

**Oral History Interview of
Pete F. Navarrette**

**Interviewed by: Daniel Sanchez
July 14, 2015
Lubbock, Texas**

**Part of the:
*Lubbock History***

© Southwest Collection/
Special Collections Library



TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY

**Southwest Collection/
Special Collections Library**

15th and Detroit | 806.742.3749 | <http://swco.ttu.edu>

Copyright and Usage Information:

An oral history release form was signed by Pete F. Navarrette on July 14, 2015. This transfers all rights of this interview to the Southwest Collection/Special Collections Library, Texas Tech University.

This oral history transcript is protected by U.S. copyright law. By viewing this document, the researcher agrees to abide by the fair use standards of U.S. Copyright Law (1976) and its amendments. This interview may be used for educational and other non-commercial purposes only. Any reproduction or transmission of this protected item beyond fair use requires the written and explicit permission of the Southwest Collection. Please contact Southwest Collection Reference staff for further information.

Preferred Citation for this Document:

Navarrette, Pete F. Oral History Interview, July 14, 2015. Interview by Daniel Sanchez, Online Transcription, Southwest Collection/Special Collections Library. URL of PDF, date accessed.

The Southwest Collection/Special Collections Library houses over 6,300 oral history interviews dating back to the late 1940s. The historians who conduct these interviews seek to uncover the personal narratives of individuals living on the South Plains and beyond. These interviews should be considered a primary source document that does not implicate the final verified narrative of any event. These are recollections dependent upon an individual's memory and experiences. The views expressed in these interviews are those only of the people speaking and do not reflect the views of the Southwest Collection or Texas Tech University.

The transcribers and editors of this document strove to create an accurate and faithful transcription of this oral history interview. However, this document may still contain mistakes. Spellings of proper nouns and places were researched thoroughly, but readers may still find inaccuracies, inaudible passages, homophones, and possible malapropisms. Any words followed by "[?]" notates our staff's best faith efforts. We encourage researchers to compare the transcript to the original recording if there are any questions. Please contact the SWC/SCL Reference department for access information. Any corrections or further clarifications may be sent to the A/V Unit Manager.

Technical Processing Information:

The Audio/Visual Department of the Southwest Collection is the curator of this ever-growing oral history collection and is in the process of digitizing all interviews. While all of our interviews will have an abbreviated abstract available online, we are continually transcribing and adding information for each interview. Audio recordings of these interviews can be listened to in the Reading Room of the Southwest Collection. Please contact our Reference Staff for policies and procedures. Family members may request digitized copies directly from Reference Staff.

Consult the Southwest Collection website for more information.

<http://swco.ttu.edu/Reference/policies.php>

Recording Notes:

Original Format: Born Digital Audio

Digitization Details: N/A

Audio Metadata: 96kHz/ 24bit WAV file

Further Access Restrictions: N/A

Related Interviews:

Transcription Notes:

Interviewer: Daniel Sanchez

Audio Editor: N/A

Transcription: Elizabeth Groening

Editor(s): Kayci Rush

Transcript Overview:

This interview features Pete Navarrette. In this interview, Navarrette discusses his early life and family, the steps he took that led him to become a barber, and the local history of Lubbock, Texas.

Length of Interview: 00:28:51

Subject	Transcript Page	Time Stamp
Background and family	5	00:00:28
Previous jobs and becoming a barber	10	00:10:27
Past Lubbock, his children, and his retirement	13	00:16:28
Ventura-Flores family connection	16	00:19:07
His business and how Lubbock has changed over the years	28	00:22:52

© Southwest Collection/
Special Collections Library

Keywords

Lubbock Texas, family life and background, barbershop

Daniel Sanchez (DS):

My name is Daniel Sanchez. Today's date is July the 14, 2015. I'm in Lubbock, Texas at the barber shop of Pete f. Navarrette?

Pete Navarrette (PN):

Navarrette.

DS:

Navarrette, yeah, sorry about that. Pete, can you please state your complete legal name?

PN:

Pedro Flores Navarrette.

DS:

Okay, and tell us when and where you were born.

PN:

I was born here in Lubbock in 1948 and I grew up in Guadalupe Neighborhood.

DS:

Okay, well let's start a little bit about your—tell us your dad's name and then your mom's name.

PN:

Well, my mom's name is—her maiden was Ablose Flores and my dad's name was Modesto Navarrette. And my dad's side of the family, they came from Barstow, Texas close to Pecos and I'm assuming from what she told me that her grandpa came from either Alpine or somewhere coastal over there *tambien* [**also**]. And, I don't know, what year but she was born here too, my mom was and my dad was born in Barstow.

DS:

What was your dad's occupation?

PN:

Well, he was a barber back in the—I think he got started right after World War II. I think with his VA [**Veteran's Association**] loan he got—he went to school at first he was going to take his business management but things got too hard for him since he never went to school. So, he stayed on that loan—he went to barber school and got his barber license and started to work for Roy Binskin, which his wife used to be a teacher in the Guadalupe neighborhood. School was back then was on Avenue N and he moved, he sold his house to my father, and him and I think his name was Alberto Gonzales, were co-owners. They bought it from Roy Binskin.

DS:

Oh.

PN:

And they started running that barber shop back in the fifties. [Laughs]

DS:

Back in the fifties. You mention that he had a GI form, so did your dad serve in World War II?

PN:

Yeah, he was a veteran.

DS:

Did he ever talk about that time?

PN:

Not very much. [Laughs]

DS:

Not very much. Yeah, a lot of people didn't share those stories, did they?

PN:

No, he said he was—I think he said he was a medic? But, he never talked that much about the war.

DS:

So, do you know anything about where he served or anything like that?

PN:

Just nothing definite but I think he was in Alaska. He served in Alaska.

DS:

Wow.

PN:

But, that's about all I know about his—

DS:

That's about all you know?

PN:

--military history.

DS:

Wow. So, you mention he had that barber shop and your mother, how many brothers and sisters do you have?

PN:

I have two brothers, Modesto and Fred and my brother cuts hair too. And I had four sisters but now I got three because my older sister, Margaret, died of breast cancer when she was fifty-nine. And I have three other sisters which is, Helita, and Sandia (Sanni), and Gloria and they're still living.

DS:

Do they all live in the Lubbock area?

PN:

No, Sanni lives in Missouri. I think it's Salem, Missouri? And Angie lives in—Helita lives in Slaton, and Gloria lives here in Lubbock.

DS:

Okay. You know, we were talking about your dad opening up this shop in the 1950's; did he talk about what it was like—his business was like when he opened it up?

PN:

Well, back then was a lot of migrant workers that came from the valley and South Texas and he did a lot or work like on weekends. But during the weeks they were at work and it was slow during the week but like on Fridays and Saturdays, I think they opened from about seven in the morning until about ten at night, and eight o'clock on Sunday until about six that afternoon. So, that's when he made money.

DS:

Wow. And you know, given that you were his son, did you go in there, when you were a kid and watch him work?

PN:

Yeah, yeah. I used to shine shoes there. And we had a lot of people that came like, in big trucks, tandems trucks from the fields and he did haircuts and shaves and he had a shower that he charged fifty cents for them to take a bath, for the towels and stuff. And I shined the shoes [Laughs]. Yeah, that was back—maybe I was about eight or nine years old, seven.

DS:

So, it would've been late fifties?

PN:

Yeah.

DS:

What was Lubbock like or the barrio like at that time?

PN:

Well, it's mostly dirt roads. And the kid—we are like on—street lights there's about three or four families or five that gather out their kids at night and play under the light like different kind of games like, kick the can, and freeze tag, and stuff like that, until my mom would yell, "Come in; it's time to go to bed!" You know, until about ten at night. But, we were mostly outside playing.

DS:

Which kids or families did you hang out with when you were younger?

PN:

There was Condillo family, Santiago family, Gonzales family, and the Ostados, the Sosas, and mostly in around that block. But, we played together.

DS:

Yeah, and you know, given that time I think that's about the time they started the Northern Little League. Did y'all play any baseball with—

PN:

Yeah, we used to play. Me and my brother played for the Jets. There was four different teams. It was Jets, the Flashes, Los Capitancias, and I forgot the other one. I remember the color but I don't remember the name. [Laughter] It was blue.

DS:

You remember who your coach was?

PN:

Lugo, Roberto Lugo.

DS:

Okay.

PN:

Yeah. A store that we used to go buy coke for all the time for a nickel. Sell a little barrel of pecans for a nickel, except I'd have a nickel in it, [DS laughs] so it was free. And there was Huertas, a little grocery store. Cinco de Mayo. There was this man on fourth street—I mean on Avenue N where we lived but further south; they used to make a lot of chicharrones which was Jose Gonzales, and about half a block south from them was Lo Garcia's. There was a little store close to—on Spur Street close to N. His name was Savez, Jose Savez and Dona Sanita she was Zuniga, she was a Zuniga. She had a store on Avenue L, *tambien*. When some of those stores pop over I'm—it's only worth most of these stores.

DS:

Where these stores separate from the house or were they part of there residence?

PN:

No, it's like, Huertas had the house to the back and Zuni had that the store was to the front of the house. The house was to the back and the little store was one room to the front. Same for Savez, same for Gonzales and Garcia's, yeah. We used to play at Guadalupe Park. I guess it's still the name of it, right?

DS:

Yeah, I think so.

PN:

On Avenue P. And the church was like a Catholic church, we all went. It's just like a _____ [0:08:43]. People were—they'd go to the new one. The school, like I said, was on Avenue N, which was Guadalupe Street. There was a teacher there I remember, Ms. Beauford, but her maiden name was Rachel and she used to show us how to dance _____ [0:09:07] and then we played like that. I didn't know a lick of English before I went to school. I only talked Spanish. When we started going to school like what is he doing? What is he saying?

DS:

About how long did it take to catch on?

PN:

I don't know, maybe second grade or latter part of the first grade. There was no head starts or nothing like that back then. It was first, second, third. Then from grade school, well it was still grade school, but we moved from—after you finished third grade, you go to Sanders, which is on Avenue T and Third Street. That was from fourth to sixth, then from sixth to ninth was Colonel Thompson. After that, in high school was Lubbock High. But I never finished. I got out at ninth

grade at Thompson. Much later, I had to go back and get a GED to get in this position. Whether you like it or not, you got to go to school.

DS:

[Laughs] You said, "later," so what did you do during your teen years when you first got out and started your own life?

PN:

Well then, when I dropped out of school, I started working at laundry. I used to work at Acne Laundry. It is on 19th—well say 20th and Avenue S. I worked there for a couple of years and then from there, we went to Dr Pepper. We used to—bottling company, which was on North Q. Just, you know, jobs. Low paying jobs. That's all we knew. Labor work.

DS:

So when did you decide and go ahead and follow your dad's footsteps, and—

PN:

Well I had a chance when I dropped out of school, but I didn't want to be barber, which my brother did. He got him out of school, the ninth grade, and he sent him to school to be a barber. He's been at it a lot longer than I have, but I didn't want to be a barber so I just did labor work. What brought me to cutting hair was I was working at WW Steel, and I was in an accident, industrial accident, and I had surgery on my back and got nine screws on my back. And the doctor ordered me to not do that kind of work anymore. He said, I got to return, and do something easy. It can't be easy to go back to that kind of work, so I guess you run from God, but whatever he says you're going to do, you're going to do. [DS laughs] So I'm here doing it. Like I said, I had to back to school, get my GED and get into this line of work, which wasn't very hard at all. I think in a couple of months, I got my GED after going to Matthew's over here. I had a real good teacher. Her name was Anne Bacon, and that was to a good will. She helped a lot, but I still had to come over here to Matthew's to get my test for my GED. I got it and started going to barber school. And I've been doing this for, let's see, eighteen years now. I ran from it, but I'm here.

DS:

So when you first started working, did you work for your dad or for somebody else?

PN:

I was working for my brother. That didn't last too long. Siblings can't get along, [laughter] so I worked, maybe for him, I worked three months. I worked longer for Flores, Julia Flores. I worked for them, kind of like nine months, then my father helped me get this place, where I'm at right now on Colgate. Of course, I didn't want a neighborhood business, but he said, "The

neighborhood's big and you can make your living there." I wanted downtown, somewhere I could charge some more, [DS laughs] but he said, "There's people there and you can make a living there."

DS:

I guess so because you're still here.

PN:

Yeah, it's been sixteen years ago.

DS:

Well I guess he was right, huh?

PN:

Yeah.

DS:

Is your dad still alive?

PN:

No, he died. I'm not good on dates, but he died maybe, what? About eight years ago? Been eight years?

Pete Jr:

We can look it up.

PN:

Yeah, he died.

Pete Jr:

Been longer than that.

DS:

So what have you learned since you've been in business in the *barrio* [**neighborhood**] for eighteen years?

PN:

How to be patient. [Laughter] How to be dedicated. Don't lose focus on what you're doing.

DS:

How has the neighborhood changed since you've been here? Have you noticed anything?

PN:

I look at it the same. I mean, they say before I got here, it was real violent, but I never had no problems here. People are good. There's a lot of drugs around the place, but I mean, you don't mess with them, they don't mess with you. What does it say?

Pete Jr:

11/15/2002.

PN:

Two-thousand two? That'd be fifteen years?

Pete Jr:

Going on thirteen.

PN:

Thirteen?

DS:

Yeah.

PN:

My mistake.

DS:

Yeah, a few more years.

PN:

Yeah, and I don't know. I see the neighborhood like, it's a good neighborhood because it was similar to what I grew up in and I'm used to this. It don't surprise me or nothing bad.

DS:

So do you still have a lot of friends back in barrio in the Guadalupe neighborhood?

PN:

A lot of them are dead.

© Southwest Collection/
Special Collections Library

DS:

A lot of them are dead?

PN:

Yeah, because I'm already sixty-seven and a lot of them that I knew have died already. And it's mostly focused on raising a family, and the needs of a family, and I don't socialize much with the outer world. I'm more oriented in around the house, and the family, and the needs of the kids. That's about what I do. I don't drink. I don't do that no more.

DS:

So are you married?

PN:

Oh yeah, I've been married, going on forty years.

DS:

Forty years. What's your wife's name?

PN:

Irma.

DS:

Irma. When did y'all meet?

PN:

That's when I used to go out clubbing and stuff. A long time ago. [Laughter] And we met at a dance.

DS:

What places were available forty years ago when you were out going out?

PN:

It was quite a few. There was a Gutina bar, there was The Fiesta, there was El Padrinos, El Puntoriso. There was a lot of places that we'd go pass a Saturday night, get drunk.

DS:

Were there any good music spots?

PN:

I think I just mentioned them. [Laughs]

DS:

Okay, and who were some of the musicians you'd listen to back then?

PN:

Back then was Little Zoe, and Sunny _____ [0:17:01.1], and _____ [0:17:03.7] Ramirez. Mostly that kind of music. There was Ruen Vamos.

DS:

A few of those are still going around, aren't they?

PN:

Yes, they're still around. I don't know if they do _____ [0:17:17] anymore, but they still perform so I guess they're okay.

DS:

You mentioned your wife, the one you have been married to now for forty years. How many children do y'all have?

PN:

We have two. Raquella and Encino, but I had two from my previous marriage, whose name is Harvey, and Sophie. I grew them up. She helped me grow them up. I had two kids when I met her and she didn't have any.

DS:

You mentioned Pete Jr. He's now a barber. Did he go straight into it or was he like you? Did he go do something else first and then come back?

PN:

Yeah, he did something else, but he ran real quick because he don't like hard work. [Laughter]
How long did you work with Harvey and them?

Pete Jr:

Eight months.

PN:

Eight months. I did it for about twenty years.

DS:

Wow.

PN:

Yeah, maybe longer.

Pete Jr:

And that'd be off the record.

PN:

No, it's recording. [Laughter]

DS:

It's going.

Pete Jr:

Off record. You know like, working hard.

PN:

No, I don't.

Pete Jr:

No, I'm talking about [crosstalk] [0:18:26].

DS:

You're dogging him. You're dogging your son.

PN:

I call it as it is.

Pete Jr:

Off the record. [Laughter]

DS:

He really is a hard working young man. I've seen him.

PN:

Yeah, he's dedicated. He does good work.

DS:

So how long has your son worked for you here? Or have y'all worked together? I think you're retired more, aren't you now?

PN:

I'm retired. I do this just part time.

Pete Jr:

I Started in late 2006.

DS:

Two-thousand and six, wow. Going on nine years. You mentioned some of that history earlier about the Ventura-Flores family and all that. Can you talk about that connection?

PN:

I only know what my mom told me. It was already mentioned, but as far as what she told me, was that they were one of the first Hispanic family to come into this region along with the Hitadoes and the Zuniga's. That's about all I know, how he got the property that he had.

DS:

Well, tell us that. We didn't get that on tape. Go ahead and tell us how that came about.

PN:

This is from down the line, grapevine. She said that he had a—him and his family came and he had a wagon. It was either an ox or a mule. They came from Alpine, Texas, and he pit it off right here in Lubbock, in the Guadalupe neighborhood for an acre of land. One of his sons cut hair without license, but he liked to cut hair, which was Julio Flores and he was one of the first business owners, as far as barbing went, here in Lubbock. He had two barber shops. He had his sons working for him too which was Julian and Manuel, and later, a grandson, Edward, who's— they're all dead now, but they all used to cut hair every weekend.

DS:

Where was their barbershops at?

PN:

One was across the street from my dad's, which was—my dad's barbershop was Modern Barbershop. Theirs was Flores. This was on T, then on F, then across the street, a block over, he had another barbershop they called El Sotoranmo. You know, you had to go down in there. He lived, did a little bootlegging on the side and he cut hair. Whatever it took to make a living.

DS:

And you hear these bootlegging stories all the time about different places.

PN:

Yeah.

DS:

Yeah, it's like when they showed that dugout a couple of years, remember? They found over there in Lubbock Country Club, and they are showing—they're going—what all it was—that tunnel under there. Everybody that knows the story goes like—that's an easy one. That's what it was for.

PN:

Yeah, that's what I know about them, the Ventura-Flores, but I do know—I did hear that he was one of the first Hispanics to come here to Lubbock.

Pete Jr:

They are in the museum, aren't they?

PN:

I thought he was, but they said—Morego, his great grandson, told me they had moved stuff somewhere else. I don't know where it is now.

DS:

Oh really? Yeah, I need to—he gave me Morego's address. I'm going to go knock on his door and ask him questions. I interviewed his brother, Raymon Flores years ago. I think he passed a couple of years after that.

PN:

Yeah, he died already. Gilbert's father.

DS:

Yeah, because at that time, he was still walking up and down Indiana. Remember he used to walk it all the time?

PN:

Yeah.

DS:

And then couple of years later, he was gone. Well is there anything I didn't ask you that you want to cover?

PN:

I think we covered it. What I know of what I remember. I was growing up here in Lubbock.

DS:

Let's talk a little bit about your business, you know, you said you've been in business now—well you're retired. How was your business, and then talk about when you decided to retire.

PN:

Well as far as physically, it is hard for me to take nine hours or eight hours standing here, so when I turned sixty-two, I was ready to retire because it was getting hard on my back. That's why now, I only do it part time in the mornings. _____ [0:23:15] because my son came and he picked it right up. He's the one that been kept it going with it because he's the one here the most. He keeps it open.

DS:

You talk about you did most of your business was on weekends? Is it still the same?

PN:

It ain't changed much. I mean, that's when they're out of school, out of work. On weekends, they had more time to come.

DS:

That's when you have to stand a bit lonely sometimes right?

Pete Jr:

Yeah, I guess Saturday is the day for everybody to get haircuts. Payday was Friday and that's when everybody has time.

PN:

I used to do it before he came out of school and on a Saturday, I'd get out of here and go to bed.

DS:

Yeah, I was telling somebody, like when I grew up, my dad would take us, me and my two brothers, the four of us would go together and that's how you got it. A dad and his kids. When you get it, you get a whole bunch of families in a row, right?

PN:

Yeah, I had some customer that brought sons and grandsons and the whole family. It would take me a while to do all of them, but I'd get them done.

DS:

How has Lubbock changed since you've been around?

PN:

It has changed a lot because when I was small, I think Broadway was the main drag and 19th was barely getting built; 19th and now we're up to what, 82nd?

DS:

135th streets? Where they're building housing?

PN:

135th? A hundred, so it's grown quite a bit. To the width and to the side.

DS:

Talk about that. You mentioned shopping downtown. What was that like?

PN:

Well whatever stores was there was—let's see if I can remember, Lubbock Sales, there was National Surf Shop, there's a few clothing areas, lean ins, a lot of theaters, where we used to go watch movies. There was three Mexican walk-in theaters, but I can't remember. One was Llanos, one was El Capitan, I think the other one was Plains, and as far as watching movies in English was Babel, and Minzie, and Clifton and Leary, and State Theater, and Arnold Benson over here. There was quite a few places, walk-in theaters. And back then, there was a lot of drive-ins, *tambien*.

DS:

What was that Spanish one that was over there?

PN:

Oh, Lone Star?

DS:

Lone Star?

PN:

I think it is Lone Star. On Amarillo Highway.

DS:

Yeah, I knew it was somewhere out there, but I couldn't remember what it was named.

PN:

It's where—what's the name of that auto parts places is? Quest? No, it's not Quest. Que es el auto parts aqui? [?] [0:26:39.1]

Pete Jr.

O'Reilly's.

PN:

O'Reilly's. That's where O'Reilly's got there factory or not the factory, but warehouse. It was over there close to there, that Mexican drive in theater was. And the park, McKenzie was the main park, and it was beautiful back then because the state kept it up real nice, and the tornado hadn't hit yet. All the trees were huge, had a lot of sage, and it was beautiful. That part was beautiful back in the days. Now, today, I don't know, it's mostly a golf course. [Laughter] Joyland's about the only thing that's going on there.

DS:

Yeah, they said they had some problems with it during the 4th on Broadway stuff they had this year.

PN:

Oh yeah?

DS:

Just because it is so many people going in through. It's limited access. It's always been that way.

PN:

Three exits. I mean, three or four entrances or exits.

DS:

Yeah, because if it's full of people, it's hard to move around.

PN:

Yeah, feels to me like Buffalo Lake. I mean, I hate going there, especially like on Easter or 4th of July. I don't go there. It takes you forever to get out of there.

DS:

When did y'all start going to Buffalo Lake?

PN:

A long time. I forgot the year model of my dad's car, but it's been a long—'38 Ford or

something like that.

Pete Jr:

Buffalo Roam. [DS laughs]

DS:

Yeah, because I forgot about that. Because that—Buffalo Spring created [crosstalk] [0:28:25.3].

PN:

I don't know when they opened, but I remember it being here for a long time.

DS:

Yeah, it's been here. Well I thank you for sharing your story and I will have this if your kids ever want to go hear what grandpa had to say, to look at it. [Laughs] All right?

PN:

It's what I remember.

DS:

All right. Thank you so much, Pete. [Laughs]

PN:

Thank you.

Pete Jr.

I was going to tell you about my grandpa. [End of Recording]

© Southwest Collection/
Special Collections Library