentage is, but Oakes and Merrill have had the highest percentage of students of color, historically. And that's historical because it goes back—because some of the students now, we're talking about brothers and sisters and children of Oakes students who send their kids here. And they'll say, "Well, I was at Oakes twenty or twenty-five years ago. You're going to go to Oakes." So there's that.

For some reason when I was there, there was a large percentage of Filipino American students. I went to one of their organization meetings and some of them knew that and others were surprised. I asked them why [they came to UCSC]. And some of them said, "Well, my cousin came here. Or a sister or a brother, or a good friend of mine who is Filipino American came here and they recommended it and we really like that."

They have a high number of African American students and it has to do with J. Herman Blake, the founding provost, an African American.

Reti: Did you know him?

Castillo: Yes. And it has to do with people like Don Rothman, who recently passed away, who had worked with students of color, and that's why he always wanted to remain there. Teaching writing at Stevenson or Cowell is very different than teaching writing at Oakes College.

Reti: Yes.

Castillo: And Don enjoyed working with these students that oftentimes their writing skills were not the writing skills that students had who were at Stevenson or Cowell.

So the student body population really interested me; the staff—it's a very diverse staff, a staff that's been there for a lot of time, so they really think very highly of the students and it's a great staff. The staff that worked in the core course, also a very committed and excellent writing staff. I didn't have to hire too many lecturers to teach in the core course because there was not a big turnover in our staff. People wanted to teach in the Oakes core course. I even had inquiries from other lecturers in other college core courses who wanted to go to Oakes College. Every year there were two or three, "Are there going to be any openings? Is someone leaving?" And then you hire one or two people who are new, who have remained. I keep going to functions of Oakes College, receptions, and I run into some of the writing people. They're still there, the core six to seven lecturers who are still there in the writing program.

We would read Malcolm X; we would read Baldwin. We would focus on an

Asian American author. We would focus on gender. Oftentimes, the authors would be women—Toni Morrison. A Latina. An Asian American woman. A white woman. A lesbian. Issues of sexuality, of gender, would also be integrated in the course. One of the staff persons, who was a Latina lesbian, she worked in the residence as a community residential advisor, counselor—would talk to the group. We had sections of fifteen to twenty students and then we had one meeting once a week, where we'd show a film, have a guest speaker, or something like that, where you would have 250 students come together, 270 students come together. Some of the core courses do that. There's different models.

I was there towards 2007, 2008, where they wanted to make the writing much more intensive, much more important. All core courses on the campus are one quarter, except for Stevenson. That's two quarters. At one time Stevenson used to be three-quarters. Given the financial situation when I was there, 2002 to 2008, it was already starting to happen. Stevenson dropped from three quarters to a two-quarter core course. That was difficult for the Stevenson folks, for the provost, but if the central administration says we can just fund you for two quarters—

But now in core courses they do A and B and writing. So those students that come in [needing help with writing] go into the A and those students whose writing level is much higher go into the B part of it. And then some of the writing lecturers, some of them are part of the Writing Program, others are just part of Oakes, teach seminars, teach other classes having to do with writing. Like the woman who is working on the oral history of Oakes College—

Reti: Leslie Lopez.

Castillo: Yes, right. She's in the Writing Program and then she's also teaching the class for Oakes on using oral history to document the history of the college.²³

So I really enjoyed that. It was working directly with students, which I really enjoy. We would have students over to the house. We'd have faculty to the house, staff to the house, and do some kind of a reception at least once a quarter, invite small groups of students. We especially wanted to invite frosh students, a group of ten or fifteen to the house to the house, sometimes for just cookies and juice. And I must say, that's been—I mean, I've enjoyed doing a lot of stuff; the Chicano/Latino Research Center I really enjoyed. But being provost and connecting with undergraduate students has really been—yeah, I'll say the highlight of my tenure at UC Santa Cruz.

Then with the preceptors we would do other receptions, like for transfer students. They're the ones who also get lost. The transfer and they affiliate with the college but oftentimes they're older. They don't live on campus. They don't do the core course so there's no socializing them to a college, to UC Santa Cruz. They just come here, "You're a junior. You've got to take upper-division anthropology." So they take their classes and they just have, generally speaking, two years and then they graduate. So we tried to do something for them. Kresge has been working more with transfer students and they have programs trying to get more transfer

²³ The student oral histories collected for the 2013 Oakes College oral history course will be available in the UCSC Library's Special Collections Department in the fall of 2013—Editor.

students, trying to get a critical mass of transfer students and work with them.

So we did different things. I mean, fortunately Oakes has an endowment. Herman Blake, the founding provost, established an endowment for Oakes. And this is one of the things that I was forever grateful for to Herman Blake. So you would have some extra funds to do these receptions, to bring an outside speaker, to hire someone.

Reti: I didn't know that.

Castillo: Yes, Oakes has—the biggest endowment is Porter College. When I left, Porter College, their endowment used to generate—I want to say 200,000 dollars a year for the provost to use to do whatever. The Oakes endowment would generate about 100,000 dollars.

Reti: That's a lot of money.

Castillo: That's a lot of money, yes. I mean, you can do a lot with 100,000. Cookies and punch are not going to cost you 100,000.

Reti: (laughs) You can do a lot of programming.

Castillo: You can do a lot of programming. So, Porter does a lot of programming and gives grants to faculty and to students, sponsors a lot of things. Same thing with Oakes. So then you get to a place like College Eight or Nine and Ten that don't have an endowment. They don't have the extra flexibility to do programs. It's interesting because I think the university has always looked at those endowments as, hmm there's an extra, if we put them all together we could get a

million dollars, maybe, to—do whatever they want to do. (laughs) But I think there'd be a real revolution if the university ever tried to take that money from the colleges.

I didn't know about this going into it and then I found out about it and I thought, wow, we can do some more stuff. At one time we put some of the money into the core course to hire more instructors for the core course to keep the student-faculty ratio down. As opposed to 20, 22 students, we were able to get it down to 15 to 16 students. And that makes a big difference if you're teaching writing, just five fewer students.

Reti: Oh, yes.

Castillo: It makes a big difference. You can take more time reading their papers, take more time meeting with the faculty. So it was those kinds of things. We would give some funds for lecturers to do courses. We had some money, so we hired a graduate student in history to teach a class on the gay and lesbian history of the United States. The history department wasn't offering that.

Reti: That was an Oakes class?

Castillo: That was an Oakes class. It was Katie – It was funny because Katie was a groundskeeper at Merrill or Crown College, and then she got into the grad program in history and got her Ph.D. in history. I haven't seen Katie for a while. She finished and she was doing the commute: teaching a couple of classes at Cabrillo, a couple of classes at Hartnell [College], a couple of classes at Monterey [Peninsula College], a couple of classes at San Jose State—doing that kind of stuff.

Then she finally started teaching at Oakes. She was teaching in the Oakes core course. I said, "Well, we'll try to keep you here at Oakes." And then she said, "How about if I put together a class on gay and lesbian history in the United States?" "Hey, that's great. There's nothing, Katie." She said, "I've gone to history and there's no funds over there." "Okay, we'll do it." You could also use it if you were a history major. It was open to anyone. I think she did it for two or three years. I mean, what happens is you have a new provost who comes and they want to do different things. And it should be that way. I told all of the people when I was leaving the provostship. I said, "I'm leaving. The course that you're doing is great. I wish I would be here. But it's a new provost. You can talk to that provost and they might want to do it. But they might not. They might want to do something else." And they understood that.

Reti: Sure. Now, there's also theme housing at Oakes.

Castillo: Yeah, they have theme housing. That really worked well. To show you the differences—when I came there were three residential preceptors, CRE's [Coordinator for Residential Education]. There were three people. Now there's just one for the whole college. These staff members oftentimes had masters in higher education, counseling, residential life. And they would live on campus and work with the students. That's been cut.

What I also saw when I was there was that we have a CAO [College Administrative Officer] at each college that I would work very closely with. Each college would have a provost and a CAO. But now there's a provost and a CAO, but the CAO is for two colleges. They're doing pairs, like Oakes/College Eight;

Crown/Merrill; Stevenson/Cowell. There was some talk—it didn't go that far—there was some talk of one faculty member would be provost at two colleges also, to cut the budget that way.

The budget had been cut to some extent. We also had our financial person [taking care of] two colleges. Then they moved to—there's a CAO and then there's an assistant CAO. This happened right after I left. Now the assistant CAOs also work at two colleges. And the advising and counseling staff—we had two and half people. But now there are just two people. Part of our endowment went to pay a half-time academic preceptor, counselor. Then I think they took a half person, so you were down to one and a half. So our funds covered to we could keep them at two. So each college has one now and the other person is 50 percent time, or something like that. They can't cut any more.

So we had flexibility. We would do senior night and use the endowment to hire the University Center. We would rent that and we would provide a dinner for them. It wasn't catered. It was a buffet. And people would get up there and they'd have presentations about what Oakes meant to them, these seniors. We had oftentimes forty to fifty students. But that costs money. I don't know if that's still being continued, or not, at Oakes College.

So there were a number of things innovative. The core course was working nicely—you tinker around with the readings, the guest speakers, the films, but it really worked well. And, as I said, I think all of the writing people who are at Oakes are still there. They're just really great people and they want to stay there. I think maybe one or two have gone someplace else.

But it was great, [working with] undergraduates, turning them on.

Reti: How was it for your wife, Shirley?

Castillo: She enjoyed it. It was like a sabbatical for her. It was at that time that Shirley said, "I'm retiring," from her job. She's a social worker administrator. I think she retired in 2003, as soon as we got there. By this time, she was working in Monterey, so she had to commute to Monterey. And that's when she decided [to retire]. And it was nice. She got involved with the house and she got involved with the staff. Sometimes we would just do stuff for the staff, a barbeque, or Shirley would cook and have them over for lunch. She took a sabbatical and she was reading and doing other things.

We got much more involved with community events, lectures and stuff in Santa Cruz as well as on campus. It's easier if you're on campus to go to a talk, as opposed to if you live in Watsonville. I would just stay here and not go home if there was a talk I wanted to come and hear, just have dinner someplace and come for the talk. But it's also hard for people who live in Santa Cruz to go home and then come back for a talk or a lecture. Maybe for staff and faculty, it's a little easier. But I think for townspeople the place is still very difficult to maneuver. Parking is a problem. You don't know where parking is. You don't know where the buildings are. You've got to walk around. The place, contrary to what's been stated, it's still poorly lit at night. If there's fog, that's even worse. So if I'm just John Smith, resident of Santa Cruz, coming here for a talk it can get—unless it's Angela Davis or something like that (laughs), then you find where she's talking.

Reti: Right, or Shakespeare Santa Cruz that has a following. But yes, it can be

intimidating.

Castillo: Yes. So she got more involved with the community and would work with the staff. Her background is in alcohol and drug abuse, so sometimes she would give some talks and lectures for some of the core course sections, because that was one of the big issues. I mean, you're eighteen, you're away from home for the first time. Nobody to tell you, "Time to get up. Time to go to bed. Time to go to class. Time to turn in that paper." And the problems oftentimes had to do—not so much with drugs, but with alcohol consumption.

One of the things that a provost is responsible for—it's not only welcoming new students and their families, and the graduations, which are very exciting, and when you see them four years later and they're leaving—but it had to do with academic disqualification, students who came here and were just having a good time and got two or three F's, not just one quarter, but two quarters and then three quarters.

Reti: So you had to be the heavy.

Castillo: I had to deliver the sad news to them.

Reti: Yes.

Castillo: Or put them on probation. At the end of the year, I met with a couple of faculty members and the academic preceptors and we had to deal with people who were not making satisfactory progress, to put them on probation. Or if there were some issues of, let's say, academic dishonesty—

Reti: Plagiarism.

Castillo: Plagiarism, cheating—you had to deal with barring the student for a year or something like that. And sometimes it involved their families, who came and wanted to know why their student was being sent home. Or sometimes students wouldn't tell their parents. (laughs) "I'm just going home for a semester." "But aren't you a student?" "Yeah, but I just want to take time off."

There's a Council of Provosts that meets to talk about campus issues as well as individual college issues. But there's also a group, usually of two or three provosts of all of the provosts, that deal with academic dishonesty, plagiarism cheating.

Reti: Because there has to be a process.

Castillo: Yes, it's called a tribunal. And they're the ones who hear the cases. The biggest issue was plagiarism. Some students had no idea that they were doing this. They were never told. And other students that you knew, knew that this was wrong, but they just got caught.

Reti: Well, you became provost during the rise of the Internet, so you had students more and more, I would imagine, plagiarizing from the Internet.

Castillo: Sure. Your paper is due tomorrow at 2 o'clock. It's ten in the morning the day before or ten at night the day before. It's so easy just to Google something. "Wow! There's a whole paper. If not the whole paper, I can use some paragraphs and fill in the rest and before you know it, it's a paper." (laughs) I think a number of students just panic. They hadn't done anything and this is

what they did. Some of them are willing to admit it. “Yeah, I did it.” And others would not say that they did it. And then others who had never been told how to paraphrase, how to use quotation marks. It was interesting because before I got that, a lot of the cases came from engineering. So engineering then tightened up, and on every syllabi it’s very clear: plagiarism will be punished. And in the core course, the instructors spend at least one or two sessions talking about plagiarism: how to cite, how to quote, how to paraphrase, but giving credit to the author. But it happens.

But it was good. I really enjoyed being a provost, doing that.

Reti: Yes, I can tell. That’s great.

Castillo: Working with undergraduate students is the main challenge. It’s great. Not every faculty member should be a provost. I think you’ve got to enjoy undergraduate education. You’ve got to enjoy teaching. You’ve got to have a personality where you work with students.

Reti: I can imagine. Otherwise you’re living there with the students, trying to do your research and not wanting to interact with the students at all.

Castillo: Yes, because you have to go to the office. You have to meet with the staff. You have to work with the staff. You have to be visible. You have to do things with students. As opposed to a faculty member—you can just do you teaching and do your research. But this is directly working with students, working with the core faculty when the course is being taught. And then afterwards you evaluate it: what did we do right; what do we need to change?

And then before its taught—the selection of books, the selection of who is going to teach the sections, how many sections do we need? So just putting it all together, the lectures, the film, “Oh, that film that we used last year. It didn’t really work. Let’s try something else.”

Reti: So it’s a constant evolving project, the core course.

Castillo: Yes, which is really nice. It’s like any course. I mean, that’s what I would do with my classes, look at the evaluations and what they said about books. If 80 percent of the students said, “This book was just lousy! I couldn’t read it.” That book—it might be, like what was I thinking when I got that book? It might be good for a faculty seminar or a graduate seminar but not for undergraduates.

Reti: This brings to my mind, what changes have you noticed among undergraduates from the days that you first taught here, until more recently. Do you think [the students] have changed?

Castillo: The change, (sighs) it’s not the seventies or eighties, where there was more student activism. But maybe there was more student activism in the sixties and seventies than there was in the eighties or the nineties. I still tend to get, because of the courses that I do that deal with Chicanos/Latinos, race, ethnicity, gender, I still tend to get students that are social sciences, humanities—history, American studies, Latin American and Latino studies, sociology. I don’t tend to get—unless one or two students are science majors and need a class in history, or an engineering student who needs a class in the humanities—students that I get still tend to be interested in the subject, still tend to be more politically conscious,

politically aware, still tend to be kind of left [wing]. They're not out marching in the streets the way they did in the sixties because of the war in Vietnam or the civil rights movement. But they're still involved with the gay and lesbian community, the gay and lesbian center, diversity workshops, student government, volunteering in schools as a tutor. They're still socially aware, socially conscious.

But the times have changed. I don't get Republicans, let's say, who are going to go to law school and then practice on Wall Street. I'm not condemning those. I don't want to stereotype but engineering and science students, math students, tend to be a little bit more politically conservative, let's say than English majors or literature majors, who might be a little bit more progressive.

They are still doing things in the community. One thing that I still see in our students here is that they want an education. They are interested in these subjects that deal with race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality. They're still very much involved in working off campus, on campus. They still have some kind of a social consciousness. It's different than the sixties and seventies.

Reti: It's a different time.

Castillo: It's a different time. Some of them are career-centered. They want to go to law school but not necessarily to work for a big firm. They might want to work for a firm that works with undocumented immigrants, let's say, something like that. And they're still open to doing a lot of things that are not traditional. I still think our students are very different from the Berkeley or UCLA students, who are more career-centered. Our students want a career; they want to work. They

want to make a living.

Reti: It's so expensive to go to school.

Castillo: To pay their debts and not live at home. But they're more interested in doing other things. We have one of the highest number of students that go into the Peace Corps. I just saw an article on this. We still have the highest number of students that do Education Abroad. They're interested in going to places to study and learning languages.

So I think we still have kind of nontraditional students. We still have students that don't mind if they end up working at a coffee shop. And maybe they'll turn that into they'll own that coffee shop and become small businesspersons. There is this kind of career-centered notion of some of the students and maybe all of the students. But I still think that they're very much interested in social justice. They still have a social concern. They still have an awareness of who they are and what they want to do and how they want to change things.

So there's been a change, but—and maybe that's why I never wanted to leave Santa Cruz—the students were terrific. They were really involved in a lot of exciting, interesting things outside of the classrooms and they bring so much to the classroom.

Teaching and Speaking Abroad

Reti: So now you did leave Santa Cruz for brief periods of time to go teach in Latin America, in Mexico, and Buenos Aires. And Germany and England.

Castillo: Yes, that's one of the things that was made available to me as a result of my interest and my background, my publications, and my world community. Early on, I developed a taste for international education. I remember my first trip abroad was in 1979, when I got a Fulbright in Bogota, Colombia.

Reti: Yes, you talked about that during our first interview. You brought your wife and kids and it was before things got really dangerous there. What a wonderful opportunity.

Castillo: Yes, we did that. Later in the eighties my wife and I went to Buenos Aires, and I did a Fulbright there. And as a result of doing that, and getting involved with scholars, European and Latin American scholars who are interested in the study of the United States, I would get invited to give talks in Latin America. And some of them were, like the Fulbright, those were three months in Buenos Aires and three months in Bogota, Colombia.

And then you're asked, because of my bilingualism, you're asked to then go and spend a week or two at other places and give talks. One of the most recent ones was in 2008. I was in Spain. I was no longer provost and I guess I was on leave. It was in late October and November 2008. I knew some people in Spain and I said, "I'm going to be there. I could talk on the upcoming election and Latinos." And they said, "Wow, this is great." So I gave a talk, it was two days before the election, about the election and Latinos. This was 2008.

Reti: Right, the Obama election!

Castillo: So they invited their faculty. It was in Spanish. I did it in Spanish. The

Spanish students at the university in Madrid were able to hear this as well as some of the EAP students who were there, who heard about this and came to the talk. I had a couple of students who were from Santa Cruz, who came to the talk and afterwards came up and said, "God, this was great. I really enjoyed it! I've already sent in my absentee ballot to vote. But it was great to have that connection because I've been here for a month or so, or two months, and I really like it here. But it's great to hear a professor from UC Santa Cruz."

Reti: A little taste of home.

Castillo: Yes, making that connection. So there's this kind of collegiality of, I would invite some of them to come and I would organize a talk for them to talk at UC Santa Cruz. Or at some of the conferences I would organize panels, at some of the American studies conferences or history conferences—someone from Spain, someone from Argentina, someone from Mexico to come and talk about, let's say, the history of urban America. They were doing something from different perspectives, international perspectives.

And then they would invite me to go over there. And I would give a talk. So I really enjoyed that, to know that there are so many foreign scholars who are working on the United States, on mainstream topics. Some look at the Civil War; others look at the Founding Fathers and the American Revolution. Others do the 1930s, the New Deal. And then others are interested in African American history, or Chicano/Latino history and culture and politics and literature. So kind of a different perspective. For example, now in Spain there's a center for the study of the United States. It's outside of Madrid. They have conferences and talks. One of

the conferences, two years ago, was on Chicano/Latino literature. I didn't attend. And then they're going to do one on the 1950s in America.

Reti: I know that there's a lot of interest in Gloria Anzaldúa's work in Europe.²⁴

Castillo: Yes, exactly. There's a lot of interest in a lot of the Chicano/Latino writers. I must say that most of these folks are more interested in literature—African American, Native American, Asian American, Chicano/Latino writers. They're interested in Anzaldúa. They're interested in the other Chicano/Latino writers. And some are interested in history. But the vast majority tend to be folks interested in literature. Some of the books are translated into French, or German, or Spanish, or some of these people read English as well.

So that's been very rewarding, to get to work and meet and collaborate with international scholars, primarily in Latin America. The connection there has to do with Spanish and my bilingualism. We can talk in Spanish and I can give a talk in Spanish. The last time I was in Buenos Aires, which was two years ago, I have this friend who've I've known for a number of years, and he knew I was coming. Shirley and I were just going there to vacation, just to travel. And he said, "Oh, you've got to come to my class. This semester I'm teaching my class on U.S. history and you've got to come."

So I went to his class and these are undergraduates, about twenty to twenty-five taking a class on the history of the United States. It was the second semester and

²⁴ Gloria Evangelina Anzaldúa was a Chicana lesbian feminist writer, philosopher, and cultural theorist. See *Signs: Autumn 2011*, which features a comparative perspectives symposium: Gloria E. Anzaldúa: An International Perspective."

they were on the 1890s, turn of the century. He kept asking me questions as he was talking. (laughs) He didn't ask me to give a talk but he kept asking me questions to involve me in the class. That was fine. So these kinds of events.

And there's an Argentinean journal on the study of the Americas. It also does Canada, as well as the United States, as well as Latin America. I'm on the editorial board of that journal. That's been very rewarding as well, this international group of colleagues that work on the United States. When the historical society has their meeting, either the Organization of American Historians, which is going to meet in San Francisco this year, in April, or the main organization, the American Historical Association that meets in January, there're oftentimes foreign scholars that are doing work on the United States. It's interesting to go hear their papers, or to have a panel with foreign scholars as well as U.S. scholars to look at the same issue but from a different perspective or lens.

Reti: I bet.

Castillo: Just like the Oral History Association. I mean, it's probably nice to see that organization and people that are doing—those that have the presidential interviews, as opposed to someone who is doing oral interviews of health care workers. It's kind of a different perspective.

Reti: Absolutely. And there's also the International Oral History Association, which met in Guadalajara in 2008 and I got to go.

Castillo: Wow!

Reti: And it was bilingual.

Castillo: So does that group meet every year?

Reti: Every two years. They've met in South Africa and Australia and Argentina. Well, that seems like a good place for us to stop today.

Castillo: Yes.

Co-authoring a Textbook on American History for Middle-School Students

Reti: So today is March 6, 2013 and this is Irene Reti. I'm here for an oral history interview with Pedro Castillo. And this is our fourth interview. So, Pedro, last time we talked quite a bit about your writing and publications over the years but we didn't have a chance to talk about your textbook that you wrote and edited.

Castillo: It's a textbook for middle school students. I just was contacted once—a publisher came—they come and visit your office to sell, see if you're interested in their books to use in the classroom. And that's how I started. I might have used one or two of the books in one of my classes. And then he contacted me and he came by. He said, "Have you ever thought of writing a textbook for middle school?" He already had something in mind. I said, "No, I've never thought about it." He said, "Well, let's talk about it." (laughs)

So we talked and it was a book that was already there but they were going to redo the whole thing. They wanted to get it ready for textbook adoption for middle schools in the big states—New York, California, and Texas. If you can get one of those contracts, then a publisher makes a lot of money off it. So he said,

“We have a skeleton and we want to redo the whole thing. We have new people.” He told me who the people were. I think there were four of us. I said, “Sure, that sounds interesting.” And he said, “Basically, you’ll write drafts and we’ll sit down—”

So then we sat down someplace in Southern California at one of the social science conferences, the four of us, and we divided up the chapters, who was going to do what and so forth. But at the same time, we were going to look at the other chapters and make comments on them. Even though I didn’t do, let’s say, the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, I would still look at those chapters and make comments. And then they have writers, they have a bunch of writers. So they said, “Come up with drafts. Come up with outlines. And we can do the rest.”

So I think I wrote one chapter on late nineteenth century urbanization, immigration, something like that. And they came back and said, “These are for middle school children, okay? This is not an essay for your undergraduates or a seminar for your undergraduates.” (laughs) Okay. He said, “Don’t worry. We all have problems with academics because they start to write—”

Reti: Yes, I can imagine.

Castillo: So I redid that and I think I did four or five chapters. They were great because then you talk to their rewriters, who rewrite the whole thing. And if you mention people, names, and dates—they Google it or whatever.

Reti: So they do the fact checking.

Castillo: Right, fact checking. And then also, if they wanted a map of the U.S. in

let's say, 1890, they can Google it and get that. They can get a picture of a reformer who worked in a settlement house, Jane Addams—they can come up with that. So they do all of the supplemental stuff. It was a process and we finally finished it. And then they send you to conferences, Meet the Author events, myself and one or two others. There was a guy who was at the University of Arizona. The third person was from someplace back East, I think it was Connecticut. And then the fourth person, I forgot where he was [from].

It was a good experience. They wanted to diversify the book and get a different perspective and have people focus on women, African Americans, Latinos, social history, cultural history—to get away from the political history, although that's there—the political history is the basis—I think the book sold well. It was published in 2000. They do these things every ten years. So I don't know if they've changed it or will change it. They haven't been in touch with me so I don't know what the status is of the book.

Reti: Well, I was thinking about our first interview and how you told me that when you went to high school there really wasn't any—very little discussion—

Castillo: Right, exactly. They told me, "Remember when you went to high school and the kind of book you had?" I said, "Yeah." They said, "Well, that's not what we want. There will be the political history but we want to focus more on social and cultural history." The suggested readings were much more diverse. The images were different—the graphs, the charts, the timelines were different. So they really were making an effort to diversify and include more workers, women, people from different walks of life, just to get away from: "this is the first

president, who did this; this is the second U.S. president—“ and to bring it all the way up and then focus on who was our president at that time. Part of that was there because they’ve got to balance—

Reti: Sure, people do need to know that history.

Castillo: Right. So that was a good experience. I really enjoyed it. It was something I did once. That was okay. But it’s real hard work. First of all, it’s writing something for middle-school students, so they’ll read it and they’ll understand. I don’t want to use the term ‘dumbing down,’ but it’s a different vocabulary. It’s different if you’re teaching a class at the university. So the vocabulary becomes different, with a lot of color, a lot of images, photographs, suggested readings, charts, graphs, and different events that occurred.

They want to sell the book, obviously, so it’s also got to be such that it will pull people in and it will pull teachers. I don’t know how it is in other states but in California each school district has the voice in adoption of the book. So it’s not like California selects one book and everybody has to use that. It’s, Santa Cruz City Schools selects a book and they use it in their middle schools, let’s say, but that’s just Santa Cruz. Watsonville might do something different. Salinas might do something different. So then they also put you on the road when school districts are about to adopt their book, to go and talk up your book.

I believe the Santa Cruz City Schools was using the book or is using it because I got an email from one of the faculty members saying that they were happy with previous books and her daughter was going to go to middle school. And she noticed that my name was on the book and she emailed me. (laughs) So that’s

how I knew. Once it's done, it goes wherever—I mean, you could try and contact the publisher and say, “Which school districts are using it, and find out.” And sometimes they'll have one book and it's on U.S. history but if it's going to be in California they try to give it a little bit of a California slant. Or if Texas has the book, it's the basic book but they give it a little bit of a slant to integrate events in that state and how it impacted U.S. history.

Reti: So it might be a slightly different edition?

Castillo: Yes, a slightly different edition—a California edition, a Texas edition—of the main [book]. For example, the Brown versus Board of Education, the Supreme Court Justice Earl Warren, he'd been a governor of California, so you play that up and talk a little bit more about that. Richard Nixon came from California, so when you talk about his presidency you throw in that he was California. I'm sure that with Texas, you do a lot with Texas as a republic those ten years after the conflict between the Texas and Mexico and before the U.S.-Mexico war. So you've got to deal with that.

Reti: Sure.

You're a grandfather too, right?

Castillo: Yeah. Right.

Reti: What's your sense of what your grandkids are learning in school in terms of Chicano/Latino history, the New Social History?

Castillo: Well, the two oldest ones—one graduated from college last year and

one is a sophomore. So I mentioned it and my sense—well, they grew up in Davis and went to the Cesar Chavez Elementary School. So they got their U.S. history, and it was a little bit different in that they got more about Cesar Chavez and the farm workers because they were at that school. But then they went to middle school at another school. The Spanish immersion program in Davis is just in elementary and then you go off to another school, but they had basic Spanish. And I asked them but their schools were not using my book. (laughs) But I gave copies to my granddaughters so they could read ahead and they could be smartie pants and know what was coming, and they could ask questions, “Well, what about this?”

So my sense, and this is four, six years ago, when they were in middle school and then in high school—is that it’s still not enough. I mean, if they get a good history teacher who maybe went through the seventies or even eighties and focused more on social and cultural history, that might happen. But I get a sense that it’s still the old kind of traditional U.S. history. There’s also this stuff that’s taken over public education since Bush became president, but even before that. Bush, and it continues with Obama—this whole issue of standards and setting up standards.

Reti: Yes.

Castillo: And basically, children in the public schools are taught to pass the test. And the more students in your classroom pass these standardized tests, the better those kids look, the better that classroom looks, the better the teacher looks, the better the principal looks, the better the superintendent of that district

looks—which is losing all sense of creativity. Especially in the science area and in mathematics, it's basically these standardized tests. It's a little bit more flexible, I think, in the social sciences and the humanities.

What is encouraging is that even though this is changing—it's going very slow—because I still get students [in the past few years] who took my Chicano history or U.S. history class and said, “God, I never got this in high school. Where did this all come from? I never got this and I'm really learning new things, not just about Chicanos, but about women, about African Americans, and relationships, and what really took place.”

But then in other places the curriculum has been expanded to include local history in some places, to go beyond the world history, U.S. history in high schools, and then government and then economics. So where they might teach a sociology class; they might teach a psychology class; they might do another social science.

In some of them they combine oral history—I remember, this is years ago, one of my former student who graduated twenty years ago, she got her credential and then taught in Watsonville. She taught second grade. So they have social studies in second grade. It's not U.S. history; it's social studies. What she did with the kids is a history of Watsonville, kind of at that level. They walked around the community. They interviewed their parents. Some of them interviewed the mayor or something like that. And then they put together these stories and presented them to the city council.

She took my classes. She got a BA from here. She worked with me. She later,

when she was getting her credential, was my student assistant in my class. So she was sensitized, to use that term, to social history, to women, to gender, to sexuality, to ethnic contributions in U.S. history. And she was able to use that in the teaching of second grade. She did that for a few years. She then went and left for another school district in the Bay Area and she's now a Ph.D. student in education at UC Davis. She wanted to go on and to use that to teach the teaching of history to other teachers.

So these are things that you hear that people are doing. So it depends on the school district; it depends on the individual. But in a sense, things have really not changed that much. I mean, the big controversy, which relates to the broader issue of teaching, in my case Chicano history, or it could relate to teaching issues of race, and gender, and sexuality course on California or the U.S. That's changing. I've seen my colleagues, the ones that are here in Santa Cruz because I have the most relationships with them—I see my other colleagues really integrating issues of race and ethnicity in U.S. history—all of them.

I must say that I was very fortunate in teaching here, as opposed to [if I had] been at Harvard or the University of Texas or Oregon State—or even much more so at Idaho State, or Montana State University, or Alabama, things would still be more traditional, more rigid. But you can go to the professional associations, whether it's American studies or U.S. history, where you really see the changes that have taken place. Like, for example, the Organization of American Historians is meeting San Francisco in April [2013]. There're a lot of sessions on gender, on sexuality, on Chicanos, on African Americans, on women. I think they're having workshops on oral history. It's not just the one-hour—we're

talking about the whole morning or the whole day, where there are these workshops. They're integrating more community college—

So I think the profession has changed. I think the teaching has changed, but in higher education. Where it's going much slower is in the public schools, in middle school and high school. Yet you have individual teachers who want to change things around. And you *can* do that, as well as get to these standards and teach these standards.

That's also a political issue because when Texas two or three years ago, they were adopting their standards, and what do you include? Do you include some of the early African American freedom riders or do you take that out? And what happened in Texas, at least three to four years ago, was that there was a more conservative state school board that adopted the textbooks. They were not writing the textbooks but they could say what could be included or excluded. Or the issue in Arizona just recently, where one of the public schools—and this is in Tucson, which has a heavy Mexican-origin and Latino population—the superintendent said teaching of Mexican-American studies and Mexican-American history was racist because you would focus on one group and you wouldn't talk about Anglo Americans. So they did away with that. I mean, this superintendent said you couldn't teach that anymore. So they took that out of this one school district.

Reti: Yes, I heard that they were accusing one teacher of being a traitor, that it was sedition, not having loyalty to the United States.

Castillo: Yes, exactly. It was unpatriotic. When you teach, in this case Mexican-

American history, you're not being patriotic. But you still had to take U.S. history. I mean, this was an elective. There's a core curriculum. Like in high school in California, I think your first year is more elective; the second year is where you do world history. It used to be Western civilization so that's changed and now it's world history. The third year it's U.S. history for the whole year. And then the senior year is one semester of government, what used to be called civics but it's government. And then a second semester of economics. Geography is still trying to make a case that they should be [included] and there are some teachers who have pushed for that, but it's still not popular curriculum. I think geography is very important and it should be integrated when you do world history, clearly, and when you do U.S. history. People don't know where things are.

Reti: Yes, basic geographic literacy is essential.

Castillo: Yeah. And that's not part of it. So the issue was, well, if we include geography, what do we take out? You can't take out civics or economics. You can't take out U.S. history. You can't take out world history. So maybe you can have geography as an elective and I think some schools do have geography. Like, the electives could be geography, sociology, psychology. In some places you have ethnic studies or you have classes on women. But oftentimes a lot of it has to do with the teachers, and the school district, the principal, the superintendent, the school board that says that's okay. So you have these issues like in Arizona, where if you teach something like Mexican-American history that's being unpatriotic. It should be U.S. history. Everybody should take that.

Reti: Right, so it's not like you could say, oh, we've made so much progress and

everything is great now. There's a backlash happening and there's still a lot of resistance.

Castillo: Right, especially when the education is very rigid, back-to-basics, standardization, standards—we're falling behind. I mean, there's always been an issue. In an early period we were falling behind the Russians. Now we're falling behind the Chinese or the Japanese because they do these exams and the U.S. falls in math and science.

But I think those were the reasons. I was satisfied with the book. I thought the book came out nice. Who knows? I might get called again to revise it. But once I finished that was it. And then for two or three years, five years, you go to conferences. They invite you to conferences and you're there for public relations and then that kind of fades away. And then they've got a new book for high school that they've got to promote, or they've got to get a new book for chemistry or something like that.

Reti: What's on their frontlist, yes.

So do you want to move on to talking about Watsonville now?

Castillo: Sure.

Community Service: Watsonville and Beyond

Reti: So, just generally, one thing I noticed from your cv is that, more so than many professors that I've interviewed, you've been very active in the local community, as well as nationally, doing service in all kinds of ways. So some of

that is in Watsonville. And you moved to Watsonville in 1990?

Castillo: Yes. But even before that—I always felt—Well, let me go back a little bit. You're evaluated at the University of California on the basis of your teaching, your research publications, and service—service to the community, service to your profession. It's very, very clear that research and publication has always been number one, continues to be number one. It's very, very hard to get tenure by being an excellent teacher and nothing else, or very little. I saw some excellent teaching here by people who did not get tenure. Because they were excellent teachers but did not publish anything, or published very little. Secondly, you're not going to get tenure by community [service]. I mean, you could be president of the Organization of American Historians, let's say, the top organization for U.S. historians. But if you haven't published you're not going to get tenure. And you can be mayor of the city of Santa Cruz, or be on a lot of committees, but that's not going to get you tenure. That will—they can use that—but—you know. So it's really publications and research that's important.

But I always felt—and as a result of that, I think, my career went a little slower than maybe it would have just focused on research and publications—but I always felt that there was another community out there where I should get involved, in the local community, the college community, and then beyond that, the broader academic and political community. I've always liked politics and I'm a political animal and I enjoy that.

So even when I was here in Santa Cruz, I was a member of the Parks and Recreation Commission here in Santa Cruz. I really enjoyed that. When I was on

it, Mike Rotkin was on the city council—one of the many times (laughs) he has been on city council.²⁵ So I approached him and he helped to appoint me.

And it's during those years, which would have been between 1976 and 1986, and it's more in the early eighties, I believe, that we came up as a commission with the Heritage Tree Ordinance, when I was on the Parks and Recreation Commission for the city of Santa Cruz. Which meant that people can't just get a chainsaw and saw down their tree, even if it's in your backyard. People have done it but now there're fines for doing that. Here was an ordinance to maintain trees and heritage trees in the city of Santa Cruz, to make it more green. There were two or three other people who felt very strongly about this on the planning commission, environmentalists, so we got together and— There was a guy who passed away and his whole idea was—I used to refer to him, not to his face, but as Chainsaw Bob.

Reti: (laughs) Oh, no.

Castillo: (laughs) Because if it was up to him, he'd get a—just knock them down. It's your house, your yard. Just knock them down, you know. Or if they're messing up the sidewalks, just knock them down. Well, you can do other things besides just cutting down the trees to try and maintain the trees— Or if it is a hazard, take it down, but plant another tree there.

So I was involved with the Parks and Recreation Commission and with the city

²⁵ An oral history with Michael Rotkin is forthcoming from the Regional History Project in 2014.

council supporting some candidates. When we first came here in '76, a conservative majority was still running the city. That didn't change—I think they got one progressive, maybe in '74—I've forgotten when that started to change. But clearly it was in the seventies, and in the late seventies when Mike Rotkin and then John Laird got on the city council, Jane Weed got on the city council. Those [people] come to mind during that time period. And especially because Mike was on campus, I would see him. And my wife got to know John Laird, because John supervised my wife's senior thesis in community studies. So there was that connection, and then connection to Jane Weed, to Mardi Wormhoudt, to other members of the city council. So there was support for the Heritage Tree Ordinance and keeping Santa Cruz green, making sure that trees would not be arbitrarily just removed from people's houses, from your backyard or your front yard. So I continued to get involved with that.

At the same time I continued to get involved with the teaching of Chicano history here, I [also] wanted to do something about that in California and in the U.S. So joining professional associations and having sessions on Chicano history, Latino history—trying to integrate those who were doing research and teaching Chicano history to have more than just a university profile, but having an organizational profile. So doing something with Chicano history, with the Organization of American Historians that I'm a member of, that has dramatically changed. Going to different meetings.

There's the Organization of Western History, which was really interesting—there was really resistance to Chicano history. Because these were kind of old-fashioned, old-timers, white males who taught Western history, but it was very

rigid political and economic history. And what was happening is that you had women who were trying to change that organization; you had people of color trying to change that organization. So that eventually begins to change.

The Organization of American Historians was much more receptive to Chicano history, to women's history, to issues of sexuality, to the environment. [The field of] history was changing. And that's when I came into the profession, [did] my graduate work in the early seventies and started teaching in the mid-seventies, and that's when social history was making a tremendous impact on the history profession. Some organizations were much more open, like the Organization of American Historians. The American Studies Association, a national organization, was even much more so, because it included not only history but literature, philosophy, popular culture, and they were much more receptive to diversity in academia. So things began to change. So I got involved with that and that was going on.

And then I went to Mexico City in '88 to '90 and directed the Education Abroad Program, and came back, moved to Watsonville, and became much more involved with that. Initially I was serving—because I really enjoyed that, I think parks and recreation are very important, especially for youth and for everyone in a community. Those are important. It's across the board. I mean, parks are for kids but their parents use the park. And then seniors need parks, also. So it's not just for kids. It's across the board. I must say that Santa Cruz really has a very good system of parks. Even before the progressives took over, there was always the emphasis on parks and we've got some very good parks now throughout the city.

So in Watsonville, I tried to do the same thing and I got on the Parks and Recreation Commission. When I was in Mexico City from '88 to '90, this is when the Chicano community sued the city of Watsonville—well, the lawsuit really started in '86 to '87, but the final decision came in 1988, when the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals, which is like the Western United States, finally ruled that at-large elections, which is what they had in Watsonville, violated the civil rights of the Latino population and they used Title V of the Civil Rights Act that's being debated now. It's before the Supreme Court.

Reti: Oh, that's what's being debated.

Castillo: It's being debated now. It's Section Five, which gives communities of color the right to sue so that city councils, boards of supervisors, water districts—all of these elected municipalities, all of these governmental—school boards—can then go from at-large to districts. And the lawyers have been arguing that they needed that, because with at large elections Latinos or African Americans would always come in fourth or fifth place and there would be three slots for city council.

Reti: And we talked about some of the earlier history of that struggle [in a previous session of the oral history].

Castillo: Right, or two slots for the water district or the school board. So they did that. And that started in the South, we see the number of African Americans on school boards and city councils, on board of supervisors, on water districts, tremendously increase. And then that issue, lawyers use that in Texas and California to go from at-large to district elections. So when we came back, they

already had one or two Latinos on the city council. And that has continued in Watsonville and in Salinas.

Before the Supreme Court now, is that some municipalities in some states, primarily from the South, are saying, "Well, that law was enacted in 1965. How long do we have to keep it on the books?" And this is what the Supreme Court is hearing. And from what I've read, it seems to be divided between the conservative justices, who are saying, "It's been over fifty years. Now's the time to stop this. Because you've had enough integration. Now African Americans in the South have political power." That's what the argument is. And the liberals on the court are saying, "No, we still have discrimination. We still have racism even though we have an African American president. People still vote along racial, ethnic, gender lines. And we still have a lot of disenfranchisement. So we've got to continue this part of the Civil Rights Act." So that's what's being debated now.

So I came back and got involved and was on the Parks and Recreation Commission, and then on the Planning Commission. After that I got on the Planning Commission. And I enjoyed that. And the issue in Watsonville—it's a small community. Its population is getting bigger. It has 48,000, 49,000. It's almost the size of Santa Cruz. Santa Cruz is 52,000, 53,000, more or less.

Reti: So the population of Santa Cruz hasn't grown as much as Watsonville's has.

Castillo: As much as Watsonville. The percentage has been much more rapid than Watsonville. And some were thinking that in the census of 2010, Watsonville would overtake Santa Cruz in terms of population. But that didn't happen. It might happen in 2020. Because it keeps growing.

But the Latino population has tended to stabilize. What we're hearing from demographers—and it has to do with the economic situation—the number of immigrants from Mexico has declined dramatically. There's more apprehension and sending of the undocumented [immigrants] back, so that's also going on at the same time, which has kept the population stable. And women are having fewer children, across the board, but specifically in this case, in the Mexican-origin community. In Mexico, the population has been dropping and dropping. I mean, we have this image that there's a lot of young kids, a lot of Mexican families are having five, eight children. I mean, it happens but not as often as it used to happen. It maybe has to do with economics. So there're fewer children, although the Mexican-origin population is a very young population. Over a third of the people in Watsonville are Latino children under the age of eighteen.

Reti: Wow.

Castillo: And the population of Watsonville now, Latinos, is about 85, 88 percent Latino.

So that has gotten me much more involved and gotten me more involved in the Planning Commission. It's a small community. Growth is a big issue. Yet agricultural land, because it's an agricultural community and agriculture is very important. So there's always been this tension between growth, and what do you grow, and the protection of agricultural lands. One, because part of Watsonville is covered by the Coastal Commission. So there's Highway 1 that runs through part of Watsonville and you can't build on that side of the freeway, of Highway 1. The Coastal Commission is involved.

Reti: I didn't know that.

Castillo: It was a big issue a few years ago when they had to approve a second high school in Watsonville. Watsonville High School was overpopulated. They needed a second school. Well, where do you put the second school? There were no parcels in the city itself so they wanted to go west of the freeway. First of all, it had to go through LAFCO here, and then it had to go through the Coastal Commission. The Coastal Commission was established to protect the coast and oftentimes the people that are appointed—well, depending on the administration—but the Coastal Commission has been very liberal and has been very environmentally friendly, and has wanted to protect the coast with no buildings, no construction, no big hotels, unless they were already there, like the Dream Inn, for example.

For Watsonville to expand and build, you're dealing with prime agricultural land. So there is that tension between a growing Latino population, a young population that needs employment, and agricultural land, and a very strong environmental community in Santa Cruz County that wants to protect agricultural land. Not only the farmers that are in South County, but there are a lot of other environmentalists. Once you pave over ag land, that's it, to build a school or to build a shopping center, whatever it is, that's it.

Reti: That's some of the richest agricultural land in the country, in the Pajaro Valley.

Castillo: Exactly.

Salinas does not have that history. Salinas is a bigger town. It's around 140,000, 150,000, around there. But they have more land. So if you go to Salinas, there's more shopping centers. But it's a bigger place. And oftentimes, when you pave over ag land in Salinas—and you can see that some of those shopping centers are from the last ten to twenty years—it's not such a big issue because the environmental movement has not really taken off in Salinas and in Monterey County. And the growers there are much more powerful, much more important. But the growers there don't mind if somebody wants to buy their fifty acres of land and give them fifty million dollars, as an example.

Reti: That's very expensive land.

Castillo: Yes. As opposed to Watsonville, where there's much, much less land. And with a strong environmental—

Reti: Do you see there being a kind of racial divide? Are the environmentalists primarily white? Are there Latino environmentalists in Watsonville?

Castillo: Probably. I guess I would be included as one of them because I was involved with the founding of Watsonville Wetlands Watch—Myself, Chris Johnson-Lyons, who works for the Community Action Board (CAB), Dick Bernard, who is no longer here; he moved back to Maine, where he has family; Celia Organista, who is a community activist in Watsonville, who retired about four years ago and then went back to work for a year and now has retired for a second time. But she's still very active in the community. So there's a few. But the tension is between those who want to maintain ag land and those who don't. Yes, I would say that when you look at this, it's the farmers, the environmentalists,

who tend to be white and the Latinos, elected officials, who want growth. Oscar Rios—

Reti: Like Alejo. Isn't Alejo behind this recent annexation effort?

Castillo: Yes, Alejo. There's this recent annexation that is going to come up.²⁶ And it's being organized by Daniel Dodge, who's Latino, who got a petition going so that the voters in the city of Watsonville can vote yes or no for a parcel of land that's prime ag land that's on the west side of the freeway to develop. So that hopefully they'll get a shopping center and they'll provide jobs for the people from Watsonville. The city council endorsed this. So it's Dan Dodge. It's Eduardo Montecinos. It's Philippe Hernandez; it's Carina Cervantes. It's Lowell Hurst too, who's tied into that group of Latinos. So it won 5:2 to put it on the ballot for June. And now they're getting the ballot measure ready and the rebuttal to the measure.

So it tends to break down—although there's some—and we see this more and more, and you probably know this from the work that you did on organic farmers—we're beginning to see an increase in the number of Mexican-origin farmers, organic and nonorganic.²⁷ They're not huge. I mean, they don't own millions of acres. But they own some land, or they lease the land, and they certainly would not want the land paved over.

²⁶ Reti was referring to Watsonville City Councilmember Daniel Dodge's effort to annex the Sakata-Kett and Green Farm properties into Watsonville city limits. Dodge has expressed an interest in seeing a Costco and an In and Out Burger built on this agricultural land.

²⁷ Castillo is referring to the Regional History Project's publication *Cultivating a Movement: An Oral History of Organic Farming and Sustainable Agriculture on California's Central Coast* (UCSC Library, 2011); see <http://library.ucsc.edu/reg-hist/cultiv/home>

Reti: I was wondering about that exact issue, yes.

Castillo: Right. And in the past fifteen years you've had two that I know, Latino farmers who've been presidents of the Farm Bureau, that generally speaking has been against annexations of prime agricultural land. So the opposition is going to come to this attempt to annex that parcel. It's going to come from the Farm Bureau; it's going to come from environmentalists, whoever that is. And then others who see themselves as wanting to retain and not build on the coast of California, in this case the coast of Watsonville.

Reti: Aren't there also issues about the revitalization of downtown Watsonville?

Castillo: Yes, well that's coming at the same time. I'm sure an argument against that vote, is, "You're spending so much time trying to annex that [land]. What about the revitalization of Watsonville? I mean, that's on the city council's agenda. Shouldn't we be paying more attention to that?" So these are the arguments.

So it was during the period of the 1990s up until 2002, when I moved to campus to be provost of Oakes College. So 2002 to 2008, I was on campus to be provost. I think I was in my last year on the Planning Commission for Watsonville, no longer on the Parks and Recreation Commission, and in my last year on the Planning Commission. Also during those years, I was on the board of trustees for the Steinbeck Center. I enjoyed that. That's when Leon Panetta and his wife, Sylvia, were on the board. So that was enjoyable, before Leon went back to D.C. So that was very important. I think the Steinbeck Center is an excellent place and it's a great museum, what they're trying to do.

I also got involved and was a founding board member of the Pajaro Valley Community Health Trust. The hospital in Watsonville, Watsonville Community Hospital, it was nonprofit and then it sold to a private group. And what happened is that there was a trust that had to be established, as you go from nonprofit to for-profit, there was a trust that was established. And they appointed a number of people to be on the founding health trust. So I did that. But that was in 1999 to 2002, so I had to resign from that because I was coming to campus [to serve as provost of Oakes College].

So a lot of my involvement in Watsonville kind of took a back seat when I moved to campus. I still kept one foot in Watsonville but I was not involved with any kind of organizations, whether it was the health trust— The thing that I did keep was I was appointed to the Community Foundation. So I was on the Community Foundation. And they give small grants. Sometimes there's a lot of red tape. I know that.

Reti: (laughs)

Castillo: To get a thousand dollars you have to put in a hundred thousand dollars of work and it's just not worth it. But it serves a function. And again, I was getting to know other people. Oftentimes in these organizations, like the Heath Trust, or the Planning Commission, or the Community Foundation, I was the only academic on there. So it's nice because you meet other people that are lawyers or doctors or engineers, or computer or small businesspeople, or police officers or firefighters. So it's kind of a different mix. I've always enjoyed that, to do things that are not just academic. I tended not to—not because I disliked the

people in history or at the university—but I tended to do other things and I wanted to do other things. I learned a lot. It was important for me to have different contacts.

And I sometimes think—and I'm not critical—people can do what they want with their academic careers—but I sometimes think that faculty members, not just here but other places, just focus only on their careers, on their teaching, which I think is important, on their research and publications, which I think is important, on service, but the service is very narrow. They do service for their profession. Very few people that I know—I mean, the one person that I would often see, and we're still in touch, is Roger Anderson from the chemistry department. He's very much involved and he's a member of LAFCO. He's the community representative on LAFCO [Local Agency Formation Commission]. Roger is an environmentalist. And Roger has been there for a number of years. Mike Rotkin, we know of his work. Tim Fitzmaurice, who was also on the city council and mayor for a number of years, is from the campus. And there're others that might be doing it.

But I've always felt that there're more important things to do off campus in the whole issue of social justice and the whole issue of politics. I've always been very much involved with politics when I was here in Santa Cruz and then in Watsonville.

Electoral Delegate for President Bill Clinton

And then nationally, the whole issue of being appointed to the National

Endowment for the Humanities, is when Bill Clinton was going to run for president, and he was president from 1992 to 2000. So around 1990, 1991, I was back from Mexico City, we're in Watsonville, but as a result of being involved with the Democratic Party and the Central Committee, I met this woman by the name of Marcia Scott. Marcia Scott had gone to high school with Bill Clinton in Arkansas. Marcia was from Arkansas.

Reti: And she lived here?

Castillo: And she was here. She lived in Santa Cruz and she was a designer, a home designer, and had a small business. I met with her and she started talking about the upcoming primaries and have you ever thought of Bill Clinton? Well, who is Bill Clinton? I didn't know who he was. I started to look up Bill Clinton, and then became part of the group supporting Bill Clinton, and then became a Clinton delegate to the national convention. The first one was in New York in 1992. I went to New York. He got the nomination. He's elected president.

Reti: What was it like?

Castillo: It was great. You met a lot of people, a lot of politicians, from the very local level, just grassroots organizers, members of the Democratic Party, all the way up to congresspeople, senators are there. And they have caucuses—they've got the women's caucus; the Latino caucus; the California caucus, the Western caucus. So you would go to all of these meetings. And then you'd have a lot of parties and stuff like that. And then you're on the floor where they're actually doing the ballot, and someone is nominated. And then the acceptance speech. So '92 was more exciting.

And then I did it again in '96, and went to the Democratic National Convention. In '96, it was in Chicago. But everybody knew Clinton was president so he was going to be renominated. It wasn't clear who the Republicans were going to put up against him.

Service on the National Endowment for the Humanities

So it was Marcia Scott, who then went to work for Clinton in the White House, and this guy, this anthropologist who was a folklorist who I met when he was at Yale University. He was a young assistant professor in anthropology. I was a young assistant professor in history. And we met and got along. Then we would see each other. During the Clinton years, because he's also from the South, William Ferris, and I guess Marcia's assignment was to come up with names to be appointed to the National Endowment for the Humanities. And she got together with Bill, William Ferris. They were talking and somehow my name came up.

So I got a call from Marcia Scott, "Would you be interested in being appointed to the NEH?" "Wow!" "I was here talking to Bill and your name came up. Send me your CV." So I sent the CV and then it's going through. But there has to be a check. See this is not secretary of defense. It's just the National Endowment for the Humanities. I'm not minimizing it. It's very prestigious—I'm honored.

So they sent an FBI person from San Jose. They came to the campus and they interviewed people in the history department. They talked to the chancellor. They talked to colleagues of mine. For example, they talked to Al Camarillo at

Stanford and they talked to a couple of people I know at Berkeley. They just do a check to see who you are, if you have any criminal background, anything that might embarrass a nomination, like maybe you stole candy from a blind woman when you were five or something. They want to know that because that might embarrass—and some newspaper might pick it up and say, oh, they're appointing this guy—

So I did the background check and then it went through my congressman. So Sam Farr said, "I know this guy and he's okay," that kind of stuff. I have a letter from Ted Kennedy to Sam Farr that Sam forwarded to me, that said, "Yes, Dr. Castillo looks fine. We're going to appoint him and approve him." And it's signed by Ted Kennedy. (laughs) That I've kept. Ted Kennedy's signature.

Reti: Yes. And so the fact that you were a liberal, Democratic historian who was doing the New Social History in a time in which the NEH was—I know there had been controversy about the NEA earlier. But that wasn't a problem, your politics weren't a problem?

Castillo: No, because I had been appointed by Clinton. But the problem was that that it was a five-year appointment. I came in in the last two and a half years or three years of Clinton. And then there was a carryover with Bush. Bill Ferris wanted to stay on, but he was a Clinton appointee, so Bush said no. He brought in a conservative historian of art from Indiana.

Reti: Was Bill Ferris the chair?

Castillo: Yeah, he was the chair. He served at the pleasure of the president. Well,

you've got a new president and the president didn't want to keep him. So he was out. My last two years on the NEH, as people were appointed—and they were not all academics. They tended to be academics in the field of history, literature, philosophy, religious studies. But there were a number of people who were lawyers. Some people there were affiliated with theater companies or museum directors. But the majority were academics.

I could see that it was changing and Bush was bringing in conservative historians, conservative academics. And it was interesting because the strategy was, let's not be accused of homophobia, or racism, or insensitivity. So let's appoint a conservative gay historian. And that's what they did! They could find a conservative gay historian. They could find a conservative Chicano historian. They could find a conservative woman historian or philosopher. And that's how they started doing it. So those of us, the last five or six remaining Clinton appointees, could not say, "Hey, you guys are homophobic." "No, they've got a gay, or they've got a lesbian—They were really conservative, though. Which is a contradiction. How can you be gay or lesbian and be conservative? I mean, you know. (laughs) That's another issue. Yeah, given what Bush represented.

And then clearly you could see—because the chair of the NEH has final approval on all of the proposals. So you're divided into subcommittees and you could say, "Oh, this looks great. There's a project to look at the history of African American freedom riders in Alabama." Terrific. The historians are first rate. The people who are going to be interviewed are first rate. What they're going to do is publish a book. Everything looks great. And they want 500,000 dollars. Everything looks great." He started saying no. He wanted proposals on the

constitution of the United States. He wanted proposals on another biography of George Washington. He wanted those kinds of proposals. Those would be the ones that were funded, not these kinds of very interesting social and cultural history, things that dealt with sexuality or gender or ethnicity, race. He approved some of them but [mostly] he said no. So we were the last six that went on. We were there until 2002. So he had eight years.

When Barack Obama came into office in 2008, the director, this conservative art historian, had been chair of the NEH for eight years. He knew that Barack was not going to reappoint him so he went and did something else. So Barack appointed—interesting political move, he appointed (which Barack sometimes does—he appointed a liberal, Republican, ex-Congressman from Ohio or Pennsylvania. His name is Jim Leach. He’s not one of these Tea Party guys, not one of these real rigid Republicans. He would be like a Nelson Rockefeller Republican, much more liberal, especially liberal on social and cultural issues. So that has changed and the membership has changed. There’re more women. There’s more African Americans and Latinos, but progressives, not the real rigid—

Reti: So when you were serving on the NEH, essentially you were sent proposals to review? Or did you have meetings to go to?

Castillo: Yeah, we had meetings. We would go to Washington two or three times a year. There would be a recommendation—we would not read the proposals. They would establish subcommittees who would read the proposals. And then they would meet in D.C. And then these subcommittees would then recommend

to the Council—and then when we got there, we wouldn't look at them all over again, we would look at their recommendations.

Reti: So they would summarize the proposals and the program officer from that division on research—these are institutional researchers, because as an organization, as the University of California, you could submit a proposal and then you could submit a proposal as an individual faculty member. So the different committee members ranked them, read them differently. We would look at those and then we would look at the top ones. And then we would get the summaries from the program officer in that area, as well as the summaries of all of the academics who were on the subcommittee. And then as a committee we would make recommendations. Let's say we looked at twenty and we ranked them, and we wanted to recommend five. And then we brought them to the full council. And the full council would take the recommendations of the subcommittee. The full council would recommend to the chair and the chair could say yes or no.

Reti: After all of that.

Castillo: Yes, with Bill Ferris there was a good working relationship. But then with the new guy things started to—he started to say no. And as the council, which is composed of twenty to twenty-five people, started to change, we could see that—you know—By the time we left, there were only six Clinton appointees and it was ideological, very ideological.

The thing that sealed William Ferris's fate and that he would not be reappointed by Bush (other than that he was liberal and a friend of Bill Clinton's) was that

there is a humanities lecture every year in February or March. And the council comes up with the name of who is going to be asked to do this lecture. So the people that we were recommended were liberals, left.

So I think it was in 2000, we recommended Arthur Miller, who came. He gave this talk after Bush had won the election and the Supreme Court decided on the election.

Reti: Oh, wow.

Castillo: So this event is a big deal in D.C. So he blasted the Supreme Court and blasted the conservatives on the court. And sitting in the audience was Sandra Day O'Connor, who as we understood later, got really pissed off. And there might have been some folks from the Supreme Court, who then talked, maybe not one-on-one with Bush, but to Bush's friends, saying, "William Ferris allowed this. We don't want him."

Reti: But they didn't go through and get rid of all of you who had been appointed?

Castillo: No, no, no. In other words, our terms—we were the last six appointees of Clinton. There was another group, of another six or seven people, but they never got confirmed because if you'll remember, the last couple of years of Clinton's years, he had to deal with the whole Monica Lewinsky—

Reti: Oh, sure.

Castillo: So he wasn't making appointments, not just to the NEH, but to the NEA

and other commissions. His whole thing got—

So when Bush came in, there were a lot of vacancies in a lot of commissions. The NEH and the NEA are two that I know about, but other things. But he was just so consumed with going to court and all of that, almost impeached, and all of that political stuff. It paralyzed the Clinton administration in terms of what he did.

Reti: That's an interesting perspective. Well, thanks. That's really important history.

Castillo: I came back after that. And then I was appointed to the California Council for the Humanities. I just got off it last year. I was termed off. And that was nice because it looks at something more specific, which is California. There are twenty to twenty-five people, a mix of academics, a community college president, some lawyers. A law firm. The chair of the council is now the librarian for the city and county of San Francisco, Luis Herrera, who was named librarian of the year in 2011 in California. So different kinds of folks. But it's kind of a small scale—I enjoyed that. I was on that council when Rene Tajima-Peña got a couple of grants. I couldn't call her and say, "Hey, Rene! You got the grant." (laughs)

Reti: (laughs)

Castillo: She had to wait for the letter. There you tend to know more of them because they're coming from California. People from UCSC—Rene, Ruby Rich, have gotten grants. Helene Moglen, I think, got a grant. It's the same thing but

it's smaller; it's just California. I enjoyed it.

Local Politics

Then I was reappointed again to the planning commission in Watsonville.

Reti: Weren't you on the library commission [in Watsonville]?

Castillo: Yeah, I was on the library commission once I stopped being provost and went back to Watsonville. I moved back in 2008, so around 2009—I was on the library commission for a couple of years, from 2009 to 2011. I resigned [from that] when Eduardo Montecino appointed me to the planning commission. We have districts and I live in his district. He ran for city council and I supported him and worked for him, so he asked me to be on the planning commission. So I did that for a couple of years.

Reti: So you retired from teaching in 2011.

Castillo: Right.

Reti: Obviously, you're still doing a lot.

Castillo: Yes, right. A lot of people will tell you that they get busier [in retirement]. I'm not teaching and I don't go to university meetings. But I'm still very much involved in the community. We ran people for city council last year [in Watsonville]. Carina Cervantes, who is now the wife of Luis Alejo, is on the city council. She was on the planning commission. We supported her and she won. She's on the city council. Carina is getting her Ph.D. in psychology here at

UCSC. Felipe Hernandez got his BA from here. He was on the planning commission also and now he's on the city council. Eduardo Montecino is a bus driver and he ran his campaign on, "I'm a bus driver. I'm a working person." He won two years ago. I'm in his district.

Dan Dodge—the family, he's not native from Watsonville, but the family is from Santa Cruz, the Dodge family is a longtime—He was a coach at Santa Cruz High School. And then Daniel and his parents moved to Watsonville, so he's been in Watsonville for a long time. Lowell Hurst, who used to be a teacher at Watsonville High School. So that's the progressive majority in Watsonville.

So I'm still involved, not running for political office, but making sure that other people run for political office to keep liberal, progressive folks in control. You're going to have a lot of Latinos running, a lot Latinos getting elected. If 85 to 87 percent of the population of Watsonville are Latinos, the prospective for them being elected is pretty high.

Reti: So when you say "we" are running, is this through the Democratic Party?

Castillo: Yeah, there's a Cesar Chavez Democratic Club in Watsonville that I'm involved in. That runs candidates and that supports candidates.

This last year, also on the school board, two Latinas ran and were elected, Maria Orozco, who works here at UCSC in financial aid, was elected. She's young. She's in her mid-twenties, very bright and is a very good addition to the Pajaro Valley Unified School District. And then Lupe Rivas, who is a retired schoolteacher, also ran. Then a third woman who ran for reelection, who I would

put in a liberal, progressive camp, ran and was reelected.

So out of the seven people on the school board in Pajaro, three are progressive, so they're hoping. In two years all they need is one more person and then they can take over the school board and set a new direction. All three of the people were just elected. So they're in for four years. If they can get one more person, they'll take over the school board.

So there's all of that politics always taking place. And you're always thinking ahead about who's going to run, who's interested? As well as the campaigns of Luis Alejo. Luis has won his second two-year term and he'll have a third, two-year term. So you're already thinking of—especially when he starts to complete four years then people are going to start to—and he'll be termed out—who is going to run for his seat? I mean, people are already talking about, for example, that Sam Farr, he's not one hundred but he's not twenty-five either. It seems like he's been there forever. And I'm sure just like Leon Panetta finally said, "Enough is enough, I want to go back to Monterey County." Leon is seventy-two, seventy-four—I forgot his age. I think Sam Farr is getting up there. Sam is, if not in his late sixties, early seventies. It must be real hard for politicians to finally say—it's like retirement—to finally say enough is enough. But after a while, you just have to make that decision. Some people in Congress, they stay there until they're in their nineties. So who knows?

It's interesting, and I'll mention this for this oral history—that one of Leon Panetta's sons, who is an attorney—he's got three sons—and one of them, who was a lawyer in San Mateo County, I think, up in the Bay Area, has moved to

Monterey. This is James, Jim—they call him Jimmy, anyway. He's making the rounds. He's on the Steinbeck Center's board. He's also on the Monterey County Central [Democratic] Committee. I think we haven't heard the last of Panetta. Maybe Leon and Sylvia are going to start sitting in their rocking chair, but—not really, because they are very active with the Panetta Institute and that's going to continue. The other son is a doctor in Minnesota—and the third son is a lawyer, I think this one is the one who is going to jump into politics. We'll see what happens. It might happen in five years, ten years, I don't know. But the Panettas will still be active, I think.

But my career, as someone who grew up in South Phoenix—and my children have visited there because my parents live there. My children have been there. One summer one of my sons did an internship with the governor's office there. He was an undergraduate at Stanford. So he spent the summer there. And it's—it's a rough neighborhood. We were talking years later and he said, "Dad, you were able to escape from the barrio." I said, "Yeah, many of the kids I went to elementary school with never made it to high school and fewer graduated from high school. And college, that was really—" And some of them I would run into when I was still in Arizona, and they were either working, or in the military, or unemployed, or some were in prison. We used to talk about this guy who, "Oh, no. He got in trouble." And stuff like that.

So for me to come out of that environment, go to the university, keep going and get a Ph.D., and then teach at a place like UC Santa Cruz, which is an excellent university—I've done a lot in my profession, done a lot here on campus, have done a lot in my community. And I have continued to get involved nationally,

internationally, locally, statewide—kind of a mix of my academic and my community service. There's always been that mix. I've had a great career. It's not over yet. It's not that I'm saying it's over. I'm just going to go sit in a rocking chair. But it's been terrific and I've really enjoyed it.

Reti: Well, it's been my pleasure to hear the whole story of your life and how you got here and everything you've been involved in, Pedro.

Castillo: Well, it's been my pleasure, also. Because here, I look at you, and you were one of my students directly and indirectly on this campus. You came here and you did your graduate work and you came in, we talked, and you said, "I think the master's is what I want for what I want to do with [your career as an oral historian]." And now you're doing this work and you're doing great work.

Reti: Thank you.

Castillo: So it's gratifying. I mean, every once in a while I hear from a student or I hear about a student, and it's just gratifying that they did okay. Or I get asked for a letter and they tell me, "Oh, I've been accepted to law school or to a master's program." I guess that's part of the rewards of this profession, this whole notion of being a mentor to other people young people from different backgrounds with different interests. Clearly working with Chicano students has always been a priority, but I've had students from different backgrounds.

Reti: I know what you mean. Well, thank you so much for doing this, Pedro.

Castillo: This has been great.

About the Interviewer and Editor:

Irene Reti directs the Regional History Project at the UC Santa Cruz Library, where she has worked as an editor and oral historian since 1989. She holds a BA in Environmental Studies and a Master's in History from UCSC and is also a small press publisher, writer, and photographer.