

**Oral History Interview of
Ruben Caro**

**Interviewed by: Daniel Sánchez
July 12, 2018
Lubbock, Texas**

**Part of the:
*African American Interview Series***

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Transcription Notes:

Interviewer: Daniel Sanchez

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Interview Series Background:

The African-American Oral History Collection documents the diverse perspectives of the African-American people of Lubbock and the South Plains. These interviews and accompanying manuscript materials cover a myriad of topics including; early Lubbock, segregation, discrimination, politics, education, music, art, cultural celebrations, the May 11th 1970 tornado, commerce, and sport.

Transcript Overview:

This interview features Ruben Caro as he discusses early Lubbock, His church, and his wife.

Length of Interview: 00:45:21

Subject

The city of Lubbock
Pastoring a church
The stars in the country
Working on a farm
His wife; playing music for the church

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Time Stamp

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00:11:17
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Keywords

Lubbock Texas, Family Life and Background, Religion

Ruben Caro (RC):

I think we'll start on the city of Lubbock. I couldn't remember the streets. We was talking about from east Lubbock to west Lubbock.

Daniel Sanchez (DS):

Okay. Let me put my header on here and that way we can let everybody know who we are. My name is Daniel Urbina Sanchez. I'm in the home of Ruben Caro. This is July 12, 2018. This is the second interview in a series of interviews that we're going to do with Mr. Caro. Thank you so much. You're willing to jump into and start talking about the city of Lubbock and the streets that you had forgotten last time.

RC:

Yes, I'm Ruben Caro, and I forgot the streets, some of them. So, when we were—from east Lubbock to west Lubbock, we would go down 17th Street because 23rd Street and 17th Street were the two streets that would go [phone rings] to west Lubbock. That's the phone in the bathroom, I think. Sorry about the phone that's coming in. It's in the bathroom, I think.

DS:

I thought I heard it over here. Oh yeah, you're right.

RC:

Just a minute. [Pause] And I would—we had to go from east Lubbock to west Lubbock, and the only streets we had that would go to—through streets was 23rd and 17th Street. We'd go down 17th Street and go over to 16th Street and go to College Avenue. At that time, College Avenue—now is University. And we had to go to 16th Street to go to Littlefield because we didn't have other streets that would go all the way through. Broadway and 16th Street, then we'd come over to 84th Street. But now we have different ways to go to Littlefield. And we would go to Plainview. We'd have to go down Avenue H, and Avenue H runs into the street they called—I remember the Drive. [Stutters] Municipal.

DS:

Oh, Municipal Drive?

RC:

Municipal Drive. We'd go down Municipal Drive and we'd go across and turn where the old dog pound used to be and go under that underpass. Municipal Drive would continue where it is now. But at that time, we had to go around to Plainview from Avenue H and go into that way to go to Plainview. But now we have different ways to go. That's a blessing. As I said I had worked a lot at night in—at the oil mill. I worked at the oil mill a lot of different positions. The other time I talked, I couldn't think about the last position I had worked. It was the solvent plant. That's

where you turn solids into liquid. It would get the last oil out of the mill at the solvent plant. And that was interesting. So, I also wanted to talk about different things that I learned and worked at in the church. Brother Miller [?] who introduced the Church of God and Christ to West Texas. And I was under three pastors. In Ralls, Texas, I was under Pastor Stuart. And we come to West Texas—I mean, not West Texas—I'd come to Lubbock in 1946. The pastor—the church on Ash Street—at the time was called Avenue A, A and 21st Street, he was Pastor Cartier [?]. Pastor Cartier. It was Pastor Ford. Pastor Ford was the pastor of the Ash Street church. And when urban renewal became involved, they said we didn't have no parking space. So, we couldn't build on 21st and Avenue A because the city had changed their rules, the city code. At that time, the city code was three feet from the next property line. But the city had changed their city code and had to be five feet for the next person's property line. So we didn't have that much space. And we had—the city had changed their code. You had to have a space for—and every pew had to have enough space and have parking spaces where each person would have enough space. So, a lot of changes was made because urban renewal had a city code. Some parts of that building was—they said it was sub-standard two-by-fours. You had to have whole a two-by-four go from top to bottom. So some of those two-by-fours over—they called it substandard because some of those two-by-fours was pitched out from the bottom to the top. So, we had to have another building. So I think it was about 1964. We might've found a place over across on 19th Street—down 19th Street. The street was called Quirt, whereas now it's called MLK, which is Martin Luther King, Boulevard. And we found that church and was from the—16th and MLK. And we bought that building over there, which is—now they call it Ford Memorial Church. So, when Ford passed away, Bishop J.E. Alexander took charge as pastor, and we served under Bishop Alexander for a little while. I pastored—I started ministering—preaching in the seventies, when I got ordained under Bishop J.E. Alexander. When I started pastoring, they appointed me to a church in Sudan, Texas. And I pastored over there at Sudan. We would drive from Lubbock to Sudan on Sunday morning and minister over there in Sudan, Texas. After a while, the church became vacant in Littlefield, Texas. In Littlefield, I pastored over there in Littlefield, Texas. One Sunday I would go to Sudan then the next Sunday I would go to Littlefield, went back and forth until I just wound up only pastoring in Littlefield. And then some people was coming to Littlefield—from Lubbock to Littlefield. After a while—back in the late seventies, gas was—we thought it was high when it started up to seventy and eighty cents a gallon. So, we went to Littlefield and I started looking for a building in Lubbock so the people wouldn't have to drive over there to Littlefield to have service. So we started another ministry in Lubbock, Texas. And there I pastored in Littlefield and Lubbock. One church—one Sunday we'd go to Littlefield and one Sunday we'd go to Lubbock. Found the building here in Lubbock. We found a house, and we had two houses. So, I put one house on the back of the other and we made a fellowship hall in the other house. It was a lot of work, but Lord blessed up to make it. We pastored here in Lubbock and the membership grew.

DS:

Can you tell me where that was located?

RC:

4117 East 2nd Street. It's still—the building is still there where we are now. 4117 East 2nd Street. We invite everyone to come and visit with us. We have a good time. It's on East 2nd Street and Peach [Avenue]. You can see it right here.

DS:

You just keep going up north, huh?

RC:

Go down north. Go down the Loop to 4th Street and turn on Peach Street and you run right into the building. We are still there. And we have a good time in the service on Sunday morning. So, then when I gave up the church in Littlefield, the bishop appointed another pastor in Littlefield and I was only pastoring in Lubbock. During that time, the congregation wasn't large enough for me to stop working on my regular job. So I was still working at the oil mill. I worked in the oil mill, and I worked a lot at night. Believe or not, when I was working, I would notice the elements. From a child, I would learn about the stars. In those days, we would pray out in the yard in the country. At that time, I imagine I could find the Milky White way [0:17:53]. Have you ever heard about the Milky White way in the elements?

DS:

Um-hm.

RC:

The North Star. All about the North Star. The Big Dipper. In those days, in the country, we didn't have running water. We had to get a bucket, about a two-gallon bucket, and leave it in the kitchen, and everybody would drink out of the dipper. We wasn't dependent on glasses and cups too much. But everybody who wanted to drink the water, you drank out of the dipper. That's where we learned about the—in the sky, we have the Little Dipper and the Big Dipper. Did you find—you seen in the sky? The Big Dipper and the Little Dipper. At that time, we'd learn—what'd they say, talk about? Saturn and Jupiter and a few more. I think you can find some more now, but we didn't know very many. What they said was Saturn and Jupiter. Believe or not, I did see the star, what they called David Star. You ever see the David Star?

DS:

I don't think I have.

RC:

They don't—it is something else to see. I don't know whether you will be living to see it because the news even didn't say very much about it. When I watched the news, they wasn't saying much about it. But finally they did say something about the David Star. I think it was back in the 1970s. Finally said something about it. And they said it's supposed to come around about every seventy-five years. So I tell the young people now, "Watch for that David Star." It is really something to see. It's so bright. It's so bright. When somebody takes pictures and that camera flash, that's similar to how bright that David Star is. When the thunderstorm is coming and you see that—we call it that chain lightning, how bright that lightning is, that is similar to how bright the David Star is. When you see it on the picture, pictures don't give it justice. That David Star is bright like the lightning's bright. It's very, very interesting and fascinating to see. What else? You can stop it a while.

DS:

Yeah, we can. [Pause in recording] Go ahead and start.

RC:

I thank the Lord for the time I lived. I can say thank the Lord I lived in the—what I called the horse and buggy days. I worked early in my childhood. I learned how to milk a cow before I was school-age. I know that I learned how to feed the horses and chickens when I was a little child. We had chickens, and guineas, goose [sic], and turkeys. We had to gather eggs. In the afternoon, all the children had chores to do. Some had to milk the cows, and some had to feed the chickens. After a while, the chicken hen would lay the eggs and my mother would know when the chicken is about to sit—means the chicken will sit on the eggs [stutters] and incubate those eggs and cause them to hatch. When that chicken hen sits on the eggs and the mother would know how many eggs to put under each chicken. They would hatch those chicks and they grow up more chickens and more chickens. When that chicken gets so big, that's what you call a frying-sized chicken. We have chickens for dinner on Sunday when you have—so many times you have chicken killed and cooked. We had to make the water hot and we had to learn to pick those chickens, take the feathers off of them. My mother knew how to cut different parts of that chicken so that all of us children would have a piece of chicken. There was ten of us in the family and we all had pieces of chicken to eat on Sunday when that chicken gets big enough to eat. That was a good time we had eating on Sunday dinner. But a turkey is different. The turkey does not want you to bother him with his nest. But we had to have the strategy to watch the turkey, because the turkey will lay a nest in the woods. He don't want nobody to bother his nest. We watched the turkey hen and the turkey hen is watching us. We had to be wise enough to not to let that turkey know that we were watching. So when they go to lay their eggs, he'd make his nest in the woods. When they lay their eggs, they come back to the rest of the herd. But we had to take the eggs out of the nest and not let our hand smell—don't—where that egg was. If your hand smell is in that nest, the turkey would move their nest where you won't know where it is.

So we'd have to have a stick and rake that egg out of the nest and put some little rock in his nest similar to the eggs, and the turkey will keep on laying eggs in that same nest. When that turkey starts to setting—where you want to hatch the most turkeys. So, my mother had to watch that turkey when he comes to get water or food, then you put those eggs back into the nest. When that turkey sits over those eggs, he would incubate those eggs. And we'd have some little turkeys back in the herd. So that was a lot of fun. Sometimes it'd be like fun and sometimes it's not so much fun. But that was in those days. Yes. We had a lot going on in my life. I was born in 1932. Now it is 2018. I've been involved with a lot of people, some with nice and some was not so nice. But we worked together. I got married in 1932. Me and my wife worked together in the church. After I learned to play music, my wife was involved with the choir. Somebody—we couldn't know how arrange a song. Thank the Lord I was able to figure out how the song went. I heard of a home and I heard of a place. So, we were able to figure out that song because nobody in the choir had musical ability to how the song would go. But thank the Lord I was able to help the choir on that song. And down through the years, we worked together and my wife was over the youth department. At that time, we had a lot of children. My daughter was with the children in the choir, and they worked and they was able to enjoy themselves in the choir. But now it's a new day. My daughter is gone and has children, and my granddaughter stays with me now. We are able to have a good time together, and it's thanks to the Lord. When we grew up in the church. I've been in the church practically all of my life. During the time of when I was eighteen or nineteen, I started running around and kind of having my own way with life. I guess the Devil was trying to take me out because I didn't—the Lord blessed me to see this time. I can say as such a time as this, the Lord has spared my life. I think I've been a blessing to other people through my life. We had deacons in the church. Brother Frederick and Brother Crockett was deacons when we first moved to Lubbock in 1946. When Ellar [?] Ford was pastor—and he was a superintendent of the district. When Brother Frederick and Brother Crockett and a few more did not accept Ellar Ford as being the pastor, we—we had different groups. Some accept Ellar Ford as being pastor and some of the members did not accept Ellar Ford as being the pastor of the church. That went on for a while. We went to court and a lot of things happened. But during that time, finally, the courts ruled in our favor, which is Ellar Ford should be the pastor of the church. And that's how the church—they called it the number two church. Now it's called Christ Temple. They built their own church. I guess that's the way the Lord would have it, that members was saved in Christ Temple. What they called number one was just Ford Memorial. It's still going on. Thank the Lord. Lord has had his way of doing things. Members was still saved and sanctified according to the will of the Lord. [Phone rings and RC answers] Hello? [Pause in recording]

DS:

Are you ready?

RC:

I don't have much more to say, I don't think.

DS:

Okay. Well, if you want to stop there we can. It's up to you.

RC:

Can you play it back on there?

DS:

Huh?

RC:

Can you play it back?

DS:

Well, not on this, no. This is not setup play. I have to go through my computer.

RC:

Okay. [Pause in recording]

DS:

Well, if you're ready to start.

RC:

Doris Caro is my wife. We worked together in the church for a long time. We married in 1952. We was married until 2016. That's a lot of years. One while, Sister Doris Caro was the president of the choir. And some time I was president of the choir. Years and years we worked together. Sometimes I would play the piano, and she knew how to play the piano. Sister Caro learned how to play the organ, finally. In the years past, the Church of God and Christ didn't have no organ. Back in the late fifties, early sixties, they were able to buy an organ and Sister Haynes taught Sister Caro how to play the organ. Then Sister Caro taught me how to play the organ. So, we had to learn how to play music together. Sister Caro and I worked in the church together. She would play the piano and I would play the organ. We worked together in the church and we thank the Lord for that experience. When I started pastoring, it was still the same thing. She would play the music and sometimes we would play the music together. I thank the Lord for that experience because it was a beautiful experience. We played together, we sang together, we helped the choir learn songs together. And I think friends and loved ones enjoyed that experience because Sister Caro liked to sew. She was a good cook. She'd make different kinds of materials, like shawls and different things. She would make little whatnots to hang on the walls in the kitchen. Sometimes

she would sell them for the church benefit. Sister Caro would—there was women in the church and they'd have bake sales, like cakes and pies. Sometimes they'd have—what do they call—country dinner. We'd have farms to help the church to carry on its lessons. We'd go on and have the experience of what the Lord wanted us to do. When we had the church on Ash Street—by the baking—and Brother Adams was a deacon at the church. But Brother Adams talked so low you couldn't hear him tell what he's talking about. But we made it by the help of the Lord. We moved on Quirt Street, which is now called MLK. We had a beautiful experience, and the Lord blessed us time and time again. The Lord is still blessing us throughout our generation. Lord has blessed us. Now our grandchildren are married. My grandson has families. So, we can believe God all of these experiences where the Lord has brought us to. He's still doing what the Lord wants us to do. Day by day we're trying to do the will of the Lord and doing what the Lord wants us to do, day by day, because the Lord is God and he is my strength, and he is my salvation, blessed be the name of the Lord.

DS:
Okay.

RC:
You can stop it here.

DS:
Okay.

End of Recording

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