

“From the Plaza to the Quad”

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS-URBANA, CHAMPAIGN
LAST 395- ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Interviewee: Sixto Clodoaldo Soto

Interviewer: Seth Eheart

Date: May 10, 2010




BIOGRAPHY

- Sixto Clodoaldo Soto, immigrant from Peru
- Quechua Instructor within the Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies
- Huanta-Ayacucho, Perú
- Completed his primary education and went on to attend National University of San Marcos
- Taught Spanish as a second language
- University of Indiana to University of Illinois
- Recently written a Functional Quechua Dictionary
- Teaches normal classroom Quechua classes as well as online
- Has a wife and son studying at Parkland



DISCUSSION

- Grew up in bilingual area son of two teachers
- Ran home from school at first bell
- Mother died at early age when, affected school
- Involved with government organized “Popular Cooperation” – Community development (teachers, dental care, etc.)
- Public school all the way, Private Catholic university failed
- Spanish as second language > Quechua as second language
- San Marcos > Indiana connection and built relationships
- Transition not hard, but different (food, music, formal, etc.)
- Sees huge differences between educational resources (academic migration, US Universities looked upon as very prestigious, but possible backlash) 
- Leftist views still alive and home state was birth place of Shining Path (Sendero Luminoso). Groups and conflict created by inequalities in class structure.
- Not a lot of Latin American culture outside of University within area
- Wanting to move back eventually, but only after retirement
- Advice for Latin Americans coming here “Love the good things and detest the bad things”.
- Identifies as a Peruvian



CONCLUSION

- Very informative
- Great pride in Peru, but a sadness
- “My country”
- Feeling of wanting to go back, but very thankful for opportunities here
- Begs to answer, “If the Latin American academic elite come and stay in the U.S., who will run these countries?”
- Personal reflection
 - Family, Guerrillas
 - Not because I am Peruvian (Jewish oral history)
 - Power of oral histories is personal connection to both interviewer and interviewee



FINAL THOUGHTS

- Oral History
 - Does what text can't, Resources were amazing (technical, guests, instructor), will definitely help in future endeavors
- Recommendations to future students
 - Lock down interviewee ASAP, watch other oral histories, become a research rat
- Suggestions
 - Full term to allow for administrative tasks and more contact with interviewee
 - Highly suggest similar projects for all disciplines
- Inspired
 - Oral history on Champaign Urbana WWII Veterans



GRACIAS!

