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San Luis Potosi

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ALEXANDER TORRES, SAN LUIS POTOSI

I have completed this oral history project on my grandfather Raul Torres. My grandfather immigrated to America in his early years of his life from San Luis Potosi, Mexico with his mother. The reason why I chose him as my interviewee was due to the fact that he is part of the second wave of my family who came to America in search for a better life. I understand what he has been through along with the pain that he has suffered. He has overcome many obstacles coming to the United States that made him a strong candidate for this project. His story might not be unique to many others but to me it was something important for if he had not made the choices that he did I may not be here. This is the story of a Mexican immigrant. This is the story of my grandfather Raul Torres.

Mr. Torres was born on June 8, 1952; he immigrated to the United States of America in the year 1961. He was 11 years old when he immigrated. He came with his mother for a better life and lived in his uncle's house approximately 6 years. He states that life was very different here almost 100 percent different. He was unable to enjoy the outdoors like in Mexico, "You couldn't go out without an adult like in Mexico" – Raul Torres stated during an interview. He then moved back to Mexico due to the problems that his uncle and wife were having.

He returned to his country of origin and went to school there. He went to trade school and at the age of 18 he came back to America leaving his mother behind in his hometown. He maintained a job at a factory from the ages of 18 through 26. He then joined a group to stop discrimination of Hispanics by the Union Local IBEW 134. "We were being discriminated by the Union because we were Hispanics" stated Raul Torres. He and the rest of the members were able to have a fair chance to be a part of the union after IBEW 134 had lost a lawsuit against them for discrimination. He was able to get in and be a part of the electrical union of Chicago. Shortly after he had his first child with his wife in San Luis Potosi, Mexico, she was born on the same day as him, 11 months later he brought here and his daughter to the states. He had his first and only son 3 years later and his second daughter 8 years later. He has been working as an electrician for the past 30 plus years for a better life for him and his family. He is currently still there and plans to retire in 2 years at the age of 62.

My grandfather has been hard working all his life, but I assume that is the price you have to pay for moving to a new country with a fresh start for a better future. His actions have made me who I am today. I want to thank him for all he has shared for this project. His story may not be as unique but it meant a lot to me. I would like to thank my grandfather for telling me his story.