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Ana M. Varela-Lago: This is an interview with Regla Espolita Pazo. And I would like to start, Regla, by talking a little bit about your family. Why did they come to Tampa, what did they do here, your family?

Regla Pazo: Well, my father came here searching for the Americans. Most of them came 13, my father was 14 years old.

AL: Where was he from, your father?

RP: Let me see, *el estaba*, part country and—I don't know.

AL: But he was born in Spain?

RP: My father was born in Spain, he came to the Americans, through Cuba.

AL: Through Cuba.

RP: That's where they all used to land, I guess. Most of them. Some of them later on came through New York.

AL: What did he do in Cuba? Was he working?

RP: My father, 14 years old when he came to Cuba.

AL: Was he working there? What did he do there, in Cuba?

RP: Well, he always liked the tobacco thing. Well, I guess that was the thing that you could make better living. And they had all the fields of tobacco on account of the

weather. They didn't get to freeze, or anything like that, you know. And that's why he came. Fourteen years old. Some relative of his brought him; a much old, you know, grown man brought him. So my grandmother didn't want him to, you know, go serve the King up there and get killed. And so that's why all of those young men came early 13, 14, before they got, I guess, until 16.

AL: Right, to avoid the military draft?

RP: Yes, the military draft.

AL: So he went to Cuba. He stayed in Havana, or where?

RP: No, he really went to the country. My father was really a country man. He liked the, well, that's what he did when he was little in Spain, so I guess that's—He was only 14 when he came, and never went back.

AL: Never ever?

RP: Like I said—a lot of times I have told Larry [her husband]—if I had had my terminal connected [?], I would have send him back, even if he had died in Spain and had to bring [him], or bury him. Because he would cry—one day he was crying. And some friend came and told [him] his mother had died.

AL: So, was he the only one in his family to go to Cuba?

RP: No, he had a brother. Another brother that too came to Cuba. They sent them. As soon as they got to, about 14 years old, they would disappear because the government would take them.

AL: Yes. So how did he decide to come to Tampa, then? What happened?

RP: Well, he got into the fields in Cuba, and he got to know the tobacco real well, you know. And that's what he did; he grew tobacco for the, you know, worked for the owners. And he got to know it well, and he went to the fields. And my mother met him. That's how she met him. When he was 14.

AL: She was born in Cuba, your mother?

RP: My mother was Cuban, yes. She was born in the country. I think they call it Bejucal, or something like that.

AL: Bejucal? Okay, so that's the area in Cuba where they worked and lived?

RP: Yes.

AL: So they got married in Cuba?

RP: They got married in Cuba.

AL: And then they came to Tampa?

RP: We came to Tampa, gosh, when was it? At least, I wasn't born. I was born in Tampa. And my sister was born in Key West. The oldest. She's not living.

AL: So they spent some time in Key West before coming?

RP: Oh, yes, yes! He was foreman. He got to be foreman of the cigar factory. My father could read beautiful and write, without hardly any school. Because, 14 years old he was—they brought him to, sent him with some friends—I met the man, an elderly man, at that time, was the one that brought my father. She trusted him. But my father, like I said, I'm sorry I didn't send him, like I said, "Larry, if I had had sense." I was working and making pretty good money at the cigar factory. I turned out to be good; had good teachers. This lady, Rosa, that I told you. But, I don't know—like I said, "Larry, I would have sent him to Spain." Even if I'd be paying the trip yet, back to his home. Oh, I loved him to death!

AL: He missed his home, you think? He missed Spain?

RP: Yes. A lot of times—one day I saw him in the yard—I was always, I could get by with murder in my family because my father protected me so much. Like my sister says, "He'd just shake your little butt like that and we'd get the whippings." But that was because I was always with him. Helping him and everything.

AL: Yes. You were like the favorite daughter?

RP: Yes, that's what I was. And my sister was a big mouth. She didn't shut up.

AL: So you lived in Key West for awhile, your family.

RP: My family, not me.

AL: Not you, you were born here in Tampa.

RP: In Tampa, yes.

AL: When did they come from Key West to Tampa. Do you remember?

RP: I think it was, I don't know, 1913, I believe. Look like it rings a bell, he came to—

AL: To Tampa in 1913. Around that time?

RP: Yes. I think we came to Tampa then. Well, I was born here.

AL: When were you born, Regla?

RP: In February, 1915. February the 17th. The three girls we were born on the 17th.

AL: And you were seven siblings? Three girls and—

RP: And four boys.

AL: And four boys. And where did you settle here in Tampa when they came?

RP: Well, when I recall, mostly around the, you know the Regensburg [Cigar Factory] in Ybor City?

AL: Um-hm.

RP: My daddy was a foreman at Regensburg, and El Paraiso too. What they call El Paraiso. I can't think about the owners. He was foreman. But then, they boycotted him after—you know he didn't want to—he wanted to go more for the working class, I guess. And he had to go to the mines and work it off. My brother, the other day he was telling me it's a wonder that he lived that long. Because he went to the mines to work.

AL: Tell me more about that. He worked as a foreman for many years, your father.

RP: Many years, yes. He was foreman in Key West.

AL: And then here in Tampa, too.

RP: In Tampa.

AL: So he was working as a foreman and he had some problem with the owner of the factory he was working with?

RP: Well, yes, whenever you didn't oblige to what they said, then they were all—they used to get together, and boycott. There were many people that was even worse that—some of the family had to leave on account of the—

AL: Right. But was there a strike at that point?

RP: Oh, yes, they had a strike that lasted ten months!

Laurence Pazo: Ten months. One eight months and one ten months.

AL: When your father had this problem with this owner, was that around the time there were these big strikes?

RP: Yes, that's why he walked out. When they went on strike, my daddy walked out of the job. He was a foreman. Really, they stayed in, but my father said no.

AL: So usually the foreman sided with the owners?

RP: Yes.

AL: But your father decided to side with the workers.

RP: With the working class.

AL: And then he lost his job, and he was then boycotted, he could never get a job in as a foreman in any other—?

RP: Yes, for, I don't know how long, ten months. That strike lasted ten months.

AL: So, he never went back to the cigar factory? What happened?

RP: To work. Not, never.

AL: No?

RP: No. But he, you know, there was only one Spanish owner in Palmetto Beach. That was the one that, I guess, he didn't want to side with the other ones. Maybe he knew, you know, the thing or they knew each other better. And I guess he might have liked my father; might have seen that my daddy always landed a foreman's job, you know.

AL: So he then went to work for this man you mentioned? To Palmetto? At Palmetto.

RP: Yes.

AL: He went back to work as a foreman?

RP: Went back to work—I don't know if—yes, he went back. The man came to talk to my mother about it. Get him. Jewish. *No se*. The owners were. And he came to talk to my mother. My father. And you know what he told my mother? "Your husband has a heart of a baby." And you need the heart of a cow or something; big heart, to strike, you know? When he had to strike but he couldn't turn against the workers. So that is when he really never was foreman any more. He went then straight to work back as a cigar maker. He was real good—yes.

AL: Because before being a foreman he had learned the trade.

RP: Oh, yes, you had to, yes. That's all he did when he came. He knew the tobacco from Cuba, you know? He was working on the field. So he had a great knowledge of it. Then, at the last, he stayed working for the working class and never went back as a foreman.

AL: I see. He just worked as a cigar worker like the others.

RP: As a cigar worker.

AL: Was he involved in the union? Did he work at the Labor Temple, in any way?

RP: No. They really had—I don't know how he—yes, but he mostly was a little more advanced, so I guess he never lost the hope of being a foreman, I don't know. I think until the—then he did a little foreman—but then they boycotted. Like my brother say. This fellow is Escalante.

AL: Escalante, uh-huh?

RP: In Palmetto Beach, I think.

AL: That's the man who gave him the job.

RP: And I guess he didn't want to join the other ones. You know, that's a man who said, "The heck with it; if he's going to do a good job for me, forget it." I guess that's how he felt. And he came to the—a Jewish fellow was the owner of the cigar factory.

AL: Of the Escalante factory?

RP: Escalante was like the head man for them. And he came to tell my mother [that] my daddy had the heart of a baby, but you need the heart of a cow to deal with these things. But my daddy I guess felt, like he said, these people are not true to me either, or to the working class. And from then on he was never foreman. He worked as a cigar maker, and worked at the Labor Temple helping the workers.

AL: Was he a member of the union?

RP: No, the union came late. And then we all joined.

AL: Oh, you all joined?

RP: Yes, I was working already in the cigar factory. Rosa told me, Regla, join the—

AL: Rosa Prado.

RP: Prado, yes.

AL: How did you enter the cigar factory. Tell me a little bit—how old were you?

RP: Sixteen. When I turned 16. You had to stay in school. But at 16 you already were of age to work.

AL: Where did you go to school, Regla?

RP: I went to V. M [Vicente Martinez] Ybor School. I went to the Catholic school first. My mother used to think highly of the education.

AL: What was the name of that Catholic school, do you remember?

RP: OLPH.

AL: Our Lady of Perpetual Help.

RP: Yes. OLPH.

AL: So that was grade school?

RP: Yes, from the first, or before the first—before you were like six, some people, you know put them in, to get an advantage before the school started and all that. They'd have a little knowledge of what was going on.

AL: And then you went to V. M. Ybor and stayed there?

RP: And then V. M. Ybor School and from there to George Washington. But like everybody, I wanted to make money. Because we were nine in the family; that's a big family to support. My daddy—my older brother was working.

AL: Did they all pretty much work in the cigar factories?

RP: Yes. Yes, all of us. They were: four boys, three girls.

AL: So how was the process of getting to work in a cigar factory? Did you choose the cigar factory you wanted to work in?

RP: It's hard times. You choose it if—look, my daddy would, like I said, it was like politics, he had been on the top and now he was on the bottom. He was good, he knew the cigar industry well. And a bunch of Spanish people too. This man didn't want to side with the group. He was boycotted, would they give him a job? Those people were something. Whenever you got into something that they didn't agree, they—

AL: They make sure.

RP: Yes, they make sure, you know. But my daddy still had friends on both sides. So this Mr. Escalante, I guess he said this is what I need; a good worker, and he knows the business. So my daddy went to work and took my older brother. And my mother went to work too.

AL: That was Ramon? Your older brother?

RP: My older brother was Manuel.

AL: Manuel, right. So what factory did you start working at?

RP: Me in—let me see—oh, my God. I worked with Rosa Prado first, that's where I met her. In the cigar factory in Corral; no, Corral was later. I think I started in Regensburg. I never went to El Paraiso, you know, that was another—did you see them in Ybor City?

AL: Yes.

RP: Paraiso and Regensburg, they were two blocks away.

AL: That was one of the big ones, the Regensburg?

RP: Yes, those were really big.

AL: So, were you one of the strippers [of tobacco leaves]?

RP: No, no. I learned to make—I learned by hand, I learned the trade with Rosa.

AL: So the first day you went to the cigar factory, you didn't know anything?

RP: Well, no. I had learned at home. And this man helped me too.

AL: So you had learned how to roll the cigars by hand?

RP: *Si*. Make them all, put the center part, and then the outside, everything. And I turned out to be good.

AL: So they assigned you to work with Rosa Prado? She was also a cigar maker.

RP: No. Yes, she was one, and her husband too. About the best.

AL: So you used to work side by side?

RP: Next to her.

AL: So that's how you met Rosa Prado.

RP: Rosa Prado, she was real good to me. I was thinking the other day that, I don't know if somebody, or did I dream that, that somebody had said her son had died? I don't know now because I've got to—somebody told me something. Her oldest son was very educated; he went into the Service I think—yes—but he was a top fellow, you know, in the service; very smart. She too believed in a lot of education. She said she didn't want to

put the son in the cigar factory. He was very nice—I think somebody—I might have dreamt—I'm asking, I said, "Larry where did I get the idea that Rosa's son had died?" I think I heard it or maybe I dreamt it, I don't know. Now I'm confused myself. And Larry said, somebody—yes, I think somebody told me. Rosa. I'm gonna find out. Through Melba.

AL: Did you work in the cigar factories most of your life?

RP: Oh, yes, until like 40, 41 I think I was. When I got my—Yes, that's the only thing that I did for—

AL: So you were a pretty good roller then?

RP: I was a good cigar maker from the start.

AL: How much could a cigar maker do—a good cigar worker like you—a week?

RP: You said 14 dollars in Depression time? You could be one of those. Yeah. But nothing to be rich. But then later on, as I knew how to do it. Because I went places and the fellow said, "I'm gonna change you. You're gonna be only here a few days until I get—"

AL: Were there a lot of women working in the cigar factories at that point?

RP: Oh, yes. Like men and women together. And sometimes they were even—her mother would go too, so there were three of the family. And you needed kind of what you would call pull, you know. Sometimes to get in the factory. They had a little bit of everything.

AL: Do you remember any of the strikes in the 1930s? There were some strikes.

RP: Well, no, in that time they were—oh, they had a strike here that lasted six, ten months. You're aware of that? But then they started, they didn't want the union but the union came in. And when the people started coming, that they had gone to New York and all of that because there wasn't any work in Tampa, the cigar factories, a lot of them were closed and all. They had a strike that lasted ten months. So people had to flee to another place to feed the family.

AL: And then people came back from New York, you were telling me?

RP: Yes, they'd come back up here when the, well, the weather was good. We didn't get the cold weather they had in New York, that they told me about all of the snow and everything. And so, it wasn't good but that's for an education person, that you go to the right school and go to college. Even two years, that will put you in another bracket. But not everybody was smart. My younger sister became a nurse. And I helped her, and all of that, so she won't go to the cigar factory. And I couldn't complain, because I came out good.

AL: But it wasn't an easy job.

RP: Yes. And I never went to do anything else, you know. Probably sometimes we even washed, like the kitchen, for people, my youngest brother and I. For a quarter each room. They'd say, "Keep scrubbing." They checked it all that boarder was clean. Because a lot of times you scrub fast and the dirt will spread. And this board would be darker than the floors. And everybody liked, they put that potash, it had potassium in it and everything, that burned your hands and everything. But people would do anything to—that's one thing that—most of them were very clean, you know. Don't put that in there [in the tape recorder].

AL: Did your family belong to the clubs, Regla? To the Centro Español or the Centro Asturiano?

RP: No, my daddy was a funny Spanish fellow. He wasn't like an individual, really. My daddy, well, most of the head bosses were doing the clubs. The big, you know, everybody would do what, keep the people happy. And my daddy never submitted himself like that. He worked hard, real hard. We had cows and my mother took care of them. My mother never weighed more than 80 pounds and she was smaller than I. So you can see how little she was. Just bones, poor thing. She had asthma. But you know what caused her asthma? Her smoking. She died with lung cancer. All my girlfriends that I had, most of them. Melba smoke, her sister didn't use to smoke. I don't believe, Gloria still don't smoke, I don't believe. But me, I made the cigars and everything and I liked my job. So you see, like the day I decided, like I told Larry, I gotta take everything back there—I need to give it an overhaul. I go to the yard and pull grass.

AL: That's good, exercise. So your father wasn't really involved in all these events, the picnics and all these things at the Centros?

RP: No, my daddy, no. You know he never joined the Centro. My brothers, when they went to Cuba—we went one time; my mother wanted to go back to Cuba. So little by little we were going, my two brothers went; the younger one and the one you interviewed [Andrew Espolita]. And my sister, and my older sister. But my daddy never joined any of the social clubs.

AL: Now how about for medical assistance? Because I know that the clubs provided hospital services.

RP: Well, my dad paid to—imagine—we were, I was so sickly when I was little, I had everything; pneumonia, bronchial pneumonia. Anything. Because, you know, as a kid, we stayed with my brothers, we sometimes didn't cover ourselves. So they were the ones that took care of us. Like Andrew, the one you interviewed, and my brother Palmiro. He was a selector in the factory. The one that goes through *la capa*, the outer layer. And he was one of those. And he pulled fall time, he supported all of us. Because, I'm gonna tell you if you sometimes didn't go to like a strike or anything at work, they would boycott

you. And my daddy, but I guess this Escalante in Palmetto Beach—the factories are still there, I don't know—now they got a smaller little factory I think; one of them is in Palmetto. But my dad said no. He wasn't gonna lower himself to them. And he went to the mines to work. He used to go on Monday and come back on Friday evening.

AL: Where were the mines?

RP: My brother knows, but I don't know where. But those were—

AL: Near here in Tampa?

RP: Near, not in Tampa, but close. You can call my brother and ask about that. Because I was too young and I really don't. He used to go to work and had to get up, at four o'clock they would already be out on the street. And come back at five, five-thirty. My older brother was a fast worker and a good one too, Manuel. And he spoke—he read a lot. But he spoke very good English and all of that. And he too went into the cigar factory with my father.

AL: Do you remember the readers when you went to work in the cigar factories?

RP: I came right after they had the strike about the readers. I never met them in the factory. But my brother Andrew I know did.

AL: Do you remember anything about that strike? The readers' strike?

RP: No, because I was kind of young. At that time I was, but I remember that they had that strike to get the readers into the cigar factory. Everything you did in there had to be—instead of talking more, I guess they hold grudges from before. I think that was one of the things. But that lady that I tell you about, she and her husband worked, they were able to put their son through school.

AL: Rosa Prado?

RP: Rosa Prado.

AL: Tell me a little bit now about what your memories are of the war in Spain. Because you were telling me before you used to go with Rosa Prado? What did you do with her?

RP: Prado, yes. Well, we went out in the commercial to collect money. And I went with her.

AL: To collect money for the Republic? I mean, for the popular front—

RP: For the Spanish people, the ones that were against Franco.

AL: So how would a typical day go?

RP: Well, after we finished work at the factory. Then we went out and collected until about eight o'clock at night. Or maybe a little earlier.

AL: And you did that every day, or once a week, how often?

RP: No, sometimes we probably have to go twice. Or they send us some money. She was in charge of that. I was just a companion. I remember one Spanish fellow took us, in Las Novedades [Restaurant], back there. Because he didn't want the other ones to know that he was helping the cause in Spain. So they were, right in their own work, they would—we said good and bad, but I guess they were both good. But one was against the thing. And they didn't even want you to—they'd kind of hide to give you the money, back there, the ones that, the cooks and all of them at Las Novedades. We collected all the commercial. We came home at night, eight or nine o'clock.

AL: Do you remember how much would you collect in a typical day?

RP: Not much.

AL: Not much.

RP: That could be—if we collected \$14 we were doing good. Because about the only people that really had anything were—there was a Spanish fellow, I don't remember his name, but then when I came up here, he used to live around here. But he moved, he was married to an English-speaking school teacher. He was a more higher—and he was one of the head men up there at Las Novedades, and he would take us back there, hiding, and give us the money.

AL: Because he didn't like the others to know?

RP: You know, it was war—a month, (inaudible)—like, the Spanish and the Cuban thought different. So any little thing would turn into a hassle. Because they—

AL: How did they think different?

RP: Well, because, like a lot of people, even my mother, was Cuban. And she never went to Spain. My daddy was a very good man: She too. But everybody, if you talk around, ask about Espolita. If he was your friend, he'll be your friend through and through. Not part friend and part the other. That was the kind of man he was. And my older brother was like him, too.

RP: Now for instance, your parents. Your mother was Cuban and your father was Spanish. What did they think about the war in Spain, the Spanish Civil War? Did they think differently, you think, because they came from different countries?

RP: No. These people that I told you about, Evangelina and all of that? They were

Spanish, they were most for the war. My mother would tell my father back then, not them. They were very nice people. They were a little more class. The girl was a schoolteacher. Evangelina LaFuente was her name. She already died, poor thing. She died with colon cancer. They were better off than us. They had their home and everything. My daddy never believed in buying houses. I guess his mind was not to stay here. I think. A lot of times he said, "I'm gonna go to Spain."

But my sister went to a lot of places. She would save more money, give less on the house and all that. She went to Cuba a bunch of times and everything. And she was blond. I guess my brother, we were—what a shipyard is? Where the people sail from, to go to Cuba, you know? Right now I don't know how to explain myself. My sister went and she was real fair. Though she was full of some tinting, and tinted her, keeping blond, you know. And my God, this, my brother—really my older brother was a lover, you know. And this lady say, "Damn, Manuel, you have changed. Where did you find this American girl?" "This is my sister." "You, you're (inaudible)!" Because my brother was dark and my sister was blond. She took from my father's side. My daddy had blue eyes. Or green eyes, whatever. And this lady said, "My God, Manuel, now you got an American girl! How many girls are you gonna have?" It was fun. You know where the ship leaves, it still leaves from there. You know where it is, Port Tampa.

AL: Port Tampa.

RP: Yes, we call it that. I guess, I don't know if we're right or if we're still with the old days. But I had to laugh with him. And that was a lady—they used to be actors. Chelo Martinez—you've heard of her?

AL: No. No.

RP: My God, they were all actors. And they used to work at the, what they call the Little Theater, down and all of that.

AL: Oh, I see, I've heard of the Little Theater, yes.

RP: You heard about that. Everybody knew them. But she worked in the cigar factory. She was married with a very nice looking man and she—they were a little better off than we were.

AL: Now that you mention the theater, there were a lot of plays and performances during the Spanish Civil War to support the Republic. Do you remember any of those?

RP: Yes, they were supporting them. I believe all of those—Melba. You talked to Melba? Melba belonged to those clubs.

AL: Did you attend any of those performances?

RP: No. One day we, who was in the hospital? And I went—oh, my daughter took me,

my older daughter. That's been about two years. But at that time they, yes, these ladies, like Chelo Martinez, my sister and all that, they learned to perform at the Little Theater. Like, little theater is what it is. They were, but, no my God, I didn't have that personality. And I was shy too, to, you know, get up on the stage and all of that. No, I'd sit on the back and watch the other ones.

AL: Do you remember Regla when people from the Spanish Republic would come to Tampa to speak, like we were talking before about some of those—?

RP: Oh, yes. We told you about that *capitán*. I don't know—my God—I'll call my brother, maybe he would remember.

AL: Do you remember any others? Like the ambassador for instance came here several times, Fernando de los Ríos.

RP: Well, I didn't go much to those things.

AL: How about your father? Was he involved in anything?

RP: No, no. My father never got involved in too much. He went through a lot, I guess. And he learned his lessons. He never joined the Spanish club. And when I said, "Daddy how come you don't—" "I'm not Cuban, I'm not Spanish, I'm not American, I'm nothing, I'm a man of the world." He would go where he could get work. He was a good man. And then too, there would have been eight children; one of them died at birth. So he had a big load to support.

AL: So how about your mother? You were telling me before that your mother didn't agree that much with how the war was going in Spain—

RP: No, my mother—he would, the captain, *el capitán*—you've heard of him?

AL: No.

RP: Well, he was dressed like a military—

AL: Oh, the guy who came? You mentioned. I remember him.

RP: He didn't look like—have you heard from anybody else that he didn't look like he was so true, like he—

AL: Um-hm. And he was the man who stayed right across from your house, at Evangelina la Fuente, when he came.

RP: *Si, con la mamá de Evangelina*. Evangelina died not that very long ago.

AL: So the family of Evangelina were supporters of the Republic, then?

RP: Oh, yes, they were. And the Captain would talk to my dad. And my mother thought they were gonna take her four boys out.

AL: Oh, really?

RP: Yes. And so she wasn't with my father. You see, my mother, my grandmother had—they said 24 children, or 18 or something. And my brother was telling me, one of my uncles, because I didn't know this; my brother Andrew told me. He was like a big colonel or he was a colonel or something when they had the revolution.

AL: In Cuba? You mean during the Independence?

RP: In Cuba, yes. My mother talked about how everything went dark. And people were bumping into the people, they couldn't see each other at night. Well they didn't have flashlights, I believe, in that time that they came. They were very new, you know. And this *capitán* came up there, and my mother used to get mad with my dad. My daddy right away, he stopped, from his porch to our porch—they were just across the street, these people.

AL: Did your father like him more than your mother did?

RP: Oh, yes. My mother, when they mentioned war, with her four boys gone! You see, I come from a family of 18 or 21 on my mother's side. And my mother said she saw her brothers go to war. And they were colonels and everything in the revolution in Cuba to free from the Americans. I believe that's what it was. And my mother, un unh. My mother used to tell my father, "These, I had them. And they're not gonna go defend no Spanish."

AL: Did your father think your brothers should go and fight in Spain, do you think?

RP: No, I don't know if he would decide. Maybe, but I don't think so. My father was against wars and all of that. Later on he, you know, he had lived longer and he had four boys. Like I said, there would have been five; one had died at birth. And so we were a very close family. And the Spanish people in Cuba were very close. The Italians were another group, that they were, they really helped each other.

AL: Do you remember any of the people here in Tampa who actually went to Spain to fight?

RP: Yes, but I really don't—

AL: Like, we were talking about the brothers Paula.

RP: Paula, yes. And other, I think—

AL: Francisco Vasquez, Paco Vasquez, *el miliciano*?

RP: *El miliciano*, yes. But he was half—everybody said he was half kooky, I don't know. Did you hear that?

AL: No.

RP: No, but he went to—yes, he fought. And he came to, and they adored him. I mean he—

AL: Really?

RP: Yes, they really. They were glad that he went to and helped, you know? Because most of the Spanish here were still—their hearts were in Spain. I know about my father. But my mother says she wasn't going to Spain, no matter what. So it was, that's why. If my mother would agree to go to Spain, I wish we would have gone there. You know. Maybe, God knows, probably was. My daddy was quite talented. You know, he never went to school, but he could take—not the highly words and all of that—but he could read all of the paper. Some Spanish, not all of it, you know, in English and be translating it in Spanish.

AL: Did he get news from Spain during the war? Do you remember something like that?

RP: No, my daddy. I don't know. They really never kept up much with the, but my mother wanted—that's why when we went to Cuba we went with the intention of staying there. But my brother, oldest, was born in Cuba. But then he, you know, he revoked that and he became an American citizen. And half of the people thought he was born here. And he'd never talk about that. And he helped a lot of the—he was for the education; he was a very smart man. Because he didn't go, probably if he went until he was about 14 or 13, they put him in the factory and that was the end of. He went to night school and all that, but he was real smart.

AL: You were telling me before, Regla, that some of your brothers wanted to actually go to Spain to fight?

RP: Oh, that was my younger brother! And then he would tell my dad, you know, some day this country will turn over, and all of that. And my dad says: "Son, I'll live longer than you. You would die and not see this country turned." You know. Probably revolution, or something. But there were a lot of people like, you know that, but we never got into that. And my father, he never talked about Spain or about this or about that; never got into discussion like that. He was quite smart, and his brother too in Cuba. His brother had less family[?] than we were and were better off. A very good looking man; tall, like six foot tall. So my daddy came in—it could have been on his mother's side. But my mother says his mother was big. *Era isleña*, part *isleña*. I myself don't know much what does *isleña*—I know it's another part of Spain, or—

AL: Yes, from the Canary Islands.

RP: Is that, from the Canary Islands? Yes. And my mother was, I don't know, she still loved her Cuba, no matter what. She never really, you know. That was her—her father was Cuban. And my grandmother was the one that was part *isleña*. And was a big woman. When my brother married he was short, and his wife was big and heavy. Like a wall, like that, Maximina. Oh, what a lovely woman! I love her to death, you know that? They got divorced and I still went to see her. My mother and I would walk to her place, it wasn't too far, after my brother—Oh, well, my brother was a lover before anything, you know that? He was good looking, though.

AL: Tell me, Regla, do you remember anything about the people who—[phone rings]. Let me see.

SIDE B:

RP: I don't know if I dreamt that her son had died or I heard it. But I'm gonna get in touch with somebody. Not call her for that, you know. She had her son. Just one boy. Good looking—

AL: And her son lived here in Tampa?

RP: Yes. Well, he no, now he was, where is he? I don't know. He's sort of, I forgot. He's out of town living. But I think he had come back. Melba knows him well too, more than I. She said that later on saw him in the clubs and she belonged to those Spanish clubs and all—

AL: Now Melba told me she used to sell all these *churros*—

RP: Melba did.

AL: Did you ever—?

RP: No, I never sold *churros*. I went with Melba. But I didn't, you know I had to come home and do my work. At night, before we eat, my mother say, "Whose turn to wash?" We were three girls. My younger sister never did much. She was the baby, you know and she could get—she was a good athlete and all that. Even fight. One day we left with her, because—let me tell you she—how she started playing baseball, she got a big old skirt that we wear that were down to there? The ball came, she got her skirt and let the ball fall in there. In the skirt, and then threw. Then the people—she didn't admit to that. She got that ball. She was a good athlete. Like Debbie. Debbie's a good athlete too.

AL: Debbie's your youngest daughter?

RP: Yes. And she was real smart. She went to [J.C.] Penney's and got herself—it was a quarter an hour. So sometimes she'd make like \$1.75 or something—that was a lot of money that time. But she was real smart, I'll say that. She went to high school. This lady

wanted to send her to the university at Tallahassee, her husband was one of these, the government's thing—I don't remember what it was. And she was so smart, she said, "you should go to college." And she wanted to, her husband, with politics could get her to go to Tallahassee and all that. My sister said, "I've got to go back home and work." Even though a quarter an hour, or whatever it was. But she's real smart. And more sense than my older daughter. My older daughter's like a kid. Never gets mad with me; we love her to death. But the older she gets the more childish she gets. She divorced. I don't even know why her and her husband, after 12 or how many years, thirteen, divorce. I still don't know why they got divorced. Now she married this fellow there. [recorder off]

AL: I wanted to know if you remember any kind of discussions or problems between the people here in Tampa who supported the Republic and the people who were against it?

RP: Well, you see, I really didn't get too much like Melba. I guess Melba told you other—

AL: But did you hear about things—?

RP: Oh, yes.

AL: Even though maybe you didn't see them.

RP: Yes, I didn't join that because I couldn't go every night. I had to come home and we had to do the work. My brother did it for us, and then we had to take care of that. So we were almost like the mothers. And I couldn't get there every night like that. So I didn't get too much, you know. No, a lot of people, I guess like everything, but most—we stayed in the Spanish thing. Maybe, one thing that had happened in this country, everything you talk; if you believe this man is good for this, they turn it to, communist. So right away they separate each other.

And that's what I believed the most of their troubles. They were not—you see my dad—my dad was like this, he came to this country; their mother sent them before they could take them, both. There were only two boys in the family. And those boys she got out of Spain. And people brought them to Cuba. And out there the government couldn't get them. Maybe some spy could kill them or what, but it wasn't likely because they were the groups that they stayed together, like the ones that didn't believe him and they, on the other part of the Spanish thing, stayed. Like this family that was there, they were very devoted.

AL: Why do you think people were so devoted to the Republic?

RP: Well, because some people were still—they were here, but they were still Spanish. You know they never gave up their—The Latin people are like that mostly. Have you talked to anybody that kind of say anything? Because I believe that the Latin people at that time, they would stick together. Today, we are more Americanized.

AL: And do you think the other communities, the Cubans and the Italians, also supported the Spaniards in this? In the war?

RP: I don't know about it, the Italians kind of stayed to themselves. And they were, you see, they were, like Hav-a-Tampa? I don't know if you heard. That factory? I don't know how it is today. It's not today, there's no more cigar factories in Tampa. I didn't know that until the other day. Coming back to West Tampa, Daddy would show me Regensburg and everything. But I stayed more in Ybor City. And no matter what, my father said nobody in this house wants to go and break a strike. They got to know that they'd be out of the house. Like this fellow, he was a boss, Baldomero, you heard of him?

AL: Baldomero Lopez?

RP: Lopez no, but what's his name. He was short and like—my brother laughed because somebody said they called him barrel belly[?], for the cigar thing at the tobacco camp?

AL: Like *barril*, they called him?

RP: *Barril*, take home, *barril*. He was small, but with—

AL: A big belly, kind of.

RP: A big belly like that. And he and his brother, for awhile they lived next door, they weren't speaking. One married an Italian, the other married a Spanish.

AL: Do you think there were problems between the Spaniards and the Italians?

RP: I don't know, we lived in Ybor City. But like my father said, when we said Spaniards, my father said, "I'm nothing. I'm an American now. I'm in this country." He left Spain and he never went back. Like I said—

AL: Did he become a citizen of the United States?

RP: Yes, he finally did. My brother and Ramonin, this fellow that I showed you in the picture of all of them, convinced him to, and he finally went and got his citizenship.

AL: Now, you mentioned this Ramonin, he was also involved in this Frente Popular—

RP: Oh, yes, they were.

AL: What kind of things did they do? Do you remember?

RP: And Aurora too, have you met them?

AL: No. No.

RP: Aurora I think is still living; Ramonin died. He was a good friend of all of us. I remember when I was going to have Debbie, they were going to do cesarean, he came to see me. And I was so thin because I got them—twin thin. I didn't gain weight, on account of they put you on those, because I was so little. And still they had to do a cesarean. Because Carmen was eight pounds, regardless. That was a big baby for me. But I don't know. My dad never got involved. First he was foreman, then they fired him. Then this Escalante was the only one that would—and he took my mother there to work. And my mother even worked a week at Hav-a-Tampa. You know, Hav-a-Tampa? They closed, I don't know if they're working or not. But then they lost the, they parted from the union, you know, of the factories. So Hav-a-Tampa became an independent. And mostly worked American people and machine. It was all machine.

AL: So what do you remember when the Republic lost the war and Franco won the war? How were the feelings here in Tampa?

RP: I don't know, there were people that are still angry and mad at each other. We, ourselves, I wasn't involved. Melba was. But I had so many things to do. I stayed by myself. When my parents died. So I had to support myself and everything. I hide every quarter and everything that I could hide under the linoleums. Hide them wherever I can. You know, because I was by myself. My brother Palmiro was a very nervous person, poor thing. And he never, they didn't take him to—when they examined him they didn't, they could tell that, you know, he was too nervous. So, but I think, my brother Andrew went. And he was happy, by going to the United States Army. I think most of the people from here were most for, you know, the boys that went wherever they went.

AL: Now you're talking about World War Two?

RP: Yes, I'm talking about when they went to fight in Spain. Before World War Two. But if they want to go, they would. A lot did go. I remember when that general came. Those people that I've been telling you across the street from my house. They put him to live there. My daddy would talk to him about how the war was doing in Spain and all of that. He turned out to be, have you heard from anybody that he was not it?

AL: How did you find out that he wasn't really—?

RP: That he wasn't—I found out from the people. I never went to this meeting. Maybe you know more about that than me.

AL: No, not more. I was wondering. He left Tampa, and then later on people realized he hadn't been very honest—

RP: That's what I heard. We never got involved. Those people that I tell you about, it's true their father have died, poor thing. And she's dead too, Evangelina. They believed a lot in education. The Tampa Gas, I understand, paid for the college. They went to the University of Tampa, instead of going to Gainesville, that would take more money. But both of them, the girl and the boy. That was a girlfriend of ours, but I'll never say—those

people, how they met. She was like a tomboy. One time when she was little my younger sister cut her hair like the boys, with the sideburns and everything. And then later on she married this—but they were a little better off. They were two, I think there were two sisters of the husband that never married. So they both worked. And boys, the girl and the boy went to the University of Tampa. Graduated and everything. Very nice people. They were.

AL: Did they have family in Spain? Do you think that's why they were so—?

RP: I don't know. I know that that general came in and they, right across the street like that, like many of the people here. And my dad would talk to the general and all that. And he kept reminding about, you know, getting more involved, this country, to get Spain away from Franco and all that. And my mother used to say, "Not my son," while he was talking to him, she's telling him, "Not my sons are gonna go."

AL: She was afraid that—

RP: You know, that the boys would get killed there. And she used to tell my [father], "I don't care what you think of them. They're Spanish. Why don't you two join the service and go and fight, so your sons won't have to go?" And I had my brother there who was drafted already for the service, the one that you talked with, he was in the service.

AL: So what happened when Franco won the war? Did people forget about Spain? What happened?

RP: I don't know.

AL: Did it have any effect on your family? Your father? How did he feel about it?

RP: Well, my father died before. He died in '39.

AL: Oh, your father died in '39?

RP: In '39. So, poor thing. He never saw the end of the war or anything.

AL: And the neighborhood, the people in the neighborhood, do you remember how they were feeling?

RP: I don't know, they were, some, I usually stayed with Rosa and all of those people.

AL: How did Rosa feel?

RP: They weren't happy. But, I don't think even Rosa wanted her son to—

AL: Did they keep collecting money after the war? Maybe for other—?

RP: I don't remember that, how it stopped, really.

AL: But you used to go with her all throughout the war? Those three years?

RP: Oh, yes, the people. I went to help this lady, I wasn't—

AL: Did you get in any kind of trouble because you were doing that, in the factory—?

RP: No, no, no, no.

AL: Did you wear any kind of uniform, or badge—?

RP: For the factory? No.

AL: No, I mean for collecting the money, to identify yourself.

RP: No, no. We went with whatever, my best clothes. I'd come home, take a bath, and put my best clothes and go to Rosa's house. She lived quite far. Sometimes it's her husband driving, they would come and pick me up. And I went to help her, to go with her so she wouldn't be alone on the streets. We went to all the commercial in Ybor City. Went clear to Nebraska, way out where there were a lot of blacks there.

AL: And you always did the same route? Pretty much?

RP: Yes.

AL: And then she would bring the money to the Labor Temple?

RP: To the Labor Temple, that's where she left the money there. And I went with her and she signed and I signed there that you don't—and for a long time we did that. I don't remember, about a few months.

AL: Do you remember the ambulances that the people from Tampa bought to send to Spain?

RP: No. I know that they sent them. What happened—that started in New York, didn't it?

AL: Yes, well they sent the money to New York, and there was a group there in New York who bought the ambulances and sent them to Spain. They weren't purchased here in Tampa.

RP: I didn't know much of that. I only went as a helper, you know really. And so I helped her. So she won't go by herself. We went up through Ybor City and all the commercial. I remember this old man that now is, was, my brother's father-in-law, the one that you went there. He took us back there to show us where we only had fifty cents or a quarter. He wouldn't even be able to, I don't remember if he gave a quarter or what, but he did, he

said he—

AL: Couldn't give any more.

RP: No. He used to—one time, my brothers told me, he had the biggest toy store—that's my brother's father-in-law. That was before my brother married his daughter later on in years. But Luis went with her to school. And I knew him well, and all of that, but they didn't. There were a little separation. But they really stuck for the, for what I know, for what I've seen. I know that people said that they took things and money and all of that. But I didn't even know that. I have heard it now, after many years. That they would steal the money in New York, or didn't send it up there, or I don't know where they. But I know about that. I don't know the whole story, really.

AL: Yes. Did you ever hear about problems with the Catholic church here in Tampa? Because the church was supporting Franco in Spain, that there might have been conflicts?

RP: I don't know that. It could be, but I really. I was too young. You know how it is when you're young? You would like to listen to the little gossip about the boys and more of that. I never. Rosa, she used to, I still love her—the other day I said, Gosh, now the other night was after you came with something that I dreamt that her husband had died. Did I dream that or is it really true? I don't know, I was—about her.

AL: They were both from Spain, Rosa and Aurelio?

RP: No, Rosa was from Cuba.

AL: Oh, she was from Cuba?

RP: From Cuba. And Aurelio was imported, I shouldn't say imported, from Spain.

AL: I see.

RP: Aurelio was older, much older than her. And she had that son that I knew him well. Very nice. I don't know the other day, I think. It gotta be a dream because—I'm gonna ask Melba—I thought the other day, call her up and find out if something had happened. She was a dear friend of mine. I was good with her. I went with her every place she asked me to go. Like every day I came home, Monday, take my bath, put my best clothes, and then we'd go around all the commercial in Ybor City.

AL: And then people also would collect at the steps of the cigar factories?

RP: Yes, they collected too at the cigar factory. But, see what it is? The cigar factory, people treasured that. That's the only thing they had to raise a family. Like my father. Like my brother said one time to my father, what were you thinking to have eight children? Because one of them was born dead—let set a few hours and die. But my daddy says, "Since I couldn't save money, I might as well have children." Because no matter

what, you know? And we never took welfare or none of that. The most we ever got, some meat or something, was when they came to the houses and they gave—has anybody told you about this? Meat and milk and different things that they would bring to some.

But we were all there, we were all working and we could afford to. And my daddy always had chicken, and he had cows as long as they let the cows. Because then came a ruling that the cows had to be away from the people for the sickness, I guess you heard about that. But as long as we had cow, my daddy had cows and dogs. We had dogs. And like this lady said, I don't know how you all turned good. You used to go up there, back there, at Parcell? You know, the empty? Up there and run like hillbillies. This lady only had a girl. One girl she had, Celia. She married three or four times, too. She married one, but that husband I think had a disease. Like venereal? disease. I have heard from other people, not from her. And she married—so she was a little better off than the other people, she had connections then with the factory. But she couldn't get the jobs. Because I'm gonna tell you the factory was something. Sometime they start, well, about December. Few days, sometimes we worked up to *Nochebuena*, you know—

AL: Christmas Eve?

RP: Christmas Eve. And we worked that day too. It was a weekday, you know. We even worked that day. New Year's the same thing. Mostly by New Year's all the factories were closed. And they didn't open—sometimes people didn't go to work until about July and August, when the rush start coming—

AL: What did you do in the meantime? What kind of things—how did you earn a living?

RP: I don't even know, because my mother, my mother raised chickens, cows, and helped my dad. She was little and thinner than I was and smaller than I was. She got asthma but really, she smoked too much.

AL: She smoked cigars?

RP: Not cigars. She would cut it up and make the little, like with tar paper, but is worse. Did you know that I used to roll them and make them for her? Put them in there and cut them up with the scissors. Everybody that smoked, the ladies specially, and they cut up, my daddy would bring *la fuma*—I think they allowed you three—

AL: Right, three.

RP: To take home. Some people would probably sneak one more, you know how it is, if they could get by. Because you didn't know in the cigar factory really the people that were spies or not. There were people that were with the—my daddy had been a foreman, all of that. But my daddy protected the workers so much that they fired him. And thank God, like my brother was telling me the other day, thank God that Escalante didn't want to join the—in Palmetto Beach, so we moved way out, out of the Ybor City section. We always lived, after you pass Columbus Drive? We lived in every place there. Those are

brick houses. We lived in those. So we live in this row, that row, the other row. And the people were, there were some good. There was a Mexican boy, Manuel—what's his name? Oh, he was so smart in school. He was little and real dark. But that was a genius, that boy, how smart.

Had another friend, the two they were president and vice-president of the—I only went to George Washington School. And didn't graduate from there. When I turned 16 they put me in the factory. I wanted to stay, but I had to go to work, to help out, you know. But we had a good family though, we were a lot of them. Like I said, my mother look at some friends of mine that, I don't know where their father went. Nobody really knows. She had one eye that was not right, you know, poor thing. And she had about five girls and one boy. Ignacio was the brother. And we'd tell my mother, mama, look she's got the little white fur coat, the rabbit fur—have you ever heard about those little kind of jackets?

AL: No.

RP: Oh, God, that was a luxury for poor people! And my mother say, "Why don't you find out what she eats." If they all eat beans every day and not be able to put meat in it, to taste it at all. My mother used to tell me, I say, "How come we can't have those things?" What do you want? [to Mr. Pazo. Recording stops] He was reading English, and the book my mother said was French. But, poor thing at least, my mother was not that educated, you know? And my youngest sister was sort of like my father.

AL: Yes. Intelligent, smart.

RP: Yes, she's very smart. My younger sister, gosh. You know she went, with nothing to go—I bought her all the clothes. I had to make what do they call now? Well, not linen, but a finer thing for her slips? She had to have cotton pants. All the clothes could be that they used to put them on the—she told me about the machines they got up there to wash clothes. And I'm gonna tell you, if a bug, head bugs, what do you call them? We call them *piojos* [lice].

AL: *Piojos*, right.

RP: *Si, piojos*. If anybody pass by there, if they were sitting there, don't ask me, but that piojo would come to me. One time, my sister had a little girl. My older sister she always brought somebody to eat, some little girl at the school or something. She brought them home to eat and all of that. She could put the oven full of cakes, so my father and I would watch it. We couldn't go out. When she went to a trip to her friend's or something. She was really, she was nice too, but I was the one that, you know, had to be there. Like, I couldn't go out because my daddy didn't know much about cooking. Some men know. My older brother and my brother Andrew can cook as good as a cook. Anything. They know how to cook. But my older brother was a lover. He was good looking, *el diablo suelto*.

AL: *El diablo suelto*.

RP: My mother used to get after him—she loved his wife so much—and she loved my mother. My mother was sick all the time. She ended up dead. She finally died with Jung cancer. But it was that smoking. That's why people say, you wanna smoke? All my girls smoke. I say, smoke? For no money! You can put ten dollars there, probably I'll get the ten dollars. And maybe smoke that time, but. And Melba used to smoke and all of that; I said no. I saw my mother, you know, coughing to death, poor thing. She finally, within years she died of lung cancer. But, like my brother said, she was gonna die of something.

So, poor thing. And she was little, didn't weigh nothing. She never weighed more than 80 pounds. And smaller than I am, so you can tell. And had that asthma that, that's what killed her. It was the smoking really. And all of my girls smoke—all of my girlfriends smoke. I said no. I'm sorry. I don't care. Her brother was so mad with her, this girl was beautiful. She had black hair and real white, and tall, you know, Adela[?]. I always had to help her out with money because she spent all of that, "buy me—to go to the matinee." She would have a new pair of stockings that was to go on Sundays to the matinee. And for the dances. "Regla?" I'd go, "Yeah, I already know. Bring me money." Because she didn't have money to go to the dance. She was beautiful; was a tall girl with curly hair—real white. But I don't know, she married a bum there. I introduced her to him. Gino, they used to call him.

AL: How did you meet your husband, Regla?

RP: Well, I met him through—the one that married Melba's sister was a friend of Larry's—that's how we met. And she met him through—I think I know Melba, I don't know. But then, he was in the Marines, and had a beautiful car and all of that. I think the car that, you know the roof, the top goes down? He was making good money in the marines at that time. And was real smart. Manuel. You met him?

AL: No, I don't think so. I don't think I met him.

RP: And he turned out to be—though they couldn't have children so they adopted the children. But they turned out to be—they, Nancy? With freckles? She's cute. I like people with freckles. Maybe [because] I never had any—I love them. I think that makes them kind of cute.

AL: Okay, I'm gonna just end the interview. And then we can stop the tape? Do you want to add anything to our conversation of the war, anything—?

RP: No, I will call Daddy. What is it that you would think that we haven't talked about?

AL: No, I was just thinking. I asked all the questions I had. So maybe, do you think there is something else that you would like to have included in the tape?

RP: No, I don't know.

AL: Okay. This concludes the interview with Regla Espolita Pazo and I want to thank you very much, Regla, for participating in this project and talking with me today.

End of interview