

Interviewee: Neil Norquest

Interviewer: Sarah Garza

Date: October 28, 2011

Location: Conference room of Colvin, Chaney, Saenz, & Rodriguez Law Office

Transcribers: Myriam Lopez, Cassandra Davila, Randy Castaneda

On October 28, 2011, my group and I interviewed Neil Norquest. Mr. Norquest is the youngest child of Mr. and Mrs. Carrol Norquest. The interview took place at the law office where Mr. Norquest is employed as a Counsel. My group composed questions in context to plants and animals as well as historical events that occurred here or could have impacted the LRGV in some way. The interview presented insightful information that will benefit the examination of the class concerning land and human interaction.

Neil Norquest: You're gonna have a good time with Kelly.

[group laughs]

Neil Norquest: He could give you *weeks* of information.

[group laughs]

Sarah Garza: Ok well just to introduce myself again my name is Sarah Garza and I'm a graduate student at the, at UTPA and, um, today is October 28, 2011 and, um, can you just state your full name?

Neil Norquest: Yes. Neil Norquest.

Sarah Garza: Ok. And, um, when and where were you born?

[00:42]

Neil Norquest: I was born on October 17, 1947.

Sarah Garza: Ok.

Neil Norquest: Uh, in the old house uh that you just conducted an interview

Sarah Garza: Ok.

Neil Norquest: in, on the corner of, uh, Sugar and Chapin here in Edinburg.

Sarah Garza: Um, so you said you were born in the house, um, did, was there a midwife?

Neil Norquest: Uh, actually uh, Dr. Ralph Homme was, I think, either on his way, you can ask my brother Kelly this, but uh he was either on his way or was being called or something. But I don't think he had gotten there. He had, I think, all my siblings were born in the house there and uh he had been the delivering doctor for several of them. I was the last. [**Sarah Garza:** Mhmm.]

Neil Norquest: And, uh, I think his nurse was there but he may not have arrived yet by the time I was born, I'm not sure. [**Sarah Garza:** Oh.]

Neil Norquest: I think maybe he had not. And so his nurse might have actually done the delivery.

[1:57]

Sarah Garza: Oh, ok that's interesting. Um, and I was wondering if you could, if you knew, um, if you could recount the circumstances to like as to why your father decided to move to the Lower Rio Grande Valley?

Neil Norquest: Uh, yes there are, of course these are stories that I have heard. [**Sarah Garza:** Mhmm. Mhmm.]

Neil Norquest: So I would have no first hand knowledge, obviously. But, uh, my father had - I'll try to make it as to the point as possible. Uh, he had originally been born in Nebraska but his family had moved when he was a child to Lindsborg, Kansas, the town of Lindsborg. [**Sarah Garza:** Mhmm.] **Neil Norquest:** Uh, it's a Swedish community in Southern Kansas. and uh his father, my grandfather, had owned a farm there. And my grandfather by the early 1920s was already in his 60's, I'm pretty sure, and he, my father was one of the youngest of his children and the oldest of four I believe of his children had already become married and moved away from home and settled you know, they were grown. And he was, he and my grandmother were nearing what we would think of as retirement age. And, as in many cases, the cold weather was starting to bother him and he had perhaps a form of rheumatism or arthritis or something wrong with him. But he determined, he and my grandmother thought that this would be a nice place to... you know warm, [**Sarah Garza:** Mhmm.][4:00] warm environment. And so, he and my grandmother and the youngest of their three children, of whom one was my father, [**Sarah Garza:** Mhmm.] who were grown but not yet out of the house.[**Sarah Garza:** Ok.] So they were college age or thereabouts. And my father had attended a couple of years, uh, I think at Kansas State University or College at that time in Manhattan, Kansas. But he wanted to farm. And so when my grandfather determined that he wanted to move to the Valley, and trade his farm in Kansas for some land here in the Valley, my dad, determined that it would be a good idea to go with him both for the purpose of continuing the farm and, sort of being with my grandparents as they, in their older age. [**Sarah Garza:** Mhmm.] So that's the best of my, that's my father's side. [**Sarah Garza:** Ok.] On my mother's side, her father had been raised in Illinois and his father, my grandfather, their name was Nordmeyer. And they had, uh, had been farmers in Illinois and my grandfather, that is my mother's father, and his wife and their oldest children of whom my mother was one, moved here in 1914. And they moved to McAllen, where my grandfather [5:41] had a small farm, but he also had a, I think it was a citrus, uh, not a citrus, but a vegetable, um, like a packing shed (inaudible) kind of thing [**Sarah Garza:** Mhmm.] on the railroad on old 83 there in what is now Downtown McAllen. So, that's how those two came and then they met and married in the 20's. [**Sarah Garza:** Mhmm.] But my, the farm, this farm that you're dealing with here was, uh, the one that was settled by my grandfather[**Sarah Garza:** Ok.]from Kansas. **Sarah Garza:** Ok. Ok. Alright. What are some of your earliest memories, um, as a child here? **Neil Norquest:** Well playing of course, [laughs] playing. You just came from the old house there so and of course it looked different back then. The roads were not paved at that time, um, they were...uh, I think both Sugar and Chapin had gravel by that time. But it was all rural, very much rural. And we had, uh, a lot of room [**Sarah Garza:** Mhmm.] as you might suspect out here in the farming area. And my earliest memories are simply being with my large family and playing. Very, very pleasant happy memories. [Laughs]

[7:15]

Sarah Garza: Yes. That's great. As, your.. okay... Since you had a large family was it, uh, did the family participate in, like, the maintaining of the land or did your father, like, hire outside help?

Neil Norquest: Well both. [**Sarah Garza:** Ok.] Uh-huh. Uh, he, all of the children, we had - there were 7 siblings of course. My mother was a housewife. She did not work outside the home any at any point in time [**Sarah Garza:** Ok.] after marrying my father. Uh, but um..all of the boys, there were four boys and three girls [**Sarah Garza:** Mhmm] and of the siblings, and all of the boys as we got, you know old enough, we worked out there on the farm. [**Sarah Garza:** Ok.] and, in addition to that, my father had, during, on a year round basis he usually had, at least one

or two or three, hired hands and then in addition to that, during harvest season of course, he would hire a lot of, a lot of folks. Everything back then... nothing was mechanized.

Sarah Garza: Mhmm...mhmm

[8:29]

Neil Norquest: From a harvesting standpoint, uh everything was hand harvested, so...

Sarah Garza: Okay.. Um.. and what kind of crops did was, did he specialize in?

Neil Norquest: Uh...well of course, in the, the summer, he grew cotton

Sarah Garza: Ok.

Neil Norquest: most years. And, in fact just about every year that I can remember until my adulthood. Um, he also grew, uh, grain sorghum, uh, and occasionally corn and, uh, one year I think, one or two years, he grew broom corn.

Sarah Garza: Mmm..

Neil Norquest: Uh, but mostly it was cotton and grain.

Sarah Garza: Ok, ok was there any...sorry.

Neil Norquest: [interjecting] I'm sorry, in the wintertime he grew sometimes vegetables.

Sarah Garza: Oh, ok.

Neil Norquest: Uh, winter vegetables; carrots...uh [pauses briefly] I'm trying to remember if he had other, uh, he had, um um...Spring, spring crop would often include tomatoes and that kinda thing. Uh, so he had winter and spring vegetables. And he also had a small, depending on which times you're talking about but a citrus orchard. [**Sarah Garza:** Oh, ok.] [9:45] We had a small grove on the south side of the house, now, um, to the south of the big house, the main house. And then in later years he had, uh, he planted a, an orange and grapefruit, uh, probably another thirty acres or so on the what we call the home place, [inaudible] where the place where the land where the house is as situated there, and you had that, and then we had some cattle

Sarah Garza: Oh that was what I was going to ask.

Neil Norquest: as well. So we had, uh, depending on again which years you are referring to, we would have anywhere from three or four to, um, oh up to fifty or so cattle [**Sarah Garza:** Mm Ok.] um which would be - we would pasture there. We had pasture land. [**Sarah Garza:** Mhmm] and as well we would feed them, uh uh, [inaudible] or silage hay and so on so forth something to feed them - beef, beef cattle.[**Sarah Garza:** Ok.] and also he had one or two milk cows most of the time so it was kind of a lot of different...some cattle, some a little bit of citrus, some winter vegetables, but the main, um, commercial crops that he grew were mainly the summer crops of cotton.

Sarah Garza: So the, the, the, the land was definitely, um, it supplied, it was self, uh, the income was well..

[11:08]

Neil Norquest: Oh yes, all of all of my dad's income, all of our family income during all of those years came from his farming.

Sarah Garza: [inaudible]

Neil Norquest: So, and and plus, we consumed certain, you know,

Sarah Garza: Mhmm.

Neil Norquest: we had, in some we would have, well not always but on occasion, we would have you know one of the beef cattle slaughtered. [**Sarah Garza:** Mhmm.] and we had pigs and we had chickens with eggs and we would have the chickens also for chicken, you know, and that kind of thing as well.

Sarah Garza: Yeah.

Sarah Garza: Ok um, so you said that mostly, uh, the harvesting was, um, labor oriented but uh, when was it, around what time did your father purchase, like, machinery?

Neil Norquest: Ok, now the actual cultivation of the land, he bought tractors. [**Sarah Garza:** Mhmm.] they had tractors all the way going back into the...my brother Kelly can give you a better idea of it, probably into the early thirties maybe in the late twenties.

Sarah Garza: Ok.

[12:17]

Neil Norquest: There was a time when my dad and granddad, uh, did their, some of their plowing and cultivation and so on with mules. [**Sarah Garza:** Oh ok.] He then bought tractors, by the time I came along in the late forties he had three or four tractors that did the cultivating work. The harvesting work which was primarily the summer crop of cotton, of course, would have been handpicked it in those days. The mechanical cotton pickers didn't come along until probably the fifties. Uh, my dad I think bought one of the early cotton pickers and it didn't work very well or something happened. And then he just went back to hand labor, and did not really have the crops commercially harvested mechanically maybe ever or maybe in the very last couple years of his farming, I'm not sure, mhmm.

Sarah Garza: Ok. Um, how did adverse weather conditions affect, um, the land such as the freezes or the Hurricane Beulah?

Neil Norquest: Mmm...Mmhmm [chuckles] Yeah, uh, the, uh, as freezes, uh, weather of course you know as a farming entity that...the weather is always a factor.

Sarah Garza: Mhmm.

Neil Norquest: And, so again my brother Kelly could give you more precise information. But obviously early frosts and things like that would, would affect whatever they were doing. But the main two things, the freezing which we occasionally had, the biggest, uh, injury was to the citrus.

[14:00]

[**Sarah Garza:** Ok.] and he, my dad had several citrus, crops frozen out. And he had in a big freeze I think it was 1963 he had a large part of his citrus orchard was frozen at that point, the trees were frozen, where many of them [**Sarah Garza:** Mmm...yeah.] didn't come back. *Most* of them didn't come back from that freeze. And there have been other freezes that hurt trees as well as crops. But as far as the hurricanes go we had, uh, several. Most devastating of course was Beulah, as you mentioned. And I have very, very vivid memories of that. 67' and it was my first year at college, I was at Pan Am. [**Sarah Garza:** Mhmm.] And obviously, it was, whatever it was I think it might've have been, by the time it got to Edinburg, it might've been a category - downgraded to a category three. But whatever it was, the hurricane took a kind of a circular course around, around this area. [**Sarah Garza:** Mhmm.] and as a result of that, we had something like twenty four hours of straight, you know, wind and we had, uh, just to give you an idea of how that affected things, we had trailers that had been, that were being used to feed. They had been at one time, they had been cotton trailers but my dad had converted them to feed trailers for the cattle. [**Sarah Garza:** Mhmm.] [15:28] And, when the hurricane was...first came in, all of the trailers, there were three or four trailers, and they were all blown over on their sides this way [demonstrating]. And as the hurricane - and all of the telephone lines going up and down the roads as far as the eye could see were blown over this way. [**Sarah Garza:** Mhmm.] and then as the hurricane circulated, uh, the telephone lines were back up [**Sarah Garza:** Mhmm.] standing up and the trailers were back up. And then, the hurricane circled more, the

trailers were blown over all the way on this side and all the telephone lines were blown over all the way on this side.

[**Sarah Garza:** Oh my goodness.] And we had some damage to the house and so forth. At that point it was in the early fall, we did not, to my knowledge, have a crop in the ground. We did have cattle. And our land is north of the University there and so, as you know, that's fairly low area, comparatively speaking. And because we had water draining, as you may know, we had, uh, around twenty-five inches of rain in a twenty-four hour period. And then that was on top of other rain, and then there was rain that followed that. So we had a total, over a period of maybe twenty to thirty days, we had a total of around fifty inches of rain. And so during the worst of that, we got, uh, runoff water from all, all over the place including McAllen that headed across country this way and came across Pan Am where the University is and then kind [16:57] of through our place. And our house was high enough to be barely out of water, but all the land around us was totally under water as far as we could see. And, the first departure from the house was by means of a boat. We had kept a boat that belonged to our pastor. And I'm not sure why we had it there, maybe for safekeeping, but we tied it to our front porch, and we, um, my dad and my brother Kelly and I got in that boat with poles and we poled our way all across all of the area between us and the University, uh, including the fence line between us and University, the barbed wire was about like this, but the water was high enough over it where the boat didn't even touch the barbed wire [**Sarah Garza:** Oh wow.] it just went all the way, and we docked the boat up near the highway, and bought groceries up there because one of the little store up there, um, West Manor Grocery, had opened up just a few days after the hurricane and a couple days so we that's how we got our first groceries after the hurricane. Uh, as far as the - we had haystacks that were ruined, uh, and of course a lot of, uh, improvements were harmed. But as far as crops go, we didn't have any crops on the land. However the cattle, we had to, uh, bring the cattle out of there and there were some calves, you know little babies and the water was so high that there was a place or two where the babies had to swim kind of the calves did. And we drove the cattle up to a higher area, um, the east side of our place the water wasn't as deep, it was only about maybe six inches deep or something like that, and the cattle remained there until the water subsided. But there was no grass because the water was covering all of the pasture. So we would try to, I think my brother Kelly tried to float some hay bales there and so that they could, we did that. And [19:05] then we had a variety of grass that was called, uh, African Star, which is like a Bermuda grass but it is very long runners, very, very large. We didn't know it would do this but, uh, within a few days after the hurricane when the water was still quite high, uh, the grass grew up on top of the water and it grew it out across the water so that there was like another layer of grass on top of the water and all of the runners were crossing the top of the water. And it was...so the cattle could stand there [**Sarah Garza:** Mhmm.] and eat off of that grass it was quite, quite interesting.

Sarah Garza: Wow. And how long did, uh, about how long did it take for the water to recede?

Neil Norquest: Um [short pause], completely - several weeks. Um within a few days maybe within a week it was down to the point where the cattle were, it was muddy rather than it was water where they were. But it probably took a good week before the water really began to recede any because after the hurricane, after the wind that died down, uh, as you all may know, what occurs from a weather standpoint, is that there is so much moisture that, uh, you continue to have thunderstorms and things like that, that occur simply because there is so much moisture. And the clouds build up and then they drop more rain. So that continued to happen for a period of several

days and actually probably a week or two after the hurricane. But uh maybe a week to two weeks when the water kinda started to go down.

Sarah Garza: Um, [three second pause] I know your father, um, contributed land for the, uh, advancement of then Edinburg Regional College?

[21:12]

Neil Norquest: Uh, it was Pan Am.

Sarah Garza: Oh it was Pan Am?

Neil Norquest: It was, yeah.

Sarah Garza: And, um, how much did he contribute?

Neil Norquest: Well, what he did is he was farming some of the land where the college now stands. He did not actually own that land, [**Sarah Garza:** Ok.] he was simply farming it. But, um, he purchased some options, uh, that some of the farmers there had expressed an interest in selling. And so he went around to various farmers and he paid for options to purchase their land. And then he, uh, once he had a sufficient number of those, he took those to the board of regents. [**Sarah Garza:** Mhmm.] At that point to the board of Regents he said if you're interested in college, these folks are interested in selling their land and... [**Sarah Garza:** Mhmm.] [22:05] Here's what they'll sell for and I've purchased options to sell the land and I am going to give you those options. So what he actually gave the college, and he had never saw or had gotten reimbursement for what he had paid. But he what he actually gave the college were options to buy the land, that he had paid for.

Sarah Garza: Oh I see, I see. Um..Ok, um moving on from the plants and line aspect, um, I know that you were attending the University in the late, latter 60's?

Neil Norquest: In uh '66, in the fall of '66, and the spring of early '67,

Sarah Garza: Mhmm.

Neil Norquest: uh, I attended a full year. And then in the fall semester of '67, I attended as well.

Sarah Garza: Ok. Um did you, um, how was the diversification of the University then, as far as gender. Um, was there more males or females?

Neil Norquest: Uh, you know...I don't remember. [laughs]

Sarah Garza: You don't remember?

Neil Norquest: I think, you know, if statistically probably was, uh, a little bit more male than female. I don't know if it was substantially or not, uh, also the Vietnam war was going on at that point and, uh, some of the guys were gone for that reason. But I think it was I don't know [laughs]. I'd just be guessing.

Sarah Garza: What of you, um, ethnicity-wise like was at that time was it, um, was there more Anglo-American versus Hispanic at the college level?

[24:00]

Neil Norquest: Uh, probably proportionally more than now, uh, but not...I think that I really, it'd be difficult for me to say. I think probably there would have been, uh, a majority of the students probably would've been Hispanic but I can't, I just have no recollection. It probably would have, I don't know, maybe fifty, or sixty, or seventy percent would have been Hispanic, something like that.

Sarah Garza: Ok, um and at this time when you were in college, your father was still farming the land up until what point?

Neil Norquest: Uh, he farmed until - he and my brother Kelly, uh farmed until...the late 60's and I'm trying to remember perhaps the early 70's. I went to Austin in sixty, early '68 and didn't come back until '72. And during that period of time, I think all of the farming operations were

terminated except the cattle. We continued to have cattle there on the pasture there, for another ten to fifteen years after that. But all of the row crops, you know, the traditional farming operations had stopped by the time I came back. I'm trying to remember, I think we may have had still some of that before I left but I'm not positive, but but late 60's.

Sarah Garza: Ok, um and you mentioned the Vietnam War.

Neil Norquest: Mhmm.

Sarah Garza: Um did you notice any...what did you notice different in the community, um, during that time period?

Neil Norquest: Well, there was, obviously, a lot of classmates who went, friends. After I graduated from college, I was called up for a physical, and then uh shortly after that they did a [26:19] lottery and I got a high number in the lottery, so...But the number of friends and classmates went and, um, it was obviously, the Valley community, uh, was affected mostly in terms of the, just, people going to the war. The University community when I went up to Austin, obviously there was a lot of anti-war sentiment and so that the protest movement that got underway in '68 and '69, that was a very, at the University of Texas campus, that was a very, very vibrant, you know protest movement, and there were parades and demonstrations and a lot of the things you see in movies like Forrest Gump, and things. They depict that pretty accurately. There were people with anti-war, you know, symbols and the hair and there was a lot of drug use that began about that time as well. All of that was a part of the campus life back then on that campus. It wasn't as, that kinda thing was not nearly as pronounced here at Pan Am, at least in '67 when I was here. [**Sarah Garza:** Mhmm.] Students were more interested in studying, and getting an education. But, uh, up in Austin it was much different.

Sarah Garza: Uh what, before you left to Austin, um, there was, um, I don't know if you, well I think you were in Austin at the time, the 1971 Pharr riots? And the movement here in the Valley, any recollection?

Neil Norquest: Uh no...I was barely aware of any of that.

Sarah Garza: Ok, ok um I also wanted to know um why did you choose, uh, to pursue a career in law?

[28:36]

Neil Norquest: Uh, that's an interesting question [laughs]. I actually took the GRE as well as the LSAT, and I was undecided about whether to go to graduate school or law school. My undergraduate majors were history and government, but it primarily was government. But I had taken so many history courses that I wound up with a history major as well. And I really enjoyed history, and I thought about becoming a history professor, and it was something I really thought very seriously about. But, uh, it really had more to do with preserving, uh, all of the available options for making a living if I were to move back to this area, and if I were to come back to this area as a professor, there would only be one option, that would be to teach at Pan Am, which may or may not be something that I could do. So I decided for, uh, economic reasons more than anything else, to, uh, to go to law school because if I did that then I could do any number of things if I came back here. And my parents as well as my wife's parents were, well my parents were getting up in years and uh at that point the only sibling here in the valley was my brother, Kelly, uh, I wanted to come back and kind of be with them in their later years. And my wife wanted to do the same thing. Her mother had passed away at an early age and her dad was here by himself and so her younger siblings were, uh, going to be moving away and everything, so she wanted to be near her Dad. So that seemed like a good, uh, a good option.

Sarah Garza: Mhmm, Did you meet your wife here in the Valley?

Neil Norquest: Yes

[30:25]

Sarah Garza: You did? Oh ok.

Neil Norquest: Yeah, we were in high school together.

Sarah Garza: Oh ok. Um...I wanted to also ask if, um, of course the agriculture market, um, started declining, it's declined from the way it used to be but if it would have been a possibility for you to, um, continue that lifestyle, would you have?

Neil Norquest: Uh yeah, my brothers and I actually discussed that, specifically. Because we uh, the last enterprise we had agriculturally was our cattle. [**Sarah Garza:** Mhmm.] And we tried to think of ways that, uh, you know it would be worth, uh, profitable and everything to continue that and enlarge. We would have to have acquired more land and more cattle and, you know, would have had to really, really worked at expanding that. And, uh, that would have been a preference. I think, my brother Mark, and myself, and my brother Kelly, *definitely* my brother Kelly, *definitely* my brother Mark, and probably me, would have preferred that. But, uh, at that point in time and for years prior to that, farm prices had been declining [**Sarah Garza:** Mhmm.] relative to the cost of machinery, uh, labor, all the other costs that go into running a business. And so as a result of that, fewer and fewer over the decades, well as you probably know, farms had increased in size, the farm size had grown and grown and grown and there were really very few family farms left. There were larger commercial farms [32:30] and, as a result of that, a smaller proportion of the population was farming or could afford to farm. And, that was our story as one of a very common one of that day.

Sarah Garza: Mmhmm. Have you noticed, um, what has been the most significant change in like the land, the vegetation besides of course the growth of buildings and stuff? Have you noticed maybe, um, a plant or something that was predominantly here, in the area but is not?

Neil Norquest: Oh yes. Of course, well when we were here, now these are not native plants but from an agriculture standpoint and just generally, the citrus groves when I was little, uh, they did not have the expressway you know that goes to Brownsville and all of that, none of that. And you could drive down to what is now old 83 all the way to, all the way from Mission to Brownsville. And most of the land was covered by, on both sides, was covered by citrus groves, at least in those areas. Now, ya know, in different areas they had different kinds of crops but all along there and particularly out, when you get out west of Mcallen in the Mission area and west of there. Um, there were just thousands and thousands of acres of citrus groves. And the freezes and population growth and things decimated all of that. Also there were a lot more palm trees back then. You see a lot of palms now, but back then, um, many, many country roads and a lot of the state roads, county roads and state highways were lined with palm trees. And a lot of those either froze or with the widening of the roads they had to be taken out. But there were several major freezes that also hurt a lot of the palm trees...so those two. Native brush land obviously has as the land has been cleared there's...the brush land has moved back from where it was. We used to have brush for example, uh, north of - you didn't have to go very far north of Monte Cristo. All that land that's north of Monte Cristo, not all of that was cleared and being farmed the way it is today.

Sarah Garza: Oh, ok. I see.

Neil Norquest: The brush was much closer in.

[10 second pause]

Sarah Garza: Was there mesquite on your property? Mesquite trees?

Neil Norquest: Uh, not on our property. On the property that was immediately adjacent to us, on the west side, there was 40 acres of mesquite trees there. It had been, um, my dad later farmed that and there might have been a point in time when it was being farmed. But for some reason it had been, uh, it had either re-grown or it may be that some of it had never been cleared, I'm not sure. But yes there was quite a bit right there.

Sarah Garza: Ok. Was there wild animals? I know you mentioned cattle, but was there, like, maybe coyotes?

Neil Norquest: Well yes, the mesquite that I just mentioned across the road had some, uh, Sarah Garza: Coyotes...

Neil Norquest: coyotes, uh huh. And we'd see the occasional, occasional Bobcat, things like that. But not, um, we didn't have any big animals. We didn't see deer for example [Sarah

Garza: Oh, ok.] or anything like that. We were too far into the settled area for that. [36:41]

Sarah Garza: Mhmm. When you were younger how many, how often would you come into, like, the town or where the square is?

Neil Norquest: Right. Other than to go to school, we went to town probably about once a week.

[**Sarah Garza:** Ok.] Ya on Saturday my mom would go shopping, and when we were little she would take us along. Um, and that was usually considered a weekly, a weekly thing.

Sarah Garza: I think that concludes the questions I have. This is a map I have of the property.

This is one of the maps they assigned from the class and I also...this was a little more clear. I did Google, a Google map

Neil Norquest: Sure.

Sarah Garza: of the address. And so, it was this one.

Neil Norquest: Mhmm [examining the map and agreeing]. It's this right here starting on - well, actually when my grandfather first came he had this, all of this [**Sarah Garza:** Mhmm.] and this here. And then he farmed, a neighbor or a friend of his from up in Kansas owned some of this land and my father farmed this, and my uncle farmed this, and my father farmed, well, came to farm, this and this. And, um, he was farming, my brother Kelly can tell you, but maybe fifty percent of all of this. [38: 43] [**Sarah Garza:** Mhmm.] and then he had this down here, all this from the highway, excuse me, from this area down to Sprague, and then where Lee school is. He owned all of that. [**Sarah Garza:** Wow.] And where that - the South Texas High School, or whatever the BETA school is, there. [**Sarah Garza:** Mhmm the Beta school.] He owned all of that and he gave this property here to the church, to the Lutheran Church. And then this, he owned this, and then he farmed, um, on this side of Sugar Road, he farmed some of these pieces, I'm not sure which ones, I know for sure this piece here. And then coming over here he farmed, let's see, um, yeah he farmed most of this, and then going down this road there were some other things. And...so it was all various [**Sarah Garza:** Mhmm.] pieces right in here.

[6 second pause]

Neil Norquest: Things were much more rural back then it's hard to put a definition to that term.

It's just, just a... also old fashion I guess you would say. The old cars, you know they were.

Everything was different.

[40:36]

Sarah Garza: Well in your lifetime you've witnessed the technology revolution, and what, I mean, what, which what would you prefer?

Neil Norquest: [laughs]

Sarah Garza: Or what would you say is better? 'Cause I've heard people say, ya know were, now a-days the families are not close knit

Neil Norquest: Mhmm. Mhmm.

Sarah Garza: and everyone's off doing their thing. I mean, what's your opinion?

Neil Norquest: Yeah. You know it's a, it'd be easy to be romantic and say it's, uh, you know, because I do enjoy history and having...you know, your childhood memories are always a lot brighter [**Sarah Garza:** Mhmm.] or generally are. But I think it's a tradeoff. [**Sarah Garza:** Mhmm.] and there are certain things as we go along and as we've come along, that we get better, better medical care. [**Sarah Garza:** Mhmm.] You - we get, a lot of...things are better. Higher wages in general, [**Sarah Garza:** Mhmm.] [41:34] More people enjoying more of the fruits of everything. But that comes at a price, and the price is some of the things you are talking about. The uh, the old cliché things like people didn't lock their doors, [**Sarah Garza:** Mhmm.] people didn't lock their car doors, people didn't, you know you'd come up to the town here and you never were...I mean you would leave your car unattended with the windows down and the doors unlocked for, you know, all day, you didn't worry about that kind of stuff. And the same thing I remember, the first time I remember seeing a key to our house - it was one of those big skeleton keys that my dad found. We were going on a trip in 1958, and I was already 12 years old and I had *never* seen either of my parents lock a door in our house, front door or anything. I know that sound like a cliché, but there is elements of truth [**Sarah Garza:** Mhmm.] in all of that. And it was a more relaxed time in many ways it was, you know,... and families were closer in some ways. Obviously the drug problems we did not have and things of that nature. Crime rates were I think less, I don't know for sure. I think they were, I don't know. Anyway but...those are tradeoffs.

Sarah Garza: Yeah. Well I'd like to thank you for taking the time to - I know you're extremely busy and taking the time to allow us to interview you.

Neil Norquest: Oh no, it's my pleasure. And, uh, I wish there were a way to convey impressions. [43:13] [**Sarah Garza:** Mhmm.] Because I know that you, ya know, asked questions that you would like to try to develop responses to. But really, um, it's very difficult to convey in words memories and impressions. [**Sarah Garza:** Mhmm.] And, but anyway you've done a great job and thank you guys for *your* efforts to preserve history, which in this case happens to be something personal to me, but whatever it is it's a preservation.

Sarah Garza: Mhmm.

Neil Norquest: That, you know, as somebody who's always enjoyed history and understood that the more you get into it that the more complexities it has, I appreciate your, you know, developing and working at trying to get into the details of things and preserve all of that for people. Good luck with all of it and on your other projects as they come along as well.

Sarah Garza: Thank you. Thank you.