

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with
GILBERTO RODRIGUEZ

July 16, 1986

at
Toltec Cafe
Alpine, Texas

By Scott Ellsworth
Abstracted by Vanessa Broussard
For the Marlboro Oral History Project
Interview #24

Archives Center
National Museum of American History
Smithsonian Institution

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GILBERTO RODRIGUEZ

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

At the time of the interview Gilberto M. Rodriguez was the proprietor of the Toltec Bar.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The interview focuses on the Toltec Bar, located in Alpine, Texas. Major topics include: race relations, various types of music and law enforcement.

The interview was conducted in the Toltec Bar in Alpine, Texas.

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Abstract of Interview with Gilberto Rodriguez, July 16, 1986,
Toltec Cafe, Alpine, Texas.
Interviewer: Scott Ellsworth

Tape 1, Side 1

:30 Spanish music in background

BACKGROUND OF TOLTEC CAFE

1:10 Gilberto Rodriguez is the proprietor of the Toltec Cafe. He started out leasing the bar from Manuel Consalzes who died about fourteen years ago. Consalzes was ninety years old when he died and he owned the bar about fifty years. The front part of the bar is about sixty years old and is made of adobe.

2:40 Anheuser-Busch Companies Inc. filmed a commercial for L. A. Beer in the Toltec Bar and scenes from the movie Slyvester were also filmed there.

6:30 DESCRIPTION OF CLIENTELE

Most of the people who come to the bar are Anglo-American, and there are also some Blacks and Chicanos. Rodriguez does not remember any racial problems.

7:50 Dan Blocker used to go to school in the area and he was a bouncer at the bar.

DISCUSSION OF MUSIC PLAYED IN BAR

11:20 Rodriguez puts his own music in the jukebox because the person who owns the jukebox does

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not really keep music updated. The most popular group for Chicano teenagers in the area is the Tortilla Factory. They play mostly Mexican music but it is more like Rock & Roll. The bands that usually play in the bar cater to the clientele.

COMPETITION WITH LOCAL BARS

- 16:40 There are three bars operating on the south side: the Chatperell, the B. F. W. Post and the Stagebarn. On the north side there is the Crystal Bar for cowboys.
- 18:40 Rodriguez does not have a bouncer because he does not feel that he needs one. Occassionally people are asked not to come into the bar because of poor conduct.
- Rodriguez states that he does place a limit on how much the bar can be changed to meet the needs of a film crew. The tables in the bar are handmade so Rodriguez does not let anyone change them.
- 23:00 Rodriguez does not sell food or hard liquor. There is no charge to rent a room for private parties; however, the person giving the party must bring his own set-ups and buy beer from Rodriguez.
- 23:55 The Marlboro account group paid \$350.00 a day to rent the bar.

FUTURE PLANS FOR THE TOLTEC BAR

- 24:30 Rodriguez envisions making one of the rooms a disco for college students. The front part

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of the bar will always be the same.

26:25

Consalzes told Rodriguez that he did not have to buy the bar because when he died it would be his. Consalzes felt that Rodriguez had been the only one successful in running the bar and he was the only one who strived to preserve the bar as it was.

29:25

Rodriguez started running the bar in 1975. Prior to this time it was leased to Chuck Maxwell. Consalzes became dissatisfied with Maxwell when he started changing things around. In 1982, Rodriguez returned to the area. Consalzes asked him to run the bar again.

Tape 1, Side 2

DISCUSSION OF LAW ENFORCEMENT

The chief of police is a Mexican American.

Illegal aliens have come to the bar but as far as Rodriguez knows the border patrol has never come.

Rodriguez states that he likes to help people who come to the bar. Not only is he a bartender but he is doctor, wife, father, and mother. People tend to confide in him. He states that he has even bailed people out of jail.

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