

Interviewee: Jose Manuel Goyos
Interviewer: Miguel Gonzalez-Pando
Date: March 1997
FIU Number: 523

Jose Manuel Goyos = JMG

Manuel Gonzalez Pando = MGP

OK, I am rolling

MGP= Jose, estamos en el año [19]97 mas o menos, vamos air atras [19]87, [19]77, [19]67... tu estas ahora, de donde tu eres?

JMG= De Caibarien

MGP= I am sorry, we have to do it in English

JMG= In English, that's right, that's right. Caibarien

MGP= I have beautiful memories of Caibarien...

JMG= You've been there.

MGP= [inaudible 54:00] share with you

JMG= You know it's a small town. On the coast.

MGP= North of Las Villas. Of the coast, there is the most beautiful beaches in the keys, in the little islands, the Gulf of Caibarien. I used to go there to a place called Ensenachos

JMG= Como no... I have heard about it

MGP= Have you heard?

JMG= Sure. I don't remember what it was like, but.

MGP= Incredible beautiful. Varadero es un charquito

JMG= See, that's what I

MGP= Beautiful beaches, pristine waters

JMG= I know, people talk about Varadero and I went there and I don't think that much of it. I like Caibarien. [Laugh]

MGP= Of course in Caibarien they have the Cangrejos.

JMG= The town of Cangrejo, cangrejeros. I remember even seeing the crabs sometimes you'd see them out on the streets hanging around, having a good time with us.

JMG= Jose, do you remember tor the first time anyone mentioned anything about the possibility of sending you to the United States? Who told you that, how?

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JMG= [Thinking, trying to remember] I believe my mother mentioned it to me.

MGP= Wait, I am sorry. Preguntas mias no salen. Tu no puedes decir “mentioned it” because “it” has not been identified.

JMG= OK, so I can mention it OK.

MGP= Exacto. Mi madre era maestra, ella me decia cuando te digan cuantas patas tiene el gato, tu dices... el gato tiene cuatro patas

JMG= OK, Who mentioned about coming here and how it occurred. I have very distant recollection. I remember something about going to the United States, which to me was going... I don't know where, because I didn't really... I had no concept except it was north. To me going to Havana, which was the capital, is a big thrill. That was like going to heaven somewhere. So going to the United States with for an eight, nine year old kid was... I can't even describe it, because I had nothing to compare it to. I know that there was, I remember, that there was a certain amount of secrecy surrounding the going. That's basically it. There was my mom talking about it and what I recollect was basically, being told something about going there, going to school there and the next thing I know we took off to Havana. I remember being at a hotel with my mom. As a matter fact, I don't even recollect that my father was there, now that I am go back. From then there was the next day, going to the airport. To me, I was a child, to me was all like, I was all excited. I couldn't wait. It was a big thrill going there and going to the United States, which was, I guess, dying and going to heaven or something. The next thing I know, I was at the airport, I guess. I recollect a lot of the people that I interviewed on my research project talked about the “pesera.” This area which is you were kind of like in a fish tank. You are now separated from whomever from your parents or family and I really don't even recollect that that much. I remember walking to the plane and that was it.

MGP= Do you remember the last time you saw your mother? Saying goodbye?

JMG= I remember almost nothing of it that is interesting. I remember, she said something to me. A couple of things of being good and studying, and Lord knows I had to be told about being good, because I was pretty well known.

[break in recording 59:21-59:29]

JMG= I don't recollect specifically that kind of farewell or final goodbye. I've learned a thing about goodbye and farewell, which I'll tell you later what the difference that I learned from a friend of mine who is a professor at, a teacher at a Community College. I have a large distinction between goodbye and farewell. I don't recollect the specifics. I remember her saying something, be good or something of that effect. But again, like I mentioned, and several people said this to me that leaving was... for me was a big thrill. I was a nine-year-old kid. This was like I am going off, the Disney World kind of thing,

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and of course most of us, I would take probably most kids if not all kids thought that it was very temporary. I know a lot of kids were told, we will see you in a couple of weeks or months. It just you be good, we'll be there or you'll be back in general. Mostly you'll be right back. This is just very temporary. Because, of course, Castro was not gonna stay there very long.

MGP= Were you aware at all of the political context within which all of this was happening?

JMG= Not really, I was aware, I remember when there was fighting in Caibarien. When the Castro folks were driving out the Batista people and I remember hearing shots and firing. I remember people talking about what was going on in the country and there was fighting in different areas. I remember the shooting and stuff. I still recollect that. Other than that. Not really. Not really what it all meant. I really didn't know per se why I was leaving. A lot of people their kids were younger, I think, understood or knew or had some idea. I had no idea that it really had to do with a lot of parents also being concerned about kids having to go to jail... to jail too probably jail [laugh], kids having to go to the armed service. Which is something that apparently had never happened in Cuba. So I was completely ignorant, this was this was like summer camp. Going off to summer camp. The long summer camp.

MGP= The trip on the plane?

JMG= I remember that, Pan American I remember. Boy was quickie, was kind of in and out. From what I was told there was a quick, less than an hour if I remember. Then we were here. I don't... a lot of people, of the people that I interviewed and have talked with, remember being told about "Ask for George" or that the key a key word was George. This person, George, they ask for when you go. I don't recollect any of that whole honesty. I recollect a just coming and the next thing I knew, I was on a.

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