George Galvin was born on May 25, 1910 in El Paso, Texas. Much of his childhood was spent moving around the country with his family, consequently he had a hard time continuing his education. He came to St. Paul in March, 1920. As a young man George pursued a boxing career. He was well-known and respected in his work and community.

In the Twin Cities Mr. Galvin has been very active in organizing unions. He discusses his employment record and his role in the organization of LULAC in St. Paul. He closes by expressing his hopes for the future and gives some advice to younger generations.

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.
This is Grant Moosbruger interviewing Mr. George Galvin on July 16, 1975, at the Minnesota Historical Society for the Mexican American History Project.

Do we have your permission to interview you and can this interview with you be the property of the Historical Society, Mr. Galvin?

Yes.

Maybe you could start by telling us where you were born, when, who your parents were, if you had any brothers and/or sisters and when they were born.

I was born in El Paso, Texas, May 25, 1910. My mother was Jovita Vermudez.

Jovita, J-O-V-I-T-A.

She was born in Leon, Guanajuato, Mexico. My father was John, Juan Cloca'va Galvan, Galvin.

Was the earlier spelling Galvan?

No. I get mixed up with this. A lot of people insist on calling us Galvanos.

Oh! I see, it is Galvin.

He writes his name J.C. Galvin and he's from the state of Coahuila.

Coahuila, Mexico. Maybe you could tell us a little about your folks. Are either of them still living?

My mother died in 1957. My dad is living. I do not know his where abouts.

I see. Do you remember from the olden days if they told you anything about when they were born or any of their early history?

No. We never discussed that because we were in early years and they worked hard. They didn't have time to discuss history.
Grant: I see. So you don't know if you have any uncles or aunts living?

Galvin: Oh! I have plenty. I have a lot of them. On my mother's side, I have doctors, attorneys, farmers, in fact I am one. I come from a Milwaukee family and Mexican but I don't know any of them.

Grant: You don't know if they're living in Mexico or the United States?

Galvin: Most of them are living in Mexico. Some live in Salamanca, Guanajuato. I have two uncles, Silvestre and Gonzalo.

Grant: Is their last name Vermudez?

Galvin: Yes, Vermundez. They are both farmers and they lived in Salamanca, Mexico. But, as I said before, I do not know them, they don't know me.

Grant: You haven't met them?

Galvin: I haven't met them.

Grant: I see.

Galvin: I haven't met any of my father's people either. I was born when they left Mexico. I was born in El Paso. We kept moving in those days. We had to take whatever we could.

Grant: In the line of work, do you know what year your folks came across into the United States? Was it in 1910?

Galvin: Oh, yes. Just about that time, they came across. They started to have trouble with the government in Mexico. They were fighting back and forth, so my dad and others took off.

Grant: Were you the first child?

Galvin: I was the first child. I have a brother whose name is John, he is in Redwood City, California now.

Grant: Just one brother?

Galvin: Just one, they're just two of us. I had a sister, but she died in childbirth, I guess.
Grant: What year was John born?
Galvin: He was born in 1914
Grant: Is he married?
Galvin: Yes. I'm four years his senior.
Grant: Is he married and living in California?
Galvin: He's married. He has eleven children.
Grant: Going back to El Paso in 1910, when you were born, do you have any recollections from your early childhood, moves or where you lived, anything like that?
Galvin: Well it seems to me that the Lord gave me a remarkable memory. I remember as far back as when I was five years old. We lived in an old box car. My dad never liked to work. He was one of those gamblers with bad luck. He never won anything that I can remember. This, of course, was in New Mexico, in El Raton, in wonderful living quarters. You didn't have to worry about fresh air because it blew in from every direction. We lived here for about four months. One day my dad got very a cute idea, he wanted a hot lunch for dinner. I had to walk three blocks in the ice and snow. When I arrived, I could hardly walk. The yard master happened to be there. He took me home. We later moved to Washington, Oklahoma.
Grant: When you mentioned the yard master helped you get home, this was in Oklahoma. I realize it can get very cold down there. Would that be a railroad master?
Galvin: Yes, temporarily. We moved to Washington, Oklahoma. It was no better there. There were snakes and many other wild beasts. There was a very large forest nearby. I thought my mother was going to die there. That was the only time my dad won any kind of money.
Grant: How come you were afraid your mom was going to die there?

Galvin: She got very sick with tonsillites. She could hardly talk and she had a high fever. Of course, in those days, we used to huddle around and try to help one another. One woman finally got a can of real hot tomatoes. She made her swallow some of those tomatoes and put some hot tomatoes on the bottom of her feet. Whatever, that was supposed to do, it did the job, whatever it was.

Grant: It was a folk cure.

Galvin: Maybe, I guess it opened up her throat and she was able to talk. That week was the one and only time I can remember that my dad won any money. Maybe the reason was that we were suffering so much around that place, that the Lord probably thought it was a good time.

Grant: A good time to let him win. Your dad liked to gamble. Was your dad a card player?

Galvin: Yes, a card player. He used to like to go from place to place and look, of course, in those days everybody was doing it. If you know anything about gambling, you want to make a fast buck. Then you go from here to there.

Grant: Do you know where he would gamble? Would he go into regular gambling parlor?

Galvin: Sure.

Grant: I see.

Galvin: In those days the gamblers used to look for railroad camps. There was a group of men that kept track of their paydays, so they would go and gamble. Of course, nine times out of ten, they would take all the money away from them.

Grant: The professional gamblers?

Galvin: Yes. But this time my dad won just enough money to take us out of that place.
Galvin: We went to Wichita, Kansas. It was about 1915. I was five years old then. I was very happy to be there. I got a chance to go to school, which I loved very much. I thought everything was going to be good. Well, it so happened that he got another urge to gamble. He just wanted to keep rolling. He heard about St. Louis, Missouri; that it was a very good town. There was a lot of gambling and a lot of work. We had everything there in Wichita. We had a nice little house. All the furniture was ours, nice furniture. We left everything as it was.

Grant: You pulled stakes and left it?

Galvin: Groceries and everything.

Grant: Do you know how long you stayed in Wichita, perhaps?

Galvin: Oh, not very long.

Grant: A matter of months?

Galvin: Just about a year, at the most. We thought that we were going to stay there.

Grant: Did your dad generally do railroad work in those years or did he work farms?

Galvin: Well, no. He worked mostly for the railroad. When we went to Wichita, he got a job for Cudahay Meat-Packing Plant. That's why my mother thought we were going to stay there. But it wasn't that way. We stayed just a year, then we took off. We went to St. Louis, Missouri. There was a lot of gambling. Well, he did win there one time again. He won $750. He wanted to double it. So he left $50 at home and he went back to try to double it. It only took him about three minutes to lose it. He came back and told my mother forget it. Before we were going to Mexico. He said, "Quit packing, because I lost the money."

From there we went to East St. Louis, which is just across the river. We lived on St. Clair Street. My mother opened up a little restaurant. We had quite a business. The only time my dad stayed in the place, was long enough to collect.
Galvin: My mother couldn't read or write, so she couldn't figure. I was going to school. There was a German family there that used to like me quite a bit. They used to help me with my studies every night. I was doing good in school for the short time that I lived there on St. Clair Street. That's in East St. Louis. I did pretty well. Then my dad found out about the outskirts of East St. Louis, Fairmont City, Illinois. He got a job at American Sink Company. He was smart. He used his head. He got a job, and in a short time he got to be a foreman. Of course, we never saw any of his money. Sometimes he'd go to the gambling place where there was gambling. By the time he got home, the check wasn't there anymore. My mother, of course, already knew that by his actions. He'd come home and he'd grab a book or something and he'd start reading. He wouldn't mention anything about money. So she started taking in boarders. They'd come in and my mother washed their clothes and fed them. That's the way my mother kept up paying the grocery bill and rent. We did pretty good there, too. We thought this time we were going to stay. It just wasn't in the books. We had a beautiful home, all nice furniture; big brass beds, and we had something very few people had—rugs on the floor. I was doing the same things there. I found someone to help me with my studies.

The first year I went to school, I jumped three grades! This German family that was there, Mr. and Mrs. Morris, helped me with my studies every evening. I was there every day instead of running around and playing like the rest of the kids. I studied with this German family. At the end of the year, I was promoted from fourth grade to the fifth. Then I jumped three grades in that year! The following year I did the same thing. I kept on. I knew studies were getting harder as I went along.

Grant: You were still in East St. Louis?
Galvin: In Fairmont. We moved from East St. Louis to Fairmont.

Grant: Which state is Fairmont in?

Galvin: That's just the outskirts of East St. Louis. We were there until 1919. My dad came and said that Lincoln, Nebraska was a good town with a lot of gambling. The only thing he had on his mind was gambling.

Grant: So was it in 1919 that you moved from Fairmont, Missouri; to Lincoln, Nebraska?

Galvin: Yes. He said there was work there. He went ahead. He didn't leave us any money. He told us that we should wait for him in St. Joseph, Missouri. So we stayed in St. Joseph, Missouri. We stayed for just the cold months. In the meantime, he was inquiring for jobs, after he came back from Lincoln, where he didn't find what he was looking for. The Morris Plant went out on strike. There was no money. I put a pair of big, long pants on, to make me look big, then I went into the plant. In those days, they never questioned. They just came up and said, "Who wants to work in such and such department?" What did I know about packing? I said, "I will." It was the fall of 1919.

Grant: So you would have been nine years old when you went to work for Morris Packing Company?

Galvin: Yes, nine years old. I worked there until the strike was settled and I never saw one penny of it.

Grant: You were living in St. Joseph, Missouri?

Galvin: St. Joseph, Missouri. We stayed there for the winter months. By the month of March, we were already in Minnesota. That was the beginning of 1920. We were already here.

Grant: What was the first town you came to in Minnesota?
Galvin: We came to Morgan to work sugar beets. We didn't know the difference between the sugar beets and wheat. But, we worked for them. It was a backbreaking job. Anybody that thinks that sugar beets are a money making proposition better try it themselves.

Grant: In other words, picking sugar beets is not the way for making money?

Galvin: Oh! No! It's a good way to break your back! We worked. My dad would get me up at 2:00 in the morning and we'd work until 8:30 or 9:00 at night.

Grant: Did your mom, dad, brother, and you work the beets?

Galvin: Oh, yes! My mother didn't. She took care of the kitchen and the house and did everything. She cooked our meals.

Grant: But your brother and your dad?

Galvin: My brother was only six years old. He was out there. I felt sorry for him. Finally, I said, "Dad, how about letting my brother go home?" He said, "He's too little." He turned around and said, "Johnny," and Johnny would say "ya" for an answer, and dad would say, "go home." Boy, he wasn't tired then, he just took off. He was a little boy so, of course, he really didn't know what was wrong with the world. We worked sugar beets that year. It was an experience that I'll never forget. We came here to St. Paul in the month of November in the year 1920. The next day I thought I would go to the Swift Plant. I wanted to go but I was torn between going to school and going to work. I figured, "Where's the money going to come in?" I knew that we hadn't done very good work in the beet fields because of inexperience and we were small and couldn't do much. Still, we came home with about $600. In November, my dad received $150 bonus, which would have been enough to carry us through the winter and I could have gone to school. But it never took place.
Galvin: I went to Swift's to look for a job. The same thing happened as in the Morris Plant. Mr. Springer came up and said, "Does anybody want to go to work in the casing room?" I raised my hand.

Grant: That's all there was to it?

Galvin: They asked me how old I was. I said I was 18. They never questioned it. The trouble was that every year in the spring, we went out and worked sugar beets. In the fall of the year, I went back. They gave me my job back. They asked how old I was? I said I was 18. It never changed. In 1922, I started boxing in Morgan. They used to take me out in the little towns and give me three bucks. On Friday and evenings, I'd shine shoes in a barbershop. Levie Frager was the barber's name. I must have been all right, or else they felt sorry for me. One fellow came in there from San Francisco. He was very interested in taking me with him.

Grant: Was he a fight-promoter?

Galvin: No. He saw that I was not lazy and that I was in there trying.

Grant: That you were willing to work? You started to talk about boxing at that time. Then you went back, I'm having trouble following the story.......

Galvin: Yes. Well, that part of it. What I'm talking about is finances. I started fighting when I was 12 years old. I'd get three bucks a fight. I would shine shoes, also.

Grant: In the same year?

Galvin: Yes. See, that part of the story, I'm speaking about finances.

Grant: All the different ways of making money!

Galvin: My dad would get through working, he sat down and read a book or something. Then I would have to go to make a few nickels. Well, anyway, that year was the first year. The second year was bad.
Galvin: The third year, I was getting better in fighting and making it. Not better money, but I was winning fights and getting in demand. They used to take me to Redwood Falls, Fairfax, Springfield, all around the little towns to go and fight. They brought me back as far as Northfield. That was quite a ride in those days.

Grant: Were they pretty conscientious in those days about matching up people for weight?

Galvin: Oh, no! They used to match me up with bigger boys. Even in professional fights. A 160 pound fighter would fight a light, heavy-weight. Late in 1927, they changed all that. Jack Demsey knocked Jim Tooney out of the ring. They had that big, long count. Then Quincebury rules came out. They put the clamps on them. They had to be close to the weights of the smaller fighters. The heavy-weights would have to fight them up to 300 pounds.

Grant: Once you got to a certain weight, then you were a heavy-weight. That was it. You had to take on anyone that came along.

Galvin: Right.

Grant: Going back to when you were a young fighter and you were starting to win more fights, did this start to become one of your main means of support? Or were you still working other types of employment at the same time?

Galvin: I was still working for sugar beets. In the fall of the year I came into St. Paul, I was beginning to get popular even though I was still an amateur. But, I still was beginning to get popular. I came here and Swift gave me a job. I'd fight for the Stockyard Pavillion in South St. Paul. That was every week, at the Stockyard Pavillion. In 1924, I tried to go back to school.
But with all my activities, boxing and working, it was pretty hard. I did go to school for about three weeks, night school. I used to fall asleep. I was tired. Then I found out I really couldn't go to school because I had to train for the fights. In 1924, I turned pro. I won. The last part of 1924, before the end of 1926, my record was fifteen by knockout and ten decisions.

You won that many fight?

Yes, that was professional in 1926. In 1927, I was to fight Tommy Grogan from Omaha, Nebraska. The fight didn't take place because I was a Mexican. They thought I was Irish with the Galvin name. They wanted two Irish men to fight although my record was good and so was his. Not only that, but he was fifth from the champion. I worked my head off to get myself in shape to fight Grogan. I figured if I could just get a close decision, I would get a rating. But I wasn't going to go in there with intentions of losing. I knew that Grogan was a good fighter. I knew that he could hit. He was experienced. I had all that under consideration. I knew I wasn't going to have it easy. I also worked hard. I used to work heavier fighters than myself; welter weights, middle weights...to make me faster.

What was your boxing weight?

I weighed 126 pounds, feather weight. Two weeks before the fight, my manager received a telegram, saying Tommy Grogan had busted his hand while training. That is unbelievable. You can strain or sprain your wrist or something, but a fighter who knows what to do doesn't sprain his hands very easy. I was mad. When you get in pretty good shape, you're just like a lion in a cage, on the edge all the time. When they told me that I was fit to be tied because I worked so hard to get in shape for that particular fight. Instead, they sent me to Fargo and I fought a fighter by the name of Joey White. He was nowhere near the caliber of a fighter that Grogan was! I punched him badly. I didn't want to knock him out. I just cut him up. At the end of the second round, my manager started to bawl me out. He said, "What did you do that for? It's not his fault that Grogan backed out. Put him out or do something." So I did. In the third round, I went out and had no trouble. I knocked the kid out. After the fight was over he came to my room and said, "I thought you were going to kill me! You're a good fighter! I never thought I'd run into anyone like you. I want to congratulate you!" Still, at that moment, I was going to give him a bad answer. Then I remembered what my manager said. It wasn't his fault. The kid was being apologetic about it. So I listened to his comments about my fighting.
I said, "Thanks, I'm sorry I had to take it all out on you." He said, "I heard about it, my manager told me. I'm sorry." I fought under the name Kid Galvin. I fought under three names: Kid Galvin, Kid Pee Wee, and Little Dago. The reason for the changes was my mother didn't want me to fight. To keep her from knowing, I kept changing my name. If I came out and said, "George Galvin is fighting tonight, then she would make me kneel down and she'd beat me up. I just laughed at her. She couldn't hurt me. So I just let her satisfy herself. Finally I thought, instead of doing that, I just won't let her know that I'm fighting. My father didn't know that I was fighting, neither did she. Otherwise he'd probably have been after my money. I was making money because I had some saved up already. My manager was a crook. He didn't tell me I was a pro when I was fifteen years old. I was going to go to different states. I would fight six or eight rounders. I never questioned him when he gave me ten dollars. He said, "Don't tell anybody that I'm giving you ten, because you're an amateur and you're not supposed to get more than three!" He was a little Jew! A red-headed Jew! His name was Goldburg. I never told anybody. I got a chance to fight Eddie Anderson from Sioux City, Iowa as a main go. We fought a couple of rounds like dogs. He dropped me in the first round and laid me out like a rug. I got up. I listened to the referee when he said, "seven." I got up. I went after him! Before the first round was over, I had Anderson on the canvas. On the third round, I dropped him again. I went after him right off the bat. I dropped him three times in the third round! Last time he didn't come back so he figured that I was lucky that I beat him. We had a full house.

GRANT: You had a re-match?

GALVIN: Yes.

GRANT: When you say a main go, you mean that was the top fight?
Yes. The top fight, before the fight, three fellows came in. They were Italian fellows. They said, "Say Paisano." I said, "Yea," and they said "How are ya doin'?" I said, "Pretty good." I was laid out on the training table. I was supposed to go on in the next round. They said, "Well, you're going to make yourself some money." I said, "Ya, ten bucks." They said, "What do you mean, ten bucks?" I said, "That's what the manager said, I'm still an amateur." "No," they said, "come here, we'll show you. Look at that. You and Anderson are pulling that prize. They like Anderson but you have a good record. We have been following you as paisanos. You should get $354. I bet you, you're getting $500 for this fight." I am glad they woke me up! So I said, "Well, I won't fight." That guy had been lying to me. He said I was still an amateur. No, I wasn't an amateur. That was for real.

What year would that have been?

That was 1926.

How did that fight come out?

I knocked him out. They told me before the fight. I had my hands wrapped and everything off. I was going to put my clothes on. I was saying, "The hell with them. I won't fight for him any more." Just about that time, the promoter came in. He said, "What's all this?" I said, "You guys tell him. I'm not bothering to explain to anybody." He said, "You're going to have to fight this."

Did he make sure that your manager didn't keep your money?

Oh yes. He said, "Did you see the crowd?" I said, "Yes." The other fellows told me that I took him out there and showed him. I said, "Ever since I was fifteen years old, when I turned Pro, he told me that I was still an amateur and he was giving me ten dollars. He said not to tell anybody anything, because it was against the law—that was giving me ten dollars. Just about
that time, Goldburg came in and said, "Well you're on kid. What's this?" He was surprised. The promoter said, "You have been cheating this kid since he turned Pro. You're going to pay him all the money or else you'll never manage another fight in the state or in the United States for that matter. You've been giving him $10 for every fight since he turned Pro." So I said, "I don't even want to talk to you. I trusted you. I thought you were a friend as well as a manager. You managed your own pocketbook, not mine! I don't want to discuss it." He said, "But I do."

GRANT: In the end did you get your money back?

GALVIN: Yes.

GRANT: Did you fire him or did you continue with him?

GALVIN: No. I didn't fight for Goldburg anymore. The promoter promised me that he was going to get me the money that I was supposed to get from the time I turned professional.

GRANT: At that stage of the game, were you still working at the packing house?

GALVIN: Oh, yes. I was still working at the packing house. I was still trying to go to school. I attempted to go to school three or four times. I just couldn't make it.

GRANT: Would this be in South St. Paul where you were going to school?

GALVIN: No. I was going to school at the University. I got that money. I told him that I wouldn't fight for him anymore. I said, "You and I are through." He tried hard to convince me that he would pay me every penny I had coming. I said, "I don't even want to deal with you, I'm dealing with the promoter. You pay him every cent you owe me, otherwise, I won't fight." He did give me $500 for that fight. I didn't pay him anything. I said, "As far as you're cut is concerned, you can just climb up a tree and stay there until I pay you." We were re-matched again for about sixty days. I won. I didn't want to lose. I dreamed that some day I would become a good fighter. I wanted to make my dream come true.
I worked hard. I stayed home. I didn't go out nights. Maybe once in awhile I'd go to the movies. That's all I had on my mind. I worked at the packing plant. I was the idol of Swift's Packing Plant. Not only of the workers, but the management also. On the day of the fight, Mr. McDonald would make sure I was sent to the dressing room. The men and the janitor would put two benches together and get some clothes and make a pillow for me. I'd lay down and rest. I got paid by them. So I beat Anderson three times. I fought him three times. I knocked him out. We used to go out after the fights. We would go out and maybe have something to eat. We talked. He said, "I'm going to get you George." I said, "That's all right. You've got two good hands and you can hit hard." He could. Then I went to fight in Milwaukee, which was a very good town for me. They liked me quite well. I was a success there, too. I was doing good until I was matched to fight Grogan in the fall of 1927, but my training period was through August and September. Believe me, it was hot. For seven long weeks, I ran ten miles everyday. You were matched against Grogan, the fellow who backed out on you the year before?

Yes. Then I used to have Earl Sayten, the Golden Glove, light, heavy-weight champion, work with me everyday. Then I had Lawrence Plant, he was also a Golden Glove champion. I was getting ready for the fight. Two weeks before the fight, Grogan backed down. That's when I fought Joey White in Fargo, North Dakota. Afterwards you were in Milwaukee, right?

Yes.

Let's go from there.

After I fought in Milwaukee, I didn't have my heart in it anymore, after they pulled that on me. I did win my fight. After I turned around and told my manager I didn't want to fight anymore, he said, "Why kid?" I said, "I'm
GALVIN: all right, I'm not hurt. I think I've reached my peak. I'm young." I was seventeen years old. What I meant by that is that they wouldn't give me any good bouts. By the time they'd get me to a good bout, I'd be no good. So as long as I couldn't get the bouts that would do me some good, I didn't want to fight. I said, "Al Singer is only eighteen years old. He won the championship. I'm seventeen years old. I can make it. The same as Al Singer did. I'll go down in history doing the same as Al Singer. I'm working hard. I'm positive that I can beat Grogan. They just won't give me the breaks." "Well," he said, "suit yourself." So I didn't fight. Then in 1928, I chose another fight—getting married. My first wife was German. Her name was Veronica KessKert. She was from Forest Lake, Minnesota. I had three children from her, two girls and a boy. Well we were too young. Her folks didn't want us to get married, not because of the fact that I was Mexican, but because of age. Of course, my mother didn't want me to get married either. She said, "You're too young." My dad said the same thing. He said, "Why don't you go to New York and see the world? Or California, anywhere? But don't get married. After you're away for a year or two, and if she still feels the same way about you and you still feel the same way about her, well, then all right, get married." I was willing to do that but she said, "If we don't, I'll never see you again." That I know. So one night we talked until 3:30 in the morning, because I was going to leave. I wanted to take my dad up on that trip. Where he was going to get the money, I don't know. He never had any. Of course, I never told him that I had any money. When I quit fighting, I had around $2700 which was an awful lot of money in those days. Besides, I used to buy my brother his clothes and pay his way to the show and his dues in the gym. When I quit, I gave him all of my equipment and everything. I'd buy my own clothes. They all would want to know where I got the money. "Oh, I do a little work at night," I'd say.

GRANT: In addition, you were also working at the packing plant?
GALVIN: Yes, but I told her that because I didn't want her to know where my other sources of income were coming from.

GRANT: I know they didn't approve of you boxing. So then you got married?

GALVIN: I got married in 1928 and we were married until 1933. I figured, well, if that's what she wants, all right.

GRANT: When you say that's what she wants, do you mean a divorce?

GALVIN: Yes. Well, we never got a divorce. Catholics couldn't get a divorce.

GRANT: I see. So you parted company.

GALVIN: Yes. I never bothered her. I never went near her at all. She tried to cause trouble for me because she wanted to come back to me again. She got married.

I found out she was going with another fellow. She called me up one time when I was living in St. Paul Park, and said she wanted to talk to me. This was in 1945. The kids were big already. In fact, I had my second oldest staying with me then, just for the summer. They were trying hard to get us back together again. I went to see what she wanted. She told me about the kids and all that. I had one of them in the house, so she talked about the boy and the other girl. She was all dressed up. She said, "Well, where are we going?" I was all sweaty and dirty and I said, "We're not going any place." I had been working on the yard. I said, "If that's what you called me for, you might as well just forget it right now and get out of the car. You did it once you'll do it again. I don't want to be bothered that way. The kids are doing all right. I pay them alimony." I think that Jean, my oldest daughter, told my wife, "Why do you keep bothering my dad? He never bothers you. He's never around here to give you any trouble, so leave him alone! I don't think I want him to give you any more alimony." So in 1945, I stopped paying alimony.

GRANT: Going back, were you still working at the packing house?

GALVIN: Yes. I was a foreman at the shipping and calf-killing department. Then, of course, there came a break for me in 1944. I haven't gone into my history as an organizer. In 1933, I had my first experience in walking out with the farmers
GALVIN: I was the only one that stuck with the farmers when they went on strike in 1933. I was one of the number-one moochers there. I used to go out and mooch from the stores; vegetables and soup bones and things like that to make soup for the kitchen.

GRANT: For which people?

GALVIN: For the farmers, themselves. They went out on strike for better prices. I worked at night. I'd go out there and carry the banner with them, then go in and mooch.

GRANT: To help support the kitchen?

GALVIN: Yes.

GRANT: So you were working at the packing house in the day time and at night you would be working with the farmers?

GALVIN: Yes, I put in my time for them.

GRANT: You were working at a packing house in town, what drew you back so that you aligned yourself with the farmers?

GALVIN: The fact that the farmers were fighting for what was right. I always believed that a person should fight for what was right. They weren't getting a decent price for their products. Actually, you could go out on a farm and get a hog for $2.50. They were better off then, taking a big load of hogs into the stockyards and ending up owing the stockyard. That's the way it was. So I went out with them. I campaigned for them and everything.

GRANT: Against the stockyards?

GALVIN: Yes. My first experience as an organizer was in 1934. We started organizing the DFL, the packing house workers. I was right in the middle of it. I knew the guy that was the leader, Bill McCoy. Bill McCoy had a record of running away with the treasury in 1920, during the big strike, the packing house strike. He figured, by coming back in 1934, fourteen years later, that the people would have forgotten him. But he got fooled. He got away with it for about a month. He came up there and he gave us union talk. He said we needed to be
organized, and all that. I was all ears to see what the purpose of the union was, because I didn't understand. Then all of a sudden a fellow sitting alongside of me said, "Georgie, I like your spirit. I know that you were out with the farmers. What made you do that?" "I did that because I believe they were fighting for what's right," I said, "That's the reason I went out with them." He said, "are you willing to fight for what's right, right now?" I said yes, that's why I'm here. He said, "Well, that man up there is no good. He ran away with the treasure in 1920. We looked for him all over. He had gone off, clothes and all. Gone, but not forgotten. He's not lying, because we haven't forgotten him. He turned his back to us. Then he took the treasury. I said, "Tell me more about it." He said, "What will you do about it?" I said, "I'll expose that man right now." So he went on and told me all about it. Whatever he could right there. Nobody was talking. I raised my hand. I had a piece of paper, but the piece of paper was blank. He thought I was readin it. So he said, "Yes, young man?" I said, "Mr. McCoy, what are you here for now? To create another treasury so you can runaway with it?" He asked me what was I talking about. I said, "In 1920, you turned your back to all the packing house workers and ran away with the treasury. I'm going to tell you, right now, Mr. McCoy, we do want to be organized, but not by a man like you! You better leave town before the rest of them find out. Your life isn't worth a slug nickel." Then this Romanian man said, "Georgie, why don't you go and talk to this man?" I said, "I haven't got the experience. I don't know anything about this." "That's all right," he said, "you just tell him what you think."

GRANT: The fellow next to you told you?

GALVIN: Yes.

GRANT: He told you to talk to someone about the man?

GALVIN: The group. There were around 75 to 100 people there.

GRANT: So after you had told who this McCoy fellow was, he left the scene then?
Yes. He took off.

Then this Romanian man encouraged you to go and become one of the leaders?

Yes.

Okey, what happened then?

Everyone said all right. After I exposed Bill, I got up there. Everybody was in favor and said, "get up and say something." I said, "I know for one thing, I'm not a speaker and as far as I'm concerned, I have no experience whatsoever, but I do know that in order to win a battle we must be organized. By saying organized, I mean we should get united and think as one not as a group."

You were already known to the packing house as Kid Galvin?

Oh, yes.

And you were already a popular figure?

Yes, so then I said, "Now, we've been here. We have gotten together with about 50, 75, and 100 people. Each time it seems to be growing. Are we going to quit organizing? We need an organization. 1934 is the year we can start organizing because President Roosevelt has given us the right to organize. You can go back to your homes and think it over. Let's think and think right. Think constructively, not destructively. We don't want to kill people. Let's do it politically." Everyone said, "he's right." Then I told them, "So when you people call again, I'm not going to come back. I'm not going to call meetings. You people are going to call the meetings. Then you let me know that you are having a meeting. But when we do meet, I want to have more than a hundred.

How many people do you guess were working at the packing plant?

Oh, Cudahays had 1400, Swifts had about 2500, and Armours had better than that.

So with different packing houses, you had potential for a lot of union members?

Was this the beginning of your activist as a union organizer?

Yes.
So did they call you back in 1934?

Yes. Later in 1934. I remember that in 1934, I wanted to make a come back again in the ring. I found out that George Degedo from Minneapolis had gotten $750 for a fight. He wasn't even a star! I knew I could beat George. When they told him that I was making a come back and wanted to fight him, George didn't want any part of it. So I forgot about boxing, for the simple reason that these people had 350 people for our first meeting. Late in 1934, we got in contact with a National Office in Chicago. They started to send speakers out. Due to the fact that I thought my education was very limited, I figured I had no right to be in front. That's the way I thought then. I let others move in. At that time we were organizing a union for a purpose. We organized a union to make things easier for everybody; for your household, your family, your future, better economical living, and better education. It was not for the things that exist today. The underworld has moved into the racket now. They move into labor and everybody goes on strike. Everytime you turn around, I'm not in favor of that. But, we won our first big strike against Cudahay Packing Plant. They fired about 49 men. I said, "They will be back with full pay and back pay. We are going to fight it."

What did they fire them for?

For union activities. Why they didn't fire me is a mystery, because I often asked that question myself.

You were with Cudahay also at that time?

Sure. They were more afraid of me when I got at the negotiating tables than they were about Simonson or Glanchender. Glanchenender still is in the District Office in South St. Paul. In 1937, we beat Cudahay in court. They would have to pay $125,000 in back pay for all the men they had laid off. They called it "laid off" but they were fired. They lost nothing, they got everything in return. But Simonson took credit for all the activity and George Galvin was pushed aside. We had a big meeting one time in South St. Paul. They wanted me up there.
They said, "Just go up in front. We're going to ask you the question: How come this Bud Simonson got ahead of George and Bud Simonson hasn't done a darn thing for the people?" This organization is organized because of the fact that George started it. He was the one who exposed Bill McCoy." I said, what did Bud Simonson say? He said, "I agree I haven't done anything."

Then the people said, "Then why should you hold the position that you have?"

What was his position?

He was President. Then I got up and said, "I don't want to start any friction among you fellows. As I told you before, we want to fight as one, all of us together. We will stay as one, not as a group. If Bud Simonson is doing a good job, let him. I don't want to be up there." But I knew the reason why I said it. Because I thought.....

You should have had more formal education?

Yes. So I figured, what am I going to do? I would have had to make reports to the National Office, all this writing. I figured that I wasn't right up there, able to do that. So I made it easier for Bud. Bud went back in there. He was tickled to death that I made a statement that they didn't expect me to make. Glanchenender thought it was very nice of me to do that. I said, "I don't know why you're so tickled about it, that I stepped aside to let someone take my place. Why are you people so tickled about it? Because I'm a Mexican and you don't want a Mexican up in front?" They said, "Oh, no George." I said, "I think it is and there is one thing I can tell you. I may be a Mexican, but I'm not afraid to get up there and fight and tell the big shots what I think of them. Before I go over there, I've already gone through in my mind what I'm going to tell these people so I don't catch myself in a tough spot and lose the case." We won case after case against the packing plants. Finally, in 1942, they were having trouble with the sheep and calf killers. They couldn't get a foreman that knew how to run the department. So Doc Baker told the manager, "I know one guy who knows his sheep." The manager asked, "Who's that?" Doc said,
"He's George Galvin." The manager then said, "He made me money, but he's Mexican." Then Doc Baker said, "The guy has been working for your company all his life and you still hold that against him, because of his nationality? You'll never find another one that knows how to pick out a lamb in the coolers and if you show him what's wrong with that lamb, he'll go right back to the killing floor and point to the man that did it. Now show me another one who can do that?" So I owe Doc Baker that much, anyway. He was pretty good to me all the time.

So then you got the job?

No, not that easy yet. I told him that I would take the job but I would not drop my union badge. I said, "You want me, you're going to hire me around the department, I'll take it by the hour. Is this department going to be mine? Or am I going to have someone else come in here and tell me what to do?" The superintendent said, "No, you are going to be running it. You will make your report." That was another thing I didn't know because of lack of education. But, I got to be just like the old timers. They could tell you when a mare was going to have a colt, or a sow was going to have her pigs, just by the moon. They could tell you anything like that.

Something you don't learn in school.

No. I could tell you exactly how fast the chain was going just by staring and looking at it.

You're talking about the slaughter house with the assembly line chain?

Yes.

So in other words, you knew your business?

Yes. I would go stand out there; the guys would go out there with a stop watch. They'd be timing the dog-gone thing and I'd look at it and say, "The chain is going 150 miles an hour. He would look at me and say, "How did you know? You weren't timing it." I said, "I know. I timed it. I don't need your watch."

You had enough experience. Then what year did you take over the sheep room?
In 1942.

You mentioned you had a big break in 1944?

I'm coming to that now. After I got the job running the department, I went on for two years, having no trouble. In fact, I plugged up the shoots, because they couldn't take care of the sheep pelts. The way I had my men lined up on the floor, I had no stoppage of any kind. We had a Bohemian man running the hide cellar. He came running, "Who in the hell is running the department now for Christ's sake? The dog-gone shoots are plugged."

In other words, you were turning out so much work there was a bottle neck at a later process. They couldn't keep up with you.

That's right, because I had no stoppage.

Right, I was just explaining that so that they'll know what you mean when you say they're plugging the shoots.

Big shots from Omaha used to come in and wrinkle up their nose when they saw who their supervisor was. Baker always said, "Don't look at his nationality. Look at him as a man, and what he is doing for the department. Ask him any question you want to know about the sheep: how you can tell whether their lamb is a yearling or whether it's just a lamb; or how old the darn thing is. Just ask him." One of them did call me; he said, "Hey you, come here." So I just looked at him and turned around and walked away from him. Sid Churney was the supervisor in the hog field. He came over and said, "Christ Sake, he's a big shot." I said "I don't give a damn who he is. My name is not "Hey," and I said it loud enough. "If he hasn't learned that much in school, hell with him, I don't have to answer to him. If he doesn't like the way I'm running the doggone department, the hell with it. He knows what my name is. They're prejudice because I'm a Mexican. That's too God damn bad, I am a Mexican."

Did you find a lot of prejudice in those years?

Oh, yes, quite a bit. Pretty soon he came over. He saw that I wouldn't move. I didn't go. I said, "You tell me if you don't want me around, because of that;
I'll be glad to step out." They said, "Oh, no, gee whiz George, control yourself." Control my foot, hell I didn't have to. Then the superintendent came in and they were talking. He said, "If you did that to George, he won't come. You want to talk to George, you go over there and talk to him. He said he won't come."

So the superintendent stood behind you?

Yes. Then he came up to me and said, "Mr. Galvin, I'm sorry. You're right. If I have to learn to conduct myself with people, with all the years of education I've had, you have the right." I said, "Well, what do you want to know? What can I tell you about these animals? You'll never learn it in the books." He said, "Can you tell me when the sheep are all dressed on the line? Can you pick out a yearling?" I said, "Oh, yes. It's very simple." So I grabbed one from the head and I pushed him. I said, "See the teeth here being pushed out? Those are the baby teeth. You can still classify that as a lamb." I was going to show him another way. I waited for him to say, is there another way. I said, "We'll try the same one, that's one way." I reached over on the lower part of his leg, on the back and I said, "Feel this. How does it feel? Soft? That's a lamb." I felt the other one. I said, "That's passed." He said, "How do you know? You haven't even looked at it?" I said, "I don't have to look at it." I reached down there and grabbed it. I said, "See." He said, "Another yearling."

Their spine would harden up?

Yes, the soft bones were there when it was a lamb. After they passed a year, the bones harden. I said, "There's another way of finding out, the way the toe breaks." They weren't satisfied. They figured they'd take me to the coolers. I went into the coolers and I showed them. I said, "There's a lot of lambs and a lot of yearlings that can pass as lambs. They're in good shape. You can cover them up. Cover it and cut the knuckle. A knuckle shows this way." He shook his head and said, "You were right, George, we don't learn this in books." That took place in 1942. I had big shots from different places.
GALVIN: I won the respect of these people. When they used to come down they would call me. They wanted me to have coffee with them. I had something worthwhile. I gained respect by showing them that I was superior to them in knowledge of the sheep and calf-kill department. Of course, I was an all around butcher: sheep, calf, beef, hogs, anything. A Norwegian boy and I were the two fastest shoulder-boners on the cutting floor. My diplomas are the cuts and scars that I have on my arm. In 1944, I got a break. I not only won the respect of many, but even those officials from the plant thought a great deal of me. One of them turned my name in to the War-Food Administration in 1944. They were looking for a man who could speak Spanish and English, to take care of and to represent all the Mexican Nationals coming from Mexico into this country.

GRANT: Which administration?

GALVIN: War-Food Administration. It was under a fellow by the name of Wright. That's all I know. Mr. Wright saw me once. He came up there. He was very pleased with the way I was handling these fellows. Now at this point, I could understand Spanish, but I couldn't speak Spanish very well. So many times, I was just guessing what these people were telling me. I had a group from Mexico City. They were very nice. They spoke very good Spanish. The first day went by, the second day, finally the third day I lay my cards on the table. I talked to them. I said, "You know I can't speak Spanish very good. I'm going to school now, to try and learn to improve my Spanish. If you fellows will help me, I'll do all I can to help you."

GRANT: These Spanish-speaking men from Mexico City were working for you?

GALVIN: At the Burlington Yard.

GRANT: This was because of the shortage of food in war time? They had to supply food to the troops as well as the people. They had to work with the people of Mexico for extra supplies and meat.

GALVIN: They brought in thousands to help out. These fellows that I'm talking about were well educated. They just took the job to come out and see what the United States
GALVIN: Looked like.

GRANT: When you say thousands, do you mean they brought in thousands of workers?

GALVIN: No. Mexican workers were called "Nationals," not only in this part of the country but all over. They came here on a six-month working permit. I was in charge of them. Bill Casey was one of the watchmen. He was the one who introduced me to Mr. Wright. Mr. Wright sent me a letter. After that, when I accepted the job, they would send a car to the front of the gate. It said on it, "WAR-FOOD ADMINISTRATION." My job was to inspect their camps and to see that they were fed proper food.

GRANT: The Mexican National workers?

GALVIN: Yes. If they were being treated right. I was even sent to Wisconsin. There were 150 in a group there. They were very pleased to see me. When they saw me, the man that was in charge spoke a little Spanish to them. He said, "This is the man from the government." When he told them that, they all parted. One line stood on this side of the tracks. They were working on the railroad track. They took their hats off. The foreman told the, "This is a representative of the government. He is your representator." So instead of saying, "pleased to meet you, how do you feel?" I asked them one question: "Why do you take off your hats for me?" They said, "Because sir, you're an important person." I said, "You shouldn't take off your hats for me. The only ones you should take your hats off to is God, to show respect to a lady, or an old man. That's when you should take off your hat. To a man who is your equal, you never take off your hat. You're not in Mexico anymore, where men try to dominate you because you are poor. The rich man has his money because you helped him make his money. You need a job that he offers you. You don't owe the rich man anything. He is the one that owes you."

GRANT: That was a good lesson for them. That was fascinating work. You were able to do a lot of work for the people, the Mexican Nationals, when they were here. Was that full-time employment? Were you also able to work for the stockyards?

GALVIN: Most of the time for them. I was working with Cudahays and then they'd send
a car for me. They came in sometimes. I barely got started. My hands would just get bloody and they'd come in and say, "George, there's a car for you." They couldn't say anything, because that was the Federal government. I got a different call from the Immigration. They wanted to know if I'd be willing to go translate and be a service interpreter, for the Immigration and wetbacks they would be catching. I was doing an awful lot of studying. The teacher I had was a German woman. She spoke very good Spanish. They thought I was there because of the girls in the classes. There were a lot of girls in there, trying to learn Spanish and Russian and all nationalities. I was the only Mexican in the classes.

Where were these classes?

They were at the University extension. Everyone had to read a paragraph out of the book we had in school. I just watched. I noticed that they showed beginners a loaf of bread, a prune, a chair and table. They'd ask "What's this?"

This is too elementary?

Yes. So I didn't say anything. I thought maybe they'd send me some place else. My turn came to read a large paragraph. "Mr. Galvin," the teacher asked, I said, "Yes ma'am." "Do you mind reading the next paragraph?" she asked. "Not at all," I said. I got up and read that paragraph right on through, because I could read. I learned to read and write both languages. Not good, I'm much better now. I owed that to my insurance business, which will come up later. She asked me to read that paragraph. Everybody turned around and looked at me. I just sat down. Then she said, "Mr. Galvin, I'd like to have you stay after class." She was kind of rough with me, after all the class was gone. "Now what are you doing here? What's your purpose?" she asked. I said, "Oh, I'm afraid you have the wrong impression of me. I have been offered a job at the WAR-FOOD ADMINISTRATION and I have also been offered a job to serve the Immigration Department, whenever they need me. Now I feel that I just cannot speak Spanish good enough to serve these two organizations. I want to improve
my Spanish. Then she said, "I'm sorry, but a lot of young guys and young men come in here and they just fool around with the girls." "To tell you the truth, I haven't even noticed them, because my mind is occupied," I said.

You were thirty-four at this time?

Yes.

In 1944.

She said, "Well, I'm sorry George. This isn't going to do you any good. What you see tonight is where we'll be for a while, then we'll move a little bit faster, toward the end, so that they can say, "Give me a glass of water; where is there a hotel; where is there a restaurant... these people come here to learn a little Spanish so that when they go to a Latin country, they can ask for a glass of water or something to eat, not to carry on a conversation, but for what they need to learn."

Did she steer you into a more advanced course?

No. She said, "What you should do is read a lot of Spanish. Get yourself some good books and read Spanish. Also find out where there's a Mexican family that speaks good Spanish and make it a point to go and visit them often. Explain to them that you want to do this." So I only knew one family in St. Paul. Oh, there were quite a few in 1944, maybe a thousand Mexicans there. But they didn't speak very good Spanish. I went to see a family by the name of Gomez in Minneapolis. They said, "Oh yes, come in." I explained to them why I was there. I was there to meet them for no special reason. I went to them for quite some time. With the help of these other fellows that I ran into from Mexico City, by the time they went back to Mexico City, I could tangle with anyone. One time I had a very good experience. There were two men from Texas in the Immigration and they stood there, great big guys, behind me. I was talking to six wetbacks. I didn't bother with the Nationals, because they were under me. These wetbacks used to be caught canning in factories and they'd bring them in. I was preaching to them what they should do and what they shouldn't do. I said, "If you come into this country illegally, you have to
obey the laws of our country. You are not in Mexico now. You are in the United States. You come in here especially illegally and you want to do the things you do over there; like going into a saloon and getting drunk. You can't do that here. The Immigration Department will catch up to you in an awful hurry. They may sometimes give you a break for your good behavior; they don't want to deprive you of making any money or better living. If they don't put a stop to that, the citizens of our country won't have anything to do here. So many outsiders come in illegally. It isn't that we are picking on you or that we don't want you here because you are a Mexican, it is because you chose to come in the wrong way."

You were explaining to them the problems. What linguistic difficulty did you have in talking with them?

None. I was all right then.

Oh, you had mentioned that at one time you had difficulty with the Spanish language. I thought this was that occasion.

No, not then. This was a bit later. By this time I had caught on. Say you take yourself with the Spanish that you know. You get into where you are talking Spanish all the time or German or whatever you are. You pick up the language fast because you have it. You just don't get practice. With me the only Spanish I used was at home. Like: "ma, I'm home. What do you have to eat? Do I have a clean shirt?" Of course, I never had to ask my mother that because everyday in the morning she'd have a clean shirt ready for me. I only used that shirt to go from home to the locker room. I took that shirt off when I came back. She'd have a clean, fresh shirt for me. I never had to ask her that. But that was the extent of my Spanish. When I'd get out of the house, it was all English.

How long after 1944 did you work with the government agency?

Just that year, 1944, but the Immigration House called me even last year.

So they still call upon you to serve?
GALVIN: They call once in a while. They may not now because I refused to go once. I was working in a position where I couldn’t say, "I have to go." These companies are not like they used to be. You were called from your job to serve the government or a Federal position, temporarily, a day or two days, three days whatever it is. As long as it was a Federal job, go ahead. I even had a direct line on the phone for about six years. The Immigration didn’t want anybody to listen to my line.

GRANT: They got you a special phone?

GALVIN: Yes.

GRANT: When did you remarry?

GALVIN: I married Isabel Vasquez in 1937.

GRANT: Did you have any children?

GALVIN: Oh yes, one daughter.

GRANT: Is she married now?

GALVIN: Yes, she’s got five children.

GRANT: What’s her married name?

GALVIN: Her married name is Aguillar, Mrs. Albert Aguillar. Her maiden name is Virgina Galvin.

GRANT: Can you tell me the names of her children? This will be history for their children?

GALVIN: Yes. The oldest one is Richard Aguillar; second oldest is Steve Aguillar; then Dawn; Jody, and Christopher. The oldest is nineteen. Steve and Richard are in the Armed Forces, the Marines. Right now Steve loves it.

GRANT: He chose a hard route. The Marines are a tough outfit.


GALVIN: Yes. I received a call, at midnight on March 19, 1958. The fellow that called me, I didn’t know him from Adam nor did he know me either. Somebody told him that I was very active in the unions and organizing. He started talking to me about LULAC, which was actually all Greek to me. I asked him what he meant by
GALVIN: LULAC, what was it? He then told me it is a League of United Latin American Citizens. It's a national organization. Someone called us from Chicago, he said, and told us that you would be the man to contact. I said, "If it's good for the Mexican people, certainly I'll be interested." He said, "Yes, that's what it's for, to improve conditions for the Mexican people and to see if we can send a few boys to college. It's for improvements all around, not just one department." I said, "I hope I can live to see the day when improvement can be made; not only in education, but housing, working conditions, representation for migrant...." He cut me off right there and said, "George, from the way you talk, you are the man we've been looking for, to organize LULAC in Minnesota." I said, "How am I going to go about that? Who am I going to contact?" "We'll come up," he said, and we made an appointment where we were going to meet and everything. We met. I guess this fellow had some relations here in St. Paul, on Walnut Street. We met at their house, outside. We happened to meet just in time. He was just pulling in and I was too. This man that called me was Jesse Mosqueda, from Des Moines, Iowa. He was one of the heroes in the Second World War, Mosqueda, M-O-S-Q-U-E-D-A. He lost his right arm. He was in the Navy. They sank the ship that he was in. He pulled about sixty men out of the water. His commander said, "Mosqueda, your arm is gone. You better get in here yourself." He said, "These other men need my help more than I do. If I'm going to die, I'm going to die pulling these men out of here." Then pretty soon he just passed out. They dragged him in with the rest of them. "Now," he said, "I want to see that we can do something. It is really something when you're out there getting ready to kill somebody. They don't seem to have any distinction for nationality or color. But as soon as you get back, in here, then things are different. You're back where you were before. That didn't improve anything. This is for the Mexican people or the Blacks or for all minorities for that matter. That's one of the reasons this organization has done a great deal of improvements in the State of Texas and the State of New Mexico. Now we are going to see if we can get all 48 states."
GALVIN: I went to work on it right away. I called a meeting the following Sunday. I got a group together.

GRANT: Who were some of these early people in the organization?

GALVIN: There was John Aguirre. He's no longer on the face of the earth. But Joe Zammarrippa still exists and Louie Medina, Joe Medina, and Manuel Aguirre. I had a good working group. I also organized in Minneapolis. There I had Dominquez and Betty Rodriquez, Frank Zragoza, Esperanza Urivana, there were a lot of others I have forgotten. I also organized in Albert Lea.

GRANT: I realize that you continued to be very active. Far from being retired. You're the kind of person that has to keep active, and keeps working. Maybe you can tell us about your present activities?

GALVIN: Well, I really don't feel right sitting around the house doing nothing. The job that I have today really came as a surprise to me because I didn't expect to hear from anybody offering me a job. I'm sixty-five years old now. Who wants an old guy like me working? Especially the kind of job that I'm holding. I received a call one night to come in and put in an application at the Historical Society. They said they were going to take a survey of the Mexican community in St. Paul. The party that called me was Betty Rodriquez, from Minneapolis. After filling the application, I came here and talked to the girl and I showed her the application. She asked me a lot of questions. Two or three days later, I got a letter from the Historical Society, telling me I didn't get the job. It was no surprise to me. It must have been a month after when I got a call from Jay Van Bury's office who is the Administrator for the Outreach Food Stamps Officers. He asked me if I wanted to take a job. Then I spoke to Judy Barre. She said, "Why don't you come into the office and we'll talk about it?" I went the next morning. She was asking me questions and writing something down. So right then and there she said, "We are going to have a meeting on such and such and I want you to be there."

GRANT: This is Project Outreach? Is this a State Department?

GALVIN: Yes.
GALVIN: It could be. That Van Bury, he's the Director of the State Department. Yes, he's in the Centennial Building. I attended another meeting which was a briefing. It was to brief us on what we had to do, orientation and to explain to us about the Food Stamps. To tell you the truth, I wasn't even listening to half the things because I feared someone else was going to get it.

GRANT: This was this year?

GALVIN: Yes, it was in the middle of April, 1976. Judy said, "You may have to go to Blooming Prairie and have an interview with those officers over there." I went to Blooming Prairie and I met Benevides. He belongs to the Migrant Affairs.

GRANT: Is that an organization or a state department?

GALVIN: A state department.

GRANT: He's one of the officers of this program?

GALVIN: Yes, Benevides was there. He took the interview. Then Padres was the Administrator or coordinator over there of that group. I never met the people before.

GRANT: Can you tell us briefly what the purpose is of this program?

GALVIN: To help the Migrant workers that are up here in the state. They just come here on a temporary basis. When they first come they get "zero stacks." That means they don't have to pay for it.

GRANT: Is there anything you'd like to sum up in the interview by mentioning any hopes for the future? Hopes for your children?

GALVIN: What kind of hopes can a man have at the age of 65? Although my future for the present seems very bright, I tell my grandson, not only grandchildren but even somebody's else's children: The only way to get up where you can be respected is to be honest, not to drink to make a fool of yourself. If you like to take a few drinks, take a few drinks. When you feel the stuff is grabbing you, then leave it alone. You can go and dance, talk and walk around. Another thing I always preach to them is: don't ever take a dollar that doesn't belong to you.
GALVIN: It's better that you learn to earn your own money and spend your own money. It is my hope that I will live long enough to see discrimination against our people vanish. I told my grandson, Steve, and my brother-in-law, who lives in Madison, Wisconsin when he went into the service, "Ray, when you get in the service, keep your eyes open, ears open, and your mouth shut. You'll go a long way. Don't go over there and start bragging about how and what you are and what you can do. In the Army, you meet a lot of people. That's all they want to do. They'll shut it for you if you talk too much."

So I got the first letter from my grandson. I told Steve, "When you get there, keep your eyes open, ears open and you will learn a lot by watching others. Keep your mouth closed. Don't talk too much. Answer questions when they ask you to advance your position in the service, and you'll be liked and you'll be respected."

GRANT: That's mighty sound advice, not only for grandchildren and people going into the service, but all around good thinking. Well thank you for this interview, George.