This interview was conducted as part of a series on the Mexican American in Minnesota.

Fred Saucedo was born on March 1, 1934, in St. Paul, Minnesota. He is the youngest of six children and was raised in the West Side. He married Sylvia Ruiz on October 8, 1955. They have three sons and one daughter.

Fred joined the Marine Corps when he was seventeen years old. He tells us a little bit of his life as a Marine. Fred gives a little background on his life in the West Side, his involvement in the church and in sports. He also tells his reason for moving away from the lower West Side area and his involvement in West St. Paul where he lives now.

Fred works for the trades of air-conditioning and refrigeration as a pipe fitter.

This is a transcript of a tape-recorded interview edited to aid in clarity and ease of comprehension for the reader. The original tape recording is available in the Audio-Visual Library of the Minnesota Historical Society.
INTERVIEW WITH FREDERICO SAUCEDO
August 17, 1976

Moosbrugger: This is Grant Moosbrugger interviewing Mr. Frederico (Fred) Saucedo on August 11th, 1976, in his home 85 W. Moreland, West St. Paul, Minnesota, for the Mexican American History Project. Do I have your permission to interview you?

Saucedo: You certainly have.

Moosbrugger: Can you tell us who you are and where and when you were born?

Saucedo: Fred Saucedo and I was born March 1, 1934. I was the first Mexican to be born in Bethesda Hospital. But don't hold me to that because my father might have left the bill unpaid!

Moosbrugger: You are the youngest in the family, right?

Saucedo: Yes, I am the youngest of six children.

Moosbrugger: What can you tell us about your early life and what schools did you attend?

Saucedo: The first school I went to was for kindergarten at the Neighborhood House. I remember the first day going to school. Up until that time, there was very little English spoken at home, at least, I hadn't been indoctrinated with too much English. I went to school with a real terror feeling in my mind. How I was going to be able to survive the first day in school? After the first meal at noon, everything went on real fine. I remember the hot meal, there were quite a few foods that I hadn't tasted at home. It made it a pleasant experience. After that, I went to Lafayette School on the lower West Side. I remember having a hearing problem, when I was in fifth grade. The teacher thougt that I wasn't paying any attention. She told me that I had a hearing problem and that I couldn't handle the course, that she was going to hold me back a grade. The following year I went to James J. Hill School. They had facilities for hearing aides. I went there for a couple of years. Then I went to Roosevelt Jr. High through ninth grade. I was active in the Student Council, metal shop and wood shop they seemed to fascinate me the most. At that young age I
Saucedo: thought of going into the mechanical field, but somehow I got into construction field. While I was at Roosevelt, I became interested in singing, I don't know how, but I ended up on the stage as Master of Ceremonies and a singer in a talent contest. Then I went to one of the better high schools in St. Paul, at that time, it was St. Paul Central. After class I went to work for a fellow across town in a tailor shop, I used to clean-up the shop, and fill up the coke machine. After Central High School, I went into the service.

Moosbrugger: Did you have to get a special permit to go to Central High School because you didn't live by that school?

Saucedo: Yes, they knew that I worked across town, so I got a special permit from the courthouse to attend Central High School.

Moosbrugger: So that you could go from school to work?

Saucedo: Right.

Moosbrugger: What was the name of that tailor?

Saucedo: Carl Tufenk, he still owns the apartments on Fourth and St. Peter.

Moosbrugger: Where was his shop?

Saucedo: His shop was located at 48 West Fourth Street.

While I was at Central, I became aware of the fact that there were different classifications of people. I found my first experience of being a minority, being different. People dressed different, they had better clothes, they had cars, all the kids were better educated than from the area that I was from. It was difficult holding a conversation with them, or you might say getting "in" with the crowd. After awhile I did make a number of friends. I wore jeans everyday, which is the standard fashion now, but at that time everybody would be wearing suits and jackets.

Moosbrugger: So you didn't feel comfortable?

Saucedo: No, I didn't feel comfortable at all. I ended up going into the service at the age of seventeen, in the Marine Corp. I almost found a home for
Saucedo: myself. It was a whole new way of life. I could make my own decisions, handle my own money and see a lot of the world. I went to Korea.

Moosbrugger: What year did you go in the service?

Saucedo: That was in 1952.

Moosbrugger: Was that before the Korean conflict?

Saucedo: Yes, I was in training camp at the start of it. I found myself in Korea and spent some time traveling around in Japan. Then I came back to the United States. Then I flew to Puerto Rico. It wasn't all that terribly exciting. As far as service life is concerned, it was a new experience for me.

Moosbrugger: How did you happen to pick the Marines? Did any of your buddies enlist at that time?

Saucedo: Yes, a fellow that lived downstairs from us, Henry Verdick, he said "I'm going into the Marines." I said "Gee, why didn't you tell me about it, I would have gone with you." He said, "Well, you can still go." I said "Fine, I'll sign up." So I went down and signed up. I got the papers, had my dad sign them. I went over to Greg Gonzales and had him notarize the papers. Henry turned out to be a bad apple. He ended up broke I ended up paying his airplane ticket home, because he lost all his money gambling.

Moosbrugger: Going back to your childhood, what did you do for kicks? Did you used to hang around the church, as an altar boy?

Saucedo: Yes, I was an altar boy. I spent a lot of time down at the church. I spent a lot of time at the Neighborhood House, playing basketball, football, and other sports. The teams were sponsored by the Neighborhood House. I played end of all places, for a small little kid. Being as small as I was, they would at least expect me to carry the ball. They had a play where I would take the ball around the end and score!
Moosbrugger: When was this, it seems to me that you were always kind of a determined kid, weren't you noted for that?

Saucedo: Yes, I always liked things that were challenging. Sometimes just knowing that I was going to be in a race was enough excitement for me. I used to do a lot of running, at that time we never heard of the Olympics, we didn't have any TV's or anything like that. There weren't any programs that sponsored kids for the Olympics. I think that if the opportunity had been there, I would have been involved in some of the areas, maybe I would have become an Olympian.

Moosbrugger: You used to have a bunch of buddies who wore derbies, did you have a club or a game?

Saucedo: No, we would just go around, trying to find things to get into. For a while we wore all kinds of loud clothes. We wanted to set ourselves apart from the ordinary. For a long time I wore a jacket that had corporal stripes, an army jacket, a light jacket, that set me apart from the rest of the kids. Another time I found a black derby in somebody's trash. I ran around with that for about a year. One time I dyed my hair. A fellow said, "Your hair will turn red if you use peroxide." So, sure enough I tried it. I was the only red-headed Mexican in the area. I was really a sight, my mother would have liked to pull my hair out. But, she didn't get too excited over that, she did tell me that all my hair was going to fall out before I reached thirty.

Moosbrugger: It is interesting to think of what kids do for excitement.

Saucedo: The first time that I really realized that there was a difference between Mexican, Anglo-Saxon and Jewish people, was when my dad had a Victory garden during Second World War. My brother, Ramedo and I went down to the Victory garden. We were playing in the corn field and I tried a corn stalk, it tasted very sweet, I asked my brother what it was, and he said that it
Saucedo: was "cana" (sugarcane). I said, "No, it's not sugarcane." He said, "yes, that's sugarcane." So I started jumping up and down, saying we are Mexican, we eat sugarcane." He kept telling me, "Don't say that, don't say it too loud." I said, "What is wrong with it"? We are Mexican and we do eat "cana." He pulled me down and said, "Be quiet."

Moosbrugger: How old were you at that time?

Saucedo: I was probably about nine. I think that I realized at an early age what a disadvantage was. I was very perceptive to what was going on in the neighborhood. I realized that everybody would go to church. They would give all their money to the church. Everybody around there remained poor. They didn't have anything. The church was planning to expand, so everybody was helping the church. I think that something was wrong with the system. You would think that the church would help to improve the lot of the people, instead the people were always giving and never getting anything in return.

Moosbrugger: It wasn't bad to be Mexican, but it was different. So for that reason it would be considered cool to jump up and down and say, "We are Mexican and we eat cana?"

Saucedo: Right, that's the reaction I had in my mind.

Moosbrugger: Did the church have some kind of influence in your life? Wasn't it kind of a community center for you? Did you get kind of drawn into the church as a kid?

Saucedo: Well, no, regardless of everything else we had, we always had the church. That was all there was at that time, besides the Neighborhood House. Our whole life revolved around a little section of the city. Most of us didn't know anything over the Robert Street bridge or the Wabasha Street bridge. We were mostly confined down in this small area, this was our whole life. Outside of being on the basketball team for the church or the football
Saucedo: team for the Neighborhood House or programs, there wasn't really anything else. Not until television came along in later years.

Moosbrugger: What roles did the church play in the Mexican American home, other than the fact that it was one of the social organizations?

Saucedo: Well, most of the older people, of course, literally lived for the church. That was their whole life. They would go to work, come home, eat supper and if anything had to be done, it would be done at the church, or done for the church. There were always Novenas going on. There was always some type of program, they were all religious ceremonial type gatherings. They were good, no question about it.

Moosbrugger: You are saying that they dedicated themselves to the church as well as to their family?

Saucedo: Right. They try to get their family to follow along in their footsteps. Unfortunately that is not the way it turned out. Most of the second generation Mexican Americans found it to be too severe to follow it. I think the first generation's mentality was restrictive as to things they could accomplish, things they could understand. Religion was the dominant force in their life. The second generation realized that there are other things, like sports and movies. As they learned the English language, difference came into play and they just went in different directions. As soon as they cut that umbilical cord, they just moved out of the area. Psychologically, they probably figured there is more opportunities elsewhere, than down at the church. Like I said before, the church wasn't doing anything. It never accomplished what it should have. That was to make the Mexican American more reliant on themselves. To make them seek bigger and wider goals. I think the church would have done well to make them that way, or to teach them along those lines. Send them out to learn other things and today the church would be twice or three times as large.
Saucedo: They have lost many parishoners.

Moosbrugger: They kept the people huddled together when they should have been reaching out and branching out on their own? As the second generation came along, the first thing that came into my mind was getting out of here. Go down the hill where there are other people, different people. Change our pattern of living. This isn't getting us anywhere. It's just like pulling all the wagons around in a circle, just keeping us here. That will be one big significance, the difference in mentality between first generation Mexican Americans who came up from Mexico, or Texas, and second generation who were born here. Are there any other big areas of differences in mentality between those generations?

Saucedo: The second generation sought to lessen the tensions between the Anglo-Saxon and the Mexicans. Getting new found ideas in school, learning the English language. The started to go out to the beaches. There was a time when there wasn't any swimming areas for Mexican Americans. They weren't allowed in some of the taverns, restaurants and hotels. In 1932, there was a move by the Welfare Department to deport some of the first generation people back to Mexico. They had applied for Welfare. After much a-do, they rescended the directive. The first generation was very passive, as was the second generation. They were passive to a point, but they made in-roads, with their new-found education and language, in showing that they could work. They were good solid workers. If they were going to be denied the right to swim in a certain area, they would accept it, but they would accept it with dignity and not be forced out. Then along came the third generation. They became a little more militant. They became a little more reluctant to accept things passively. They want to obtain higher goals. This is my generation. They became active politically and socially. They started to move into areas that other generations would
Saucedo: Not move into before. Many of the third generation moves, forced the second generation to react, to become more vocal and state their position more clearly. People like Frank Rodriguez, who was a member of the Carriers, a business agent. He was put on the spot several times, and reacted favorably.

Moosbrugger: Put on a spot in what way?

Saucedo: He was asked, at one time, to require or request more jobs for Mexican Americans. There was a time when the second generation thought, "I am not going to look after these guys, why should I, no one looked after me." With the younger crowd today, that's not good enough. We have to look after each other.

Moosbrugger: Do you think there's a fair percentage of Mexican Americans in the trades and in business?

Saucedo: No, there isn't. Proportionally, they are not. They aren't being sought out. When they do become involved, problems crop up, mainly in the line of understanding each other. Trades have a certain pattern of training that they always follow. There's no deviation from that.

Moosbrugger: Patterns that would make it a little tougher for a Mexican American kid, than an Irish, German or French person?

Saucedo: Yes. The paternalistic patterns that take place in a lot of unions. If you are related to someone, you sail through, there's no problem. If you are an outsider, you get asked certain things like, "Why are you here?" You know you don't belong here. These are asked on the side during secret meetings. They are not recorded in the minutes of the meeting. They get you in the hall. They try to sway you into leaving before you get inalted into certain unions. I have had that happen to me. These are different tactics. They call you into an executive board meeting for pure harassment. Not for anything specific, not for anything that you
Saucedo: have done wrong. They just try to irritate you. They know they are
taking up your time. They know they have no goods on you. They just try
to give you problems. You dread everytime you get a letter from them.
You don't know if someone said that you said or did something. You get
chastised and just sit there. They don't tell you what you are being
accused of. They say come on down at a certain time for a certain meeting
of the executive board. If you don't appear, it will cost you a fine.

Moosbrugger: Are there many Mexican Americans in the union?

Saucedo: In my union there are three or four at the most. The total membership is
about 400 or 500.

Moosbrugger: How about Mexican Americans working together in groups by and for Mexican
Americans. Does there seem to be more criticism of one another and more
internal harmony than there is in other nationality groups?

Saucedo: In my experience, I have been involved in both. In Anglo-Saxon groups and
in Mexican American groups. I am past President of the Men's Club.

Moosbrugger: Our Lady of Guadalupe Men's Club?

Saucedo: Yes. I have been on the Fiesta Committee. I have also been involved in the
West St. Paul Jaycees, the football program. My experience have been with
both types of organizations. There are always mistakes made. There are
always problems that crop up. There is always the problem of getting
volunteers. I think the problem centers on the fact that Mexican Americans
are more sensitive about the particular problems. They seem to over
emphasize the fact that if a person doesn't have leadership quality, he
shouldn't be there. They will just literally harangue the guy to death for
not doing one thing or another. Other organizations have the same problem,
they just remagnify ours to the point where we become critical of each
other. After awhile we become enemies. We can no longer work with each
other. If a guy could emphasize that to a point, then people would pay
Saucedo: attention to him. It happens in all organizations, Black, White, Brown, whatever the case may be. We are just over-sensitive about our particular situations.

Moosbrugger: Do you think there is a need for a Mexican American political organization? Any local or national one?

Saucedo: Well, there has been a need for an organization for the last ten years. It's ironic, at each general election, the lower West Side consistently votes majority wise for the Democratic party. Yet if you look at the over all picture of the West Side, they have so little to show for the vote that they give for this particular party. It's really tragic that they don't have an impact, a greater impact, for the City Council. If a guy would go down the line, always making it a point to check the Ward by Ward results, after each general election, or for that matter, in the Fourth District, which is Karth's district. I always go over them for the Democrats. As far as political impact, it's non-existent.

Moosbrugger: The Mexican American does vote in a block for DFL? Why isn't there a political system?

Saucedo: Most Mexican Americans are not politically savvy as to how to use the political system. They have very little knowledge as to how the system works and what it is all about. What benefits they can derive from it. Our generations have not been the type that are overly demanding. In wanting to compensate for some of the things missing in their lives. We are still the type of people that get along with little or nothing. The generations that are now growing up on the West Side, have almost never try to reach a goal, they give up completely. They say, "Forget it." They get Welfare and think that's the best thing they can do. They use the political system in that way, by getting Welfare. That is really a shame, because there is a lot more that can be had. If they had people in
Saucedo: the state government, if they had people close to the governor's office. I am talking about people in this area. People who were born and raised in this area. We have the people available who could go out and run for office, but we don't have the type of mentality that really wants to get behind it and push it. We are too critical about any individual. It's always, "He is this way or that way." They are not looking at the overall picture. If he gets in, why it's a beginning. A couple of years ago we had a re-district. The first legislative district got enlarged, it now includes West St. Paul. So what happens, West St. Paul got its first legislator, first district, he lives up in this area. We could have had somebody from the lower West Side run for office. We would have had the overwhelming vote down there.

Moosbrugger: So, in other words, your chances are better now for getting someone in office?

Saucedo: They are better now, then they were before. West St. Paul is quite receptive. The people up here are not as prejudiced as they are in the other area.

Moosbrugger: There are more people in this area that know and like and trust Mexican Americans?

Saucedo: Right. Those of us who moved up here have set a pattern. We have been involved in community organizations, PTA's, school programs etc. We have exposed ourselves to front line situations. I have been President of the P.T.A. at Moreland School for several years. We have started programs there and ran them through. I was involved in a fight at City Hall to get sidewalks on Moreland Avenue. It was a fight, in fact, to tax myself. The P.T.A. and I felt that we wanted and needed sidewalks on Moreland. Now that one side is paved, the kids don't have to walk out on the street to get to school. We have led our fights through the courts and City Hall
Saucedo: Chambers. We came out ahead. We have kind of displayed a situation where we are not passive anymore, we are active.

Moosbrugger: You have unity in this area with Mexican Americans and all other nationality groups?

Saucedo: Right. They realize that we are here. Those of us that are here, are well accepted in the Neighborhood.

Moosbrugger: How do you think the Mexican American thinks, acts, believes, and reacts different from the usual?

Saucedo: One of the areas is the feeling that we have towards other people. Like Blacks. My feeling towards Blacks is as an equal. I look at the White as an equal. The relationship, looking back, as I talk to people and find out what there feelings are, the Blacks don't feel that way. They look at us in a different perspective. They look at us politically, as if we are taking away something from them. They feel they have earned something for themselves. They feel they have earned the right to call themselves minorities. When the Whites talk about minorities, they are actually talking about Blacks. When the Blacks talk about minorities, they try to encompass everyone like Chinese, Mexican Americans and the Blacks. Mainly for greater gains that can be had from the Federal Government. In terms of funds that are available for different programs. When the programs are put into effect, they are mainly put into effect for Blacks only. The Whites look at it in a way that, "Well, the Mexicans aren't applying for the programs. They don't want to get involved in the programs." It's not that, it's just that we feel we should be allowed to operate our own programs. We are uniquely different from anybody else. We should have a say and input in all types of minority programs.

Moosbrugger: How about in respect to the family life and family unity? Do you think that the average Mexican American family is any different from the Anglo-Saxon
Moosbrugger: family?

Saucedo: The main difference is that in the Mexican family, the father dominates. He operates his house. He has been brought up all his life to look at his father as the head man, the decision maker. Whatever he says goes. As he grows older, he becomes cast into a role. He has to carry through the light, too. It makes it difficult for him to become involved with an Anglo-Saxon woman because in her life (Anglo-Saxon) the mother has been the dominant force. She is the one who makes the loudest noise in the house and directs things. You have a conflict when you have a marriage between a Mexican and an Anglo-Saxon because you are both fighting for the top spot in the home. A lot of times it ends up in divorce in a matter of a few years. When you have a marriage between a Mexican girl and a Mexican boy, she usually accepts the second-spot without too much hesitation. She realizes that that is the way it has to be. She's been brought up all her life to accept second-position.

Moosbrugger: Are there any compensations for her, typically, in the Mexican American home?

Saucedo: Generally speaking the Mexican male is more than generous with what ever he has. Usually he dedicates it all to his wife and children. Although being the disciplinarian that he is, it may seem at times like it isn't worth it all. He feels that he has to have order and he has to have control of all situations that arrive at his home. Anything that happens in the house has to go through him. It becomes very close to dictatorship. He realizes that he can't become his boy's or daughter's buddy; that's the price he has to pay for the leadership he gives. Hopefully, his kids will look at him as a man who can stand on his two feet. He makes up his own mind, and does his own thing. Today's kids in the Anglo-Saxon family are looking at their parents and are all confused.
Saucedo: They don't know what is happening, they don't know who to ask, their mother or father whether they can do this or that. Neither one of them wants to accept the responsibility. How can they possibly grow up to make decisions if they have been confused all their life?

Moosbrugger: You say that there's more of a tendency amongst the Mexican American father to be a good provider? Is there more pressure on him to be a good provider than other nationality groups?

Saucedo: Yes, I think so. Along with being a dictator, it makes him responsible to see that his kids are clothed and fed and have the best possible education. If he fails in those areas, he has to answer to himself. When he turns around and looks back, and says, "I didn't do the job right." If his kids turn out bad, he has to be able to stand up and say, "Well, I did the best I could. I gave them all that I could. I tried to direct them as well as possible, and they turned out bad. Well, the last thing they want to do is point a finger at me. I'll put them on their ear right there. That is not the way I played the game."

Moosbrugger: So it is mighty important that they give it their best?

Saucedo: Yes, it's important that each father does the best that he can for his kids.

Moosbrugger: Are there any other aspects of inter-marriage that you can think of dealing with Mexican Americans marrying Anglos or Blacks?

Saucedo: Some are uniquely different in talking about father dominating the home. When I see most young Mexican American girls getting involved with Blacks, they look at their father. He's often harsh in making decisions. In today's world, kids don't like to hear the word "NO" especially when they hear constantly or too often. They get turned off by their dad. They figure, "I'll never marry someone like that. I don't want to have anything to do with anybody that is strict." So when they first get involved with a Black person, a Black male, he is a passive person, as far as they are
Saucedo: They will do anything for them. Mainly because although he doesn't see Brown as the ultimate, he still treats her with respect and with a great deal of want. So he puts on his leading dance for her. They get her, you might say, "Cornered" into marriage, or into living with them. Of course, they have all the conveniences of having someone that will do as they say for a change. They don't have to be put under the strain of being pressured into doing things.

Moosbrugger: The Mexican women is not being pressured?
Saucedo: Right.

Moosbrugger: They find a certain amount of freedom with the Black male?
Saucedo: Right. More so then they would find with the Mexican male.

Moosbrugger: Is there a different application to Mexican boys or Mexican girls marrying Anglos?
Saucedo: I have a definite feeling for one who wants to marry a White girl. It seems that for a lot them it's a status symbol. I think they look at their mother and they say, "I don't want anybody that is that passive." My oldest boy says, "I am not going to marry a Mexican girl." To which I reply, "I don't know who else would put up with you." Then I say, "Anglo-Saxon girls wouldn't put up with you. You are too dominant, too forceful. You better marry a Mexican girl or else you'll be in a heap of a lot of trouble. Boys change, we have never had too much of a relationship with our father. The third generation parent didn't have any contact as far as being buddy, buddy with their sons, like the Anglo-Saxon. We always respected him. He went to work and we wouldn't see him for the rest of the day. We knew, no matter what, that we would have food on the table. It was just a whole different outlook. So we don't have the type of training that's going to lead us to do anything different then our predecessors did. We kind of set ourselves aside. When the kids need help, we show them how to solve the
Saucedo: problem. That is about it.

Moosbrugger: You have been active with coaching teams. Haven't you been, in a sense "Buddy, buddy" with your sons by taking an interest in their interests, which isn't typical of a generation ago?

Saucedo: Yes, it is changing. I think it's one of the reasons I did get involved in football. One of my boys is playing on my team. The other two missed out. Even so, you hold an arm's length relationship. It is a much better relationship, I think, than I had with my father. Mainly because we were talking to each other on a different level. I never had a chance to sit down with my dad to discuss things, or talk about my problems. I have done that several times with my boys, which is actually unparallel. It just doesn't get done too often in Mexican homes. Often times, the father has too many problems of his own to be worrying about your little life or your little world. Now my boy plays football. He has been playing football for two years. He sees me in a different light than I saw my father, I am sure of that. My other kids look at me somewhat differently, also. I remember, a couple of weeks ago, the older one was saying, "Father doesn't love us any more. He is going to run away." The little one said, "No, that can't be true. He always takes care of us. How can he not like us, anymore?" So, I am sure he sees me in a different light. In coaching teams, we have won three championships in the last five years. We have been close on the other two. We have developed a different respect with kids in the area. I think it's a growing process for myself and the people in my generation who are involved in sports. We are getting more oriented. We are learning more about children. We want to get a little bit closer than our parents were to us. Maybe it's because we realized that we missed something.

Moosbrugger: We only have a certain amount of control. If you had your wish, or way,
Moosbrugger: Would you have your daughter marry an Anglo, a Mexican American, or a Black? How would you try to influence her?

Saucedo: I would rather see her marry a White. Mainly because I would feel that he had a better economic standard. I wouldn't mind a bit if she married a Mexican American, although I know her capability of living happy would be somewhat less.

Moosbrugger: She would have to buckle under, so to speak?

Saucedo: Right. I am sure she would wind up working. That's not to say that she wouldn't wind-up working if she married a White fellow. Up here in this area, we are the 29th wealthiest county in the nation. The chances of marrying a White boy are higher, or at least it wouldn't be her chances at all. As far as a Black would be concerned, it wouldn't be a totally devastating situation. It wouldn't bother me. If that is what she chose, that's the way it had to be.

Moosbrugger: Do you feel there might be a certain segment of population that might disapprove?

Saucedo: I am sure there is that segment of society left. Even within my own family there would be ill feelings about it. Right now, my own feelings wouldn't be bothered that much. Not as much as it would have ten or fifteen years ago. One of the reasons that I moved up into this area was because of the opportunities for the kids. It narrows the chances of their getting involved with the lower-class. I didn't want the kids to wind up marrying down in the lower class. You can call it what you want. You can call it segregation, that I tried to segregate my family from the lower class or whatever. It's a step that I took. Hopefully, it will enriched their lives.

Moosbrugger: You were active as Past President of Our Lady of Guadalupe Church Men's Club. When did you start getting interested or involved in that club?
Saucedo: I became interested in that in 1968. Father Monsour came to the parish. I met him and he asked me to get involved. I got involved, when I started there was the same old leadership in the Men's Club, there were ten members. We would meet once a month. They sent out a notice in the paper saying that they wanted new leadership, they wanted new members. So I took up the challenge to try and build up a new organization. We met with some resistance, but it didn't take too long to get a goal established. We elected our new officers and started building a new program that eventually would end up in the beginnings of the Independence Committee.

Moosbrugger: Did your membership grow?

Saucedo: The membership grew from the original ten people to thirty-five or forty members strong.

Moosbrugger: What were your goals? Did you have fund-raisers?

Saucedo: We had fund-raisers. We had different projects in the church, like getting a walk-in refrigerator freezer installed in the church, decorating and landscaping the grounds, changing the appearance of the church and school grounds. We brought in quite a sum of money in most of the programs.

Moosbrugger: How many years did you stay active with that?

Saucedo: I was involved with that for about five years. Then, Father Monsour left for Bolivia and I decided that it was time to move on to something else.

Moosbrugger: Did the Men's Club stay fairly active and strong?

Saucedo: The Men's Club as we knew it then, the priest did nothing about it. It almost disbanded itself. For the next few years, there was no such thing as a Men's Club. There were just different groups down there. The Women's Club was more active, they carried on several of the programs that we had started.

Moosbrugger: Did anyone try, or the parish priest of Guadalupe try to re-establish the Men's Club?
Saucedo: Well, they are trying now. They are trying to get something active going. They are having a beginning again starting this next month. They are getting five or six new members. I think they are about up to ten members. Most people don't have time to get involved. The older members are tired now. They saw some of the idealistic programs that we had fall by the wayside after a new group tried to take over. People get involved when programs are going along smoothly, people are dedicating themselves, money is coming in and being donated towards the church. You have critics who say, "people are pocketing the money, it's going to different areas than it should be." They feel that they want to get involved. They want to get into some of the action. When they do take over an organization, they find out that its not all gravy, and there isn't that much money to be had. So, consequently the programs fall apart. I think, we noticed that with the Independence Celebration Committee. It brought opposition. They thought everybody was making a big profit and raking off a lot of money. It turned out that when they took over the program went down to zip. Now they wind up with a dance every year or small parade, just like it was before.

Moosbrugger: Do you find discouragement from the organizations you were in, with the people from the community or other people?

Saucedo: Yes, at this time of life, when I can go out and devote my energies to areas that can really make money for myself instead of for the church. When I have the potential to make two or three times the money, it's foolish to go back down there and invest my time in the church or become involved. I thought about it several times, to get involved with the church. But now that I am going along with a whole new program at home, it would just be insane to go back down there again. It would be a waste of time, energy and money.
Moosbrugger: Do you feel any kind of attraction or connection to that parish?
Saucedo: Yes, I have always felt that we belong to the parish. If the priest came over and asked me to do something, there is no question about it that I would help him out. But I am not going to volunteer myself for anything. The new type of religion that they have going now, you are supposed to dedicate yourself. You are supposed to open yourself up to the new meaning of the church, the new movement. I just don't see it that way. Also, I look at the church as being a good thing for many people. It's always good to go to church and become involved religiously. There are too few people that do that. It is survival, helping them out financially.

Moosbrugger: In other words, when you are with them, you devote a lot of your time and energy, or else you are not with them at all?
Saucedo: Right! As far as the ceremonial part of it, it really played a very little part in my life. When I was president of the Men's Club, I was involved in more of the function part. If the priest needed anything financially, we would go out and get it. To me, that is as good as prayer. Some people get therapy from prayer, I get therapy from doing something for the church, rather than getting something out of it. My views on church are a lot different than most people. Everybody goes to church on Sunday. They give a little and that is it. That is their whole meaning for church. They forget about it the rest of the week. As I look at it, if I could do something for the church every week, than that is my therapy.

Moosbrugger: What are your hopes, or goals, for the future? Anything to do with life?
Saucedo: Well, for the future, as you can see as you look around here, you see a lot of coins, and a lot of rings. I am out buying every weekend and putting stuff away. Someday as I get older, when I retire, I plan to open up a little coin shop. To work in buying and selling. To have a little business of some type. Where a person would sell used and new merchandise.
Moosbrugger: So you have that to look forward to your retirement years. You are working as an air-conditioning, refrigeration and heating mechanic now?

Saucedo: Right. I service and install heating, air-conditioning. I work as a pipe fitter for Air-Conditioning Associates. I have been in the pipe fitting trade for about ten years.

Moosbrugger: How many more years, do you think you will be able to do that type of work?

Saucedo: Well, our retirement is still to age sixty. I probably have another fifteen to eighteen years left. Hopefully, they will drop the retirement down to fifty-five. It gets a little rough going up on the roofs in that hot sun. Just a few days back, I got a letter from the union. It said, "Fill this application out from the Metropolitan Sewer Board." It is not an easy job, but it is not one of the harder jobs, either. You don't have to go in the hot sun or the cold weather. It is a maintenance type job. They are looking for minorities for the County Sewer Board. "Fill the application out and give it back to me and I'll see that it gets processed" it said. I am jumping up and down, boy that's a good deal! A state government job. No more lay-offs in the winter time. No more slow downs.

Moosbrugger: So there might be a possibility around the corner that you don't see, yet?

Saucedo: I sent the application in to the Metropolitan Sewer Board. The Metropolitan Sewer Board sent the letter back saying that they are not looking for any help at this time. They kind of busted the bubble. Then I hear about them having a Mexican American working over there. They are complaining that they don't have a Mexican American on their whole entire force. The union pointed out to them that they had one Mexican American working there temporarily. The following week they had laid him off.

Moosbrugger: This is at the Metropolitan Sewer Board?
Saucedo: Yes, the Metropolitan Sewer Board.

Moosbrugger: What philosophy that has added to your life, would you leave to your grandchildren? Since this tape will be preserved for may years to come.

Saucedo: I think the philosophy that I have lived with all my life, has run into opposition from quite a few men that I have talked to. They don't like to hear about people like myself. What I consider a self-made man. A person that lives his own life. There is no limitations as to what I can do and what I can't do. Nobody can demand anything of me. At the same time, I have to be willing to pay the ultimate price of any decision that I make. I am that type of person. If I make a decision I will follow it through to its conclusion. If I don't, I will die in the process. You have got to be your own person. You have got to be your own man. Not letting any outside influences dictate your life for you. You must be able to stand up and say, "This is the way I feel. This is what I am going to do. This is how I am going to do it." If a person lives his life that way, he will never be defeated in anything he does. He just can't be defeated.

Moosbrugger: Make the best decision and stick to your bet?

Saucedo: You see persons upon persons and you wonder about so many flaws in their characters. That is why I don't get involved socially with a lot of people. My wife and I would rather be by ourselves than with anybody else. Most people we talk to want to talk about their problems. When I talk to anybody, I don't tell them about my problems. I solve my own problems. I don't think anybody is interested in getting involved in my problems. I am the only one who can handle those situations.

Moosbrugger: Have you ever ran across things in your life that were totally outside of your control?

Saucedo: Not really. If I was in the office of the President, I don't think I would be anymore capable of handling it than Gerald Ford would be.
Moosbrugger: There is nothing wrong with that. Okay, it's been a real pleasure inter-
viewing you. Anything else we should add before we quit?
Saucedo: Well, you might want to catch my book that I will write in 1999!
Moosbrugger: You mean The Great Mexican American novel?
Saucedo: "An Epic In Its Time."
Moosbrugger: Why don't you mention, who your wife is and who your children are, from
the oldest to the youngest?
Saucedo: My wife's name is Sylvia Saucedo (maiden name is Ruiz). My oldest boy is
John Allen, the second is Maximilian Leonard, 3rd is Julie Renee and my
youngest is Jude Randolph. All the J's were named by my wife. The only
one that I named was Maximilian.
Moosbrugger: Okay, thank you very much for the interview.
Saucedo: Okay.