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

Ramedo Saucedo was born August 1, 1930 in St. Paul, Minnesota. Catalina Saucedo was born in 1930 in Maxwell, Texas and came to St. Paul in 1943 where she and Ramedo Saucedo were married in 1956.

Ramedo received both BA and BS degrees from the University of Minnesota and has done graduate work at the University of Arizona and the University of Colorado. He taught at University High School 1960-1966 and now teaches at Southwest High School. Catalina continues to work in the business world in one of her many capacitites: presently she prepares income tax forms and is studying real estate. Both Saucedos are very active in the Mexican-American community. Ramedo was director of the Minnesota Historical Society's Mexican American Project and Catalina was co-director.

Discussion centers on childhood and adult life in the Mexican-American community of West St. Paul; the Mexican consulate established in St Paul and Ramedo's role as the fourth consul; and the organization of the MHS Mexican-American Project.

This is a transcript of a tape-recorded interview edited slightly for clarity. The original tape recording is available in the Audio-Visual Library of the Minnesota Historical Society.
Transcript of a Recorded Interview
with Ramedo and Catalina Saucedo
April 6, 1977
Interviewer: Juan Sanchez

Sanchez: Tell me, Cata - we will handle the interview in English so we can just feel free to discuss things easily and freely among us - can you tell us a little bit about your early life in the west side of St. Paul?

Catalina: Well, I came to the west side of St. Paul in 1943. I went to school at Lafayette and then I...

Sanchez: OK. Where were you born then, Cata?

Catalina: I was born in Maxwell, Texas, which is near San Marcos.

Sanchez: Would you care to tell us what year?

Catalina: I was born in 1930.

Sanchez: That's fine. (unclear) And Ramedo?

Ramedo: I was born on the west side of St. Paul and the year was 1930, August first, to be exact. I attended Lafayette School also, an elementary school, plus Roosevelt Junior High. And then Humboldt High School on the west side of St. Paul.

Sanchez: Where did you attend school, Cata?

Catalina: I just attended Lafayette. After that I just took my test for my high school degree.
Sanchez: How about your further education, Ramedo?

Ramedo: Well, after high school I attended the University of Minnesota for a couple of years and then went into the military service. It was during the Korean conflict during 1949, 1950 and joined the National Guard for Minnesota. At that time the 47th Division was called into active duty and I found it exciting leaving the state of Minnesota and moving down to Alabama where they were going, and spent two years in the Army traveling the South, going to Georgia, Texas, Florida. And then when I returned, through the GI Bill I was able to continue my studies at the University of Minnesota.

Sanchez: You completed your studies then?

Ramedo: Yes, graduating from the College of Science, Literature and the Arts and receiving a degree in history with a minor in Spanish.

Sanchez: You also got into teacher training, I understand.

Ramedo: Yes, thanks to a fellow by the name of John Sanchez. Right between. As soon as I graduated from college, receiving my bachelor of arts, I enrolled in law school, and I had been there for a year and I had just recently gotten married, and we were looking for additional funds since Cathy was working and in a way supporting me to a tremendous degree financially. And then I somehow happened to walk over or look into the College of Education, and someone suggested I speak to a fellow by the name of John Sanchez. I went over and I talked to John Sanchez, and thanks to him today I'm in teaching. He outlined very nicely how I could fulfill the requirements in the College of Education and receive my bachelor of science degree, and worked with John in fact at University High School.

Sanchez: Cata, while Ramedo was in Korea, or was during that time of the Korean conflict traveling somewhere, as he mentions, where were
you?

Catalina: I was at home.

Sanchez: In...

Catalina: In St. Paul, yes, still at home with my family. And I was going to Rasmussen's Business College for general office work. And I was working at Farmers Union Central Exchange.

Sanchez: Did you know each other then?

Catalina: I met Ramedo when I was thirteen and decided at that time that someday I would marry him.

Sanchez: Great, great. Then when you finished, Ramedo, your educational training and you became then a certified teacher for the state of Minnesota, what did you do then?

Ramedo: I taught, thanks to John again, at the University High School and was there for a period of six years, and enjoyed my teaching experience there tremendously.

Sanchez: Now at that particular time that's when the famous National Defense Education Act and institutes were being held around the country for special training of special teachers. I understand you participated there.

Ramedo: Yes, I received a stipend through the National Defense Education Act to attend a program of schooling - graduate school - with the University of Arizona one year and the following year at the University of Colorado. So those two summers, the years 1961 and 1962, were spent doing graduate work at these two universities.

Sanchez: Cata, when did you get married, you two?
Catalina: We got married September 22, 1956.

Sanchez: Good, very good. Now that's teamwork, isn't it?

Ramedo: You remember the year. I remember the day.

Sanchez: So shortly after you were married, a special honor was given to you both by having a consulate established, a Mexican consulate established here in St. Paul. Would you share with us a little bit what you actually did and how this came about and why?

Ramedo: The position had been vacant for a couple years, I'm sure.

Sanchez: And you became the fourth consul, Mexican consul.

Ramedo: The fourth consul after a gentlemen by the name of Pierce Butler had passed away. His son, Pierce Butler the third, called me one day and asked if I wouldn't meet him at his office to discuss the need for continued consulate service in this area. At that time there were several Mexican citizens as well as non-Mexican citizens or people of Mexican descent who were going to Pierce Butler for information. And he felt at that time, since he was consul for the Netherlands - he still is - he couldn't handle both situations.

Sanchez: What did the job actually entail at the time? Why actually was the consulate instituted here?

Ramedo: The consulate originally was instituted for two reasons. One; for commercial purposes, to stimulate business for Mexico and two; to serve the Mexican citizens in this area.

Sanchez: What was your part in this work, Catal? I understand you have always teamed up to do things together, and that was another venture of the Saucedos.
Catalina: Well I was in charge of the office, receiving the people that came, giving them information that was needed, writing letters, of course, to Mexico, issuing tourist cards to people who were going to visit Mexico as well as taking care of invoices for the business places, like Minnesota Mining. There were quite a few.

Sanchez: Did you find, Cata, in your work that you had to use your work that you had to use your bilingual skills extensively?

Catalina: Yes, I did.

Sanchez: Did you have to use Spanish as much almost as English, both in writing and in speaking to people in St. Paul?

Catalina: Yes. Yes, I did.

Ramedo: I must say that this certainly stimulated an interest or aroused a tremendous interest in Mexico for us, since questions were coming in constantly on anything and everything that had to do with Mexico. Therefore we made it a point to travel intensively through Mexico and get to know it's history, it's people, our ancestors actually, as much as possible.

Sanchez: I understand that the consulate also had some kind of a library, information library type thing. Would you like to elaborate a little bit there?

Ramedo: Yes. Since becoming consul the government was sending publications, periodicals, magazines, anything and everything that it received...

Sanchez: In Spanish?

Ramedo: In Spanish and in English and forwarded it on to all the
consulate offices throughout the United States. And then we of course would help make it available to anyone that was interested in reading that information. We would also distribute it. We also had a mailing list that we used to send information out to people who were interested. They would call in. Some people would only be interested in certain aspects of Mexico and we would forward this information on to them.

Sanchez: Was the consulate in a commercial location or did you have it at home? Where was it actually located for awhile?

Catalina: We had the office at home for the first ten, eleven years, and then the last seven we had it at the Gorman School building which is on the west side.

Sanchez: So actually you were with the consulate for sixteen years roughly?

Catalina: Yes.

Sanchez: Now is the consul, Mr. and Mrs. Consul here almost, we can say that you probably had to interact with the Mexican authorities and that would probably lead you to what you were mentioning, Ramedo, that you had to travel to Mexico as well. Now what was your connection for instance, with Chicago, with the general consulate there, Mexican consulate?

Ramedo: The Mexican consulate in Chicago, since it is a career consulate and a permanent consulate, it is directly involved with the overseeing of a number of offices in the northwestern part as well as the northeastern parts of the United States. For example, Ohio and Indiana and Illinois of course and Minnesota, since there are no consulates in North and South Dakota and Iowa. It actually covered this entire area, northern part of the United States. And as a result, from time to time we could go to Chicago to turn in reports and also receive calls from them as well as make
Sanchez: How about Mexico itself? Official business led you there too?

Ramedo: On a number of occasions we went to Mexico, not only to the American consulate, but also to the Secretary of States office, which is called (Spanish)

Sanchez: Did you go with Ramedo on these trips, too, Cata?

Cata: Yes, I did. We also went to visit my relatives. Most of them are in Mexico City.

Sanchez: Now as a teacher, Ramedo, you also had an opportunity to travel to Mexico, I understand. Would you care to share with us a little about these trips?

Ramedo: Being involved with Spanish, actually my full time position, we became so interested in my travels through Mexico that I couldn't help but let the students know and help develop a better understanding of another person's culture. It's all part of the language, as far as I'm concerned. And the books of course give you a certain limited amount of information, and my whole-hearted enthusiasm was to encourage the students to participate in some types of a travel program. And we would go summers and also during - lately - during the past four or five school years, during the school year.

Sanchez: We have discussed traveling to Mexico, but where specifically, Ramedo, did you actually go often?

Ramedo: Mexico City, Also Guadalajara, the second largest city, and a small town by the name of (Pasquerro?) I selected these three towns or cities, one: to give them a picture of how people live in a city of ten million - Mexico City, secondly: a more peaceful, more Spanish colonial type architecturally designed city like
Guadalajara, and thirdly: a fishing village, a little more remote, out of the way, difficult to get to such as (Pasquerro?) with cobblestone streets and roosters crowing in the morning and the typical atmosphere say that existed maybe three or four hundred years ago.

Sanchez: (Pasquerro?) is on the northeastern coast, and the Pacific coast?

Ramedo: Yes, that's right out of Mexico City. The northwestern part. Pardon me.

Sanchez: Northwest of Mexico City.

Ramedo: Right. A good eight-hour drive.

Catalina: We also made some trips to Acapulco, resort area.

Ramedo: That's right. On some travel programs we went to Tosco and Acapulco as well.

Sanchez: Now you have mentioned that you have traveled to Mexico quite often either for official business as a consulate, both of you, or for official business as a teacher, taking students. How about friends, relatives? Any reasons to visit Mexico because of other people like relatives or friends? Have you done some traveling, visiting and so on, to visit your own people perhaps?

Ramedo: Absolutely. Every time, every occasion that we were able to get to Mexico we certainly made it a point to visit relatives, but the unfortunate part in the limit of time in traveling with groups is that once a person visits one relative, it's very offensive not to visit the others. And because of that we would have to allow ourselves more time to spend in Mexico just visiting with relatives. But it was extremely difficult to do when accompanying a group.
Sanchez: Want to add something to that, Cata?

Catalina: No.

Sanchez: OK. Then maybe we should go on to discussing a little bit your adult life in West St. Paul or in the western side of St. Paul. Maybe Cata, you could start out a little bit and tell us about your marriage and subsequent family and give us a few impressions. . .

Ramedo: How much you have enjoyed being married to me.

Catalina: Well at least it hasn't been dull. Well after being married for five years we were finally lucky enough to get a daughter. That is (name unclear). She will be sixteen. Three years later we had our son Romado. I think that has completed our life; has added a lot to it at any rate.

Sanchez: Do you have any other family in town? Brothers or sisters on your side, Cata?

Catalina: No. I have one brother in Minnesota. He is in Crookston. The closest one to me. I have one brother in Texas yet, one brother in California, and two sisters also in Los Angeles.

Sanchez: Your parents are not alive?

Catalina: No, my parents. My mother died when I was sixteen and my father in 1972.

Sanchez: How about you, Ramedo?

Ramedo: I'm fortunate enough to have a wonderful family. I certainly have a wonderful daughter and a very enjoyable and intelligent son. My wife of course, has been a tremendous help to me in practically all of the work that I have undertaken in the past. And most of my family is here in Minnesota. As far as cousins and uncles,
grandparents, I don't know where they live. My dad became an orphan at the age of ten and left Mexico, arrived here in 1916, and to this date he doesn't know where his six brothers live or whether they still are alive today. So...

Sanchez: When you say here, your family, Ramedo, where do you mean, St. Paul?


Sanchez: Now with regard to jobs and employment, you might like to share with us all kinds of things you can tell us. You have already mentioned the fact that you were of course, Cata, working at the consulate. You have a full life being a housewife and a mother. But I also understand that you engaged in other tasks besides. Before you mentioned that you had some business education before you were married.

Catalina: Yes, before I was married I went to Rasmussen's Business College and worked after that. Once Ramedo resigned from the consulate, which left me unemployed, so to speak, I decided to go back to business college and I took an administration school. I have my certificate in business administration in accounting and I went to work for Northwestern National Bank.

Sanchez: St. Paul?

Catalina: St. Paul. For six months. I took a leave of absence from there to help a little on the Mexican-American Project and now I have decided that I will just stay home and just do part-time work. At the present time I am working with income tax. I have actually worked on that for the past sixteen years.

Ramedo: You might ask her for her immediate projected plans for the
future, employment-wise.

Sanchez: Oh yes, I understand that you are pursuing a new career, too, Cata. Maybe you would like to share with us a little bit. Sounds very exciting.

Ramedo: Never a dull moment.

Catalina: Well, I always I have to keep studying, or finding something else to do. So as soon as income tax season is over, I will be studying real estate. Hopefully by the end of the year, first part of next year, I will be going into business for myself, which will include real estate and income tax. And I am still doing some translations and I still do some. Other people that come here from Mexico, help them get their papers to be here as permanent residents.

Ramedo: She's very well familiar, I think she's an authority as far as I'm concerned, on the immigration laws, rules and regulations governing the entry of immigrants into this country. She's up to date. She's worked with the various consulates and immigration offices.

Sanchez: How about you, Ramedo? What can you tell us about your multiple jobs that you have held throughout the years? But why don't we discuss first perhaps your work as a teacher?

Ramedo: It's been very rewarding, as I've mentioned before. I am deeply grateful to John talking me into. . .I remember the day I walked into that office at Peik Hall. And John asked a question after I told him what school I was in. He asked me, "Is your dad a lawyer?" I said, "No." "Well then, I hope you don't expect people to be breaking down your door and just barging in or waiting in line to come into your office after you hang up your shingle."

And that led me to think a little bit about an immediate
employment situation. And that's when the situation opened up
at University High School and John invited me to teach there.

As I mentioned before, I was there for six years until
1966 at the University of Minnesota, the laboratory school, the
University High School run by the College of Education, also
working with student teachers at the time.

Sanchez: Teacher training.

Ramedo: Teacher training, right, for the College of Education.
And in 1966 they were ready to merge with Marshall. And I
wasn't too happy over that type of situation. As a result a
gentleman by the name of Dr. Jerry Arndt offered me a position
with the Minneapolis Public schools and indicated that there was
an opening at Southwest High School and I have been there ever
since and have enjoyed it very much.

Sanchez: Can you tell us a little bit about that special program
that you have in conjunction with the Minneapolis schools,
the Mexican-American cultural interchange that you are trying
to establish through some cultural ideas that you have?

Ramedo: Two years ago some of the Chicano students at Franklin
Junior High School went to the principal indicating that they
weren't receiving enough information on the Mexican-American
contributions in this country. They weren't getting any Spanish
at all. They weren't receiving any cultural information on the
Hispanic world at Franklin. At that time the principal, Mr.
Anderson, contacted the Chicano Studies Department of the
University of Minnesota, who in turn sent a man by the name of
Hermando (Straya?) to Franklin once a week. This was in the
afternoon between two and three and for... At the end of one
trimester, or a quarter at the University, because Hermando's
schedule was rather packed, he wasn't able to continue. To
continue the encouragement and to avoid there being a gap, the
principal then contacted Mr. Arndt in Minneapolis who in turn then asked me if I would be willing to work with those students one day per week. I was then released from my duties at Southwest for... well, let's see, on Fridays, and was able to work with those students as well as students from Sanford and Folwell. So we would meet on Fridays, and basically we labeled it as an Hispanic cultural enrichment program for the Minneapolis Public Schools. The parents were very happy with it. We received several letters of encouragement for continuation of the program. We therefore... Hermando, with Hermando's help from time to time we were able to submit a letter of, well, a proposal, a small proposal, to the Minneapolis Public Schools and this year we were able to work a little stronger with the program. So currently then, it's the Hispanic Cultural Enrichment Program designed for children of Hispanic background but not strictly limited to.

Sanchez: In this vein, Ramedo, I understand that you are of course interested in all twenty basic Spanish-speaking countries in the world, besides Mexico and the United States with it's many millions of Spanish-speaking, and the Mexican-American movement here in this country. But I also know that you had special interest at one time and you took some students abroad. After many years of taking students to Mexico you went to Spain, I understand. What prompted you to do that?

Ramedo: A number of reasons, of course. Since all avenues lead to Spain obviously, whether it's the language or the culture, the traditions, all the customs - they all stem back to Spain. And I don't know too many books - Spanish books - that don't include Spain. And of course the Minneapolis public schools made a travel program available to the students, and one year we were able to charter a flight and we took students to Spain and enjoyed it very much.

Sanchez: Now you mentioned, Cata, that you were going to pursue a
real estate career, a real estate agency and service career.
And that reminds me of some interest that I have seen in
both of you in owning different homes throughout the years, one
at a time it appears. And I wonder if you would like to share
a little bit your venture of, your initiation to real estate
throughout the years.

Catalina: Well I think it started somewhere about in 1960.
All of a sudden Ramedo calls me at work and says, "Cathy, I have
just made a bid on two homes and got them both. Now what do we
do?" I said, "That's your problem, not mine." But we got the
homes and got the lots and got everything settled up. So then
Ramedo gets quite bored, I think, living in the same house for
a period of two years. Therefore we have to keep moving to
keep him happy.

Sanchez: But how do you accomplish that?

Catalina: We move a house and we remodel it and live in it for awhile
and then we rent it or sell it and move another one.

Sanchez: What do you mean, move a house? How do you go about this?
Maybe you would like to explain. I'm not quite clear.

Catalina: I think I'll have Ramedo explain that.

Ramedo: There are a number of houses available during the year. There
are always development projects going on throughout the Twin City
area. And checking the newspaper of course, you will find a number
of homes available for bid or for removal. And all one has to do
is call a mover, a house mover, and I'm sure that most...

(End of Side one)

(Begin Side Two)

Sanchez: Yes, that sounds very interesting about this moving of houses,
Ramedo: Now is this because of the extensive highway and freeway construction in the Cities, the expressways that they are building through, that they have to displace these houses?

Absolutely. The constant changes that are taking place throughout the city. I got started on that by accident actually. I was over at the Highway Department getting my license for my automobile one day and I saw a sign posted, houses that were coming up for bid. So I quickly ran out and I took a look at the homes and then I came back and that same afternoon the bids were going to be opened, so I submitted my bid. And I wasn't sure what to bid, so I bid a thousand dollars on one and a dollar on another. And luckily that afternoon at two o'clock when they opened the bids, I got them both.

Now does the Highway Department then own these houses?

The Highway Department in some cases buys the home from the owner. I-94 was coming through at that time.

Right here by the Capitol.

Right by the Capitol. Right. And in another case the Housing and Redevelopment or that one time the Port Authority or different areas. The latest one that we were able to buy came from the edge of Keller Golf Course. They were expanding the facilities there. Highway 61 and 36. So we moved that one onto one onto one of the lots we own.

Now do you move the foundation too, or just the house?

No, just the house itself. And the foundation has to be put in after the excavation first. The footings have to be
all moved, foundation, new electrical and plumbing all has to be brought up to code.

Sanchez:  To the present code.

Ramedo:  Yes, the city ordinance. Right.

Sanchez:  Now is this a certain type of house, or can they move any type of house?

Ramedo:  Or the can move practically anything. It's just a matter of...

Sanchez:  Brick, stone?

Ramedo:  Oh yes, sure. Brick? Easy to move. Stone also. I think block is a little more difficult. But it's not the size of the house necessarily, although wiring has something to do with it and where it's going. But they have moved up to eight-story buildings. So size is no really object. Nor distance.

Sanchez:  How much does it cost roughly to move a house like this?

Ramedo:  Well at the present time, I'm sure, a story and a half, or a one-story home roughly runs from fifteen to two thousand dollars. About two thousand dollars, I would say.

Sanchez:  To move it.

Ramedo:  To move it only. The foundation depends on the size of the house, and the wiring depends on how many rooms have to be wired and so on.

Sanchez:  Catá, how many homes have you lived in then? These new homes that you move and renew. Can you think of how many since...You started you said in 1960, you started?
Catalina: Right. But we have been married twenty years and we have lived in nine different homes. That gives you an idea of how often we moved. However I have my husband's promise to build my dream house this year and hopefully I will never have to move again.

Sanchez: Now that's in 1977?


Ramedo: I think you're making that very clear.

Sanchez: Now tell us a little bit. . . Maybe both of you want to share about this exciting project which we are bringing to a culmination actually, this Minnesota Historical Society Mexican-American History Project. You have been of course, Ramedo, as director and Cata, you of course were co-director basically, because. . . What was your official position?

Catalina: Oh, I did do some transcribing.

Sanchez: You did transcribing. . .

Catalina: And some editing.

Sanchez: You did the editing. You kept, of course, all kinds of information retrieval and everything for Ramedo. You backed him up in everything he did in the work.

Ramedo: She knew some of the families also who were here as community pioneers. She knew, when it came time to ask them to identify certain photographs, she was able to do this. She was very helpful in a number of ways.

Sanchez: This recording that we are making at the present time, as the bibliographer, I can say that this is number seventy-seven, and some people believe that the sevens are of course the lucky
numbers. But we are culminating the project. It has lasted now for what, two and a half years?

Ramedo: No, two summers. This is what we have devoted to the project. Last summer and the summer before last, '75 and '76. And this was the only time we were able to work on the project for a number of reasons. Number one, a place in which to work. Second, the equipment that was needed; and thirdly, because of our full-time employment. It was difficult to do justice to it during the school year.

Sanchez: What are some of your ideas as to the goals or the main reasons for the existence of this project, Ramedo? Maybe you would like to share a little bit of your own personal philosophy or your thoughts on this project now that it has taken two summers 1975 to 1977.

Ramedo: I was very gratified to know that I had been selected as director of the project from among a hundred or so applicants. I'm sure it was over a hundred applicants from throughout the state, throughout the country, people who had knowledge of Minnesota and its people. And I was excited about the project because nothing of this type had ever been documented before. It was the first of its kind.

Yes, we always asked ourselves a question, why haven't we as Mexicans or Mexican-Americans or Chicanos submitted information for posterity reasons in the archives of the Minnesota Historical Society, a permanent building, a permanent record, established some information on our community pioneers. Nothing, relatively nothing existed. A handful of items were here. A picture of Juarez, for example. I don't know of anything else. Oh, some unpublished and a few published works were documented here, but nothing that would help any seriously-minded, or I should say sophisticated researcher.

So I became interested and as I moved along on the project, even more and more excited about trying to find and go back
into history, when the first Mexican immigrants arrived here, what is available. There is still a lot of information out there that we haven't tapped. And I hope that this is a beginning of a project rather than an end of a project.

Sanchez: This project of course has been Minnesota-wide. How many parts of Minnesota did you actually visit on behalf of this project?

Ramedo: One complete summer we devoted to Minneapolis and St. Paul and suburban areas in the metropolitan area. Last summer we went outstate. We went to visit cities and towns where heavier concentrations of Mexican-American populations existed. Or it currently exists. Mainly, the southern part of the United States — rather Minnesota — like Albert Lea and also east like Litchfield and the Red River Valley area, these areas where heavier concentration of Mexican-Americans are currently living.

Sanchez: Cata, do you have any further information you would like to share with us with regard to the project? What are some of the things you observed as you interacted with people and contacted people and connected into this project?

Cata: Well I found it very interesting, and I learned a lot of things really from talking to some of the people that were interviewed. And of course when I did the transcribing and the editing I was surprised to find out a lot of things that I had never even thought of.

Sanchez: About the very people who live in this state or have lived for quite a while, of Mexican-American descent?

Cata: That's right.

Ramedo: We found a tremendous amount of contributions to the state of Minnesota, not only of course in agriculture. That to me is
only a small minor percentage of the population, (unclear) but a good random sampling of all professions and occupations. And this is certainly not the stereotype.

Sanchez: Now is the stereotype are you talking about the idea that we think that Mexican-Americans have been and perhaps still are migrant, migrant farm workers?

Ramedo: Exactly. I also might add that perhaps as an outcome of this project other community leaders are beginning to ask the question, why not a film on the history of Mexican-Americans in this state? Another question, where is the book that should have been written sometime ago? So that there are a number of active community leaders that have begun to go above and beyond this pioneer stage.

Sanchez: Why don't we move a moment back to reminiscing a little bit about life in the west side of St. Paul where you lived. Maybe Cata, you could start out by telling us a little bit about your life at home and what some of the things were, discipline and how you went about your life.

Catalina: Well I had strict parents. I lived with my father and mother and two sisters and two brothers at home. There was a larger family, a family of twelve to begin with. I had two cousins living with us. And of course I was brought up to believe that you were not to go out without a chaperone, and you couldn't go out on a date unless you had somebody with you, your little brother or an older sister. It was very strict. But I managed to get out.

Sanchez: How about - you said chaperone - when you went to school or when you went to visit people? Did you always go as a family, as a group?

Catalina: We always went as a family. We were very close. Where one
went, everybody else went. However, most of the time we had company. We didn't visit as much as we were visited. That made it convenient.

Sanchez: Did you live in a big place?

Catalina: Yes, we had. . .Well in St. Paul we lived in several different places when we first move here. But when I was about fifteen my dad bought a four-plex. We lived in one, a three bedroom home, part of a four-plex.

Ramedo: This was on Chicago and Robertson Street on the west side.

Catalina: On the west side, right. At that time no one had to worry about anything. We knew all our neighbors. When we did go someplace we never locked doors.

Sanchez: Were your neighbors of Spanish descent or were there other ethnic groups living in that area?

Catalina: We had mostly Spanish or Mexican. I think we had only one Anglo family in one of the apartments. All the others were Mexican.

Ramedo: I might emphasize that it's a fact that this occurred every day of the year. No one on the west side that we knew locked their doors. We knew where everyone lived. We knew our neighbors by name, first name. We knew how many members of the family there were. We knew what each family owned. We knew if someone was riding a bike, we knew who it belonged to right away. So it was interesting in that respect. We didn't envy, you know, because no one had any more than we did. No one had any less than we did. So it was really an open. . .open in the sense of being open with one another, frank with one another and honest with each other and stealing was (not) condoned. We
just didn't think that there was such a thing as stealing. No one ever... This was pounded into our heads when we were small. "Don't ever take anyone else's things without permission." And we just didn't do it. And I am sure it was the same with her family. So we trusted each other automatically without even gaining that confidence and that trust.

Sanchez: What are some of the recollections you have of your youth, your early youth, Ramedo?

Ramedo: I spent my... My mother, a very religious woman, involved the family in all religious services at the Guadalupe parish church. My father, not so religious. And when I went to Mexico on a number of occasions I would see and look around in the church and I would see mothers with their children, but very few men. And I always recall my childhood and how my mother got me involved in serving mass. In fact I was an altar boy from the age of eight or nine till I went into the service. Till I was still going to college my life tended to revolve around the community, around the church activities.

Sanchez: This brings me of course to this point of activities. How about organizations? Did you as a family participate in some of the social organizations?

Ramedo: Practically all of the organizations. My father was involved with most of the organizations.

Sanchez: Could you name some perhaps?

Ramedo: The Reconstruction Committee. (Spanish) (unclear) My dad was involved and instrumental, attending meetings and participating actively in those organizations. In fact he was one of the original board of directors, signed for the mortgage
on the church. That was on Wabasha. When they bought the building on Fairfield (unclear) old mission to the building on Fairfield they needed co-signers for the note. And he was one of three, I believe.

Sanchez: As young people of different ages, of course, can you remember some of the ways you spent your time playing and where and how. There was no TV at the time.

Catalina: There wasn't any TV. We listened to the radio and we...or at least at my...I think mostly we entertained each other, talking, or we all learned to do some crocheting or this type of thing at home to keep entertained. And at my house we always had someone over. I don't think a day went by when we didn't have some neighbors or relatives or someone that would always come over.

Sanchez: How about you, Ramedo?

Ramedo: Well the playgrounds across the street from the church on Fairfield and Eva, we would go there and we would play marbles, big marble championship every year. We would compete. The object of course was to try to get the championship, and most of the kids were involved as I recall, at least the kids my age. And of course we would trade a lot of comic books. We would also go to the (unclear) There were a number of camping experiences through the Boy Scouts, the church had Troop 99 I belonged to. We went to camp. So all in all it was a very enjoyable childhood as far as I could see. My parents were very encouraging. But it always had to be someway, somehow always associated with the church.

Sanchez: Did you come to downtown St. Paul often?

Ramedo: Every day that I can remember my dad wanted a newspaper when he got home. I remember it cost a nickel. La Prenza. Over on Wabasha Street. So I would walk across the Wabasha Bridge almost
every day to get my dad's paper. After school I would do this.

Sanchez: Winter and summer?

Ramedo: Winter and summer. When my dad got home of course there were two things he wanted: one, to listen to the news on the little Philco Radio, and secondly, after supper to relax and read the newspaper. Come to think of it we spend more money socializing and going to restaurants and night clubs and formal entertainment, automobiles. And my dad had relatively simple interests for entertainment. He would have a couple of beers now and then, a bottle of wine maybe on payday.

I remember we used a charge at a local grocery store. For some reason he never, that I remember when I was young, he never paid up his debts. He would just walk over to the store and he would charge whatever he needed and on payday he would just pay off a certain amount. The bill always continued. When I got old enough though, I noticed some discrepancies in the bill and that's when we tried to encourage my dad to stop charging and pay cash if possible.

That was a time when charge accounts were non-existant. Cash was the thing. Today is you have cash, there must be something wrong with your credit rating. At that time if you didn't have cash you probably just didn't buy anything.

Sanchez: What do you mean with credit rating? Are you talking about credit cards?

Ramedo: Credit cards, yes. If you don't have credit cards today (unclear) your credit isn't any good.

Sanchez: You mean those little plastic gizmos?

Catalina: (Laughter) Right.

Sanchez: With the computerized numbers on them. Well they are here
to stay for a while. Well this was a delightful time here that we enjoyed together at the Audio-Visual Department at the Minnesota Historical Society Building by the state capitol in St. Paul, Minnesota on the sixth of April 1977. At twenty minutes to four we are completing this recording for the Mexican-American History Project. Muchas Gracias.

(End of interview)