



Smithsonian

National Museum of American History Kenneth E. Behring Center

Undocumented Organizing Oral History Collection

NMAH.AC.1581

Leigh Gialanella

2023

Archives Center, National Museum of American History
P.O. Box 37012
Suite 1100, MRC 601
Washington, D.C. 20013-7012
Business Number: Phone: 202-633-3270
Fax Number: Fax: 202-786-2453
archivescenter@si.edu
<https://americanhistory.si.edu/archives>

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives Center, National Museum of American History
Title:	Undocumented Organizing Oral History Collection
Date:	2019-2022
Identifier:	NMAH.AC.1581
Creator:	National Museum of American History (U.S.) Centeno-Meléndez, José (Interviewer) Ramirez, Marla Andrea (Interviewer)
Extent:	45.09 Gigabytes (17 .wav files, 34 .pdf files)
Language:	English .
Summary:	Collection documents through born-digital oral histories the lives and experiences of undocumented community organizers and activists.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

Made for the National Museum of American History by the Undocumented Organizing Collecting Initiative between 2019-2024.

Related Materials

Materials at the National Museum of American History

The Division of Political History holds the following materials related to undocumented organizing:

2006.0106; 2006.0211 - Posters, leaflets, and other objects documenting protests and demonstrations, such as the Immigration March (April 10, 2006, Washington D.C.) and the Great American Boycott/Day Without An Immigrant (May 1, 2006)

2018.0073 - Posters and clothing, including monarch butterfly wings, used in the DACA protest on March 5, 2018

2018.0156 - Friendship bracelets made by teenage girls in a Texas detention center

2018.0198 - Poster, "Stand with Immigrant Workers"

2019.0321 - Moises Serrano Collection (North Carolina). Identification cards including passport, drivers licenses, Mexican consulate card, Latino Credit Union card, and DACA identification cards

2020.0018 - Bruno Hinojosa Collection (North Carolina). Brick from Poder Emma's cooperatively-owned community center and T-shirt from "The Dream is Coming" campaign

2020.0048 - Javier Jairo Morales Collection (Chicago, IL). Graduation cap, gown, stole, and monarch butterfly wings

2022.0130 - Elver Barrios Collection (North Carolina). Graduation cap, gown, and honor society cords; megaphone; water bottle; messenger bag; and campaign literature

2022.0150 - Juan Escalante Collection. T-shirts from "The Dream is Coming" and "Undocumented, Unafraid"

2022.0234 - Yajaira Gonzalez Collection (Nebraska). Planner, graduation cap, photographs, and books

2022.0286 - Gaby Pacheco Collection (Florida). Shoes worn on Trail of Dreams March

2022.0287 - Isabel Sousa-Rodriguez Collection (Florida). Boots worn on Trail of Dreams March

Materials at the Anacostia Community Museum Archives

Gateway/Portales Exhibition Records (ACMA Acc. 03-102)

Black Mosaic: Community, Race, and Ethnicity among Black Immigrants in Washington, D. C. Exhibition Records (ACMA Acc. 03-027)

Processing Information

Collection processed by Leigh Gialanella, digital archivist, 2023.

Preferred Citation

Undocumented Organizing Oral History Collection, Archives Center, National Museum of American History

Restrictions

Collection is open for research. Access and use of born-digital audio materials available in the Archives Center reading room or by requesting copies of materials at RightsReproductions@si.edu.

Conditions Governing Use

Collection items available for reproduction, but the Archives Center makes no guarantees concerning copyright restrictions. Other intellectual property rights may apply. Archives Center cost-recovery and use fees may apply when requesting reproductions.

Accruals

Further accruals are expected. The repository continues to add interviews to this collection on a regular basis.

Historical

Undocumented organizers have played a crucial role in U.S. politics over the last 20 years, most notably by securing the first significant piece of immigration reform since the 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act. The announcement of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) in 2012 broke a logjam by securing a limited immigrant right, the first granted in 26 years. This achievement represented a signature moment in U.S. history echoing Emancipation, Women's Suffrage and the Civil Rights movements, where people without citizenship or the right to vote changed government policy.

The origins of undocumented organizing in the 21st century can be traced back to 2001, when undocumented youth pushed for access to higher education. Up to the moment of high school graduation, undocumented youth, then and today, are guaranteed access to a K-12 public education by the landmark Supreme Court decision in *Plyer v. Doe* (1982). Yet upon graduation, their futures are foreclosed without protected access to higher education. They face the choice of silently slipping into wage work or returning to their home country. In 2001, Senators Dick Durbin (IL) and Orrin Hatch (UT) responded to the crisis and introduced the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors Act, otherwise known as the DREAM Act.

What had seemed like an easy bill to pass became implausible after the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001. Anti-immigrant sentiment spiked, encouraging Representative James Sensenbrenner (R-WI) to introduce highly

restrictive immigration legislation in the Border Protection, Anti-terrorism, and Illegal Immigration Control Act of 2005. Using the only tool available to them, hundreds of thousands of immigrants across the United States took to the streets in May 2006. Many undocumented youth organizers remember this moment as a potent lesson, introducing them to the power of people's movements.

With strong training and support from immigrant rights organizations, such as CHIRLA, NILC, National Council of La Raza, UCLA Labor Center, Casa de Maryland, NAKASEC, Latin American Coalition, Community Change, and Make the Road New York, among others, young activists formed undocumented-led organizations such as United We Dream (UWD), Immigrant Youth Justice League (IYJL), LA DREAM Team, and the New York State Youth Leadership Council (NYSYLC). As directly-impacted people, undocumented youth set their own agenda and developed innovative mass mobilization tactics.

Inspired by the May 2006 marches, undocumented youth began to focus on direct-action campaigns which peaked in 2009-10. Wearing high school graduation robes, they traveled to the U.S. Capitol and conducted sit-ins in congressional offices to push the passage of the DREAM Act. Others built upon Black organizing traditions and walked 1,500 miles from Florida to Washington, D.C. Paying homage to Civil Rights activism, this march, known as the Trail of DREAMs, wound its way through the U.S. South facing Ku Klux Klan activity along the way. Early organizers also borrowed from LGBTQ+ organizing tactics by "coming out of the shadows" and declaring themselves "undocumented and unafraid," thereby risking deportation. Strategically, they announced their status through scripted narratives emphasizing their "Americanness" as high-achieving, English-speaking students raised on the American Dream. These strategies paid off. Anti-immigration sentiment still ran high, but popular opinion swung in favor of the DREAMers as "Americans" despite their legal status.

To take advantage of this political opening, undocumented organizers fiercely advocated that the DREAM Act be placed at the top of the immigration rights agenda. As DREAMers, they had a strong chance of success in creating the first pathway to citizenship since the 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act. They argued that the DREAM Act could serve as a wedge, widening the door for other immigrants to gain legal status. Immigrant rights organizations disagreed, unwilling to shift attention away from comprehensive immigration reform. This caused a rupture that resulted in undocumented activists breaking away from the immigrant rights platform and trusting their own knowledge and experience over those in established systems of power.

Lacking a large national organization to direct and mobilize campaigns, undocumented activists used the internet to create new systems for organizing. They constructed DREAMActivist.org to coordinate events nationwide, held synchronous Coming Out of the Shadows events, and ran online forums to share up-to-date information with chat rooms on how to navigate daily life as an undocumented person.

They pushed for the DREAM Act coordinating nationwide events to rally support for their cause including marches, demonstrations, sit-ins, fasting campaigns, and walkouts. Yet after nine years of gridlock, in 2010 Congress failed to pass the DREAM Act by five votes. Suddenly, the youth and students who had stepped forward faced an even greater risk of deportation.

In the wake of the DREAM Act's failure, undocumented organizers regrouped. A dedicated legal team investigated a largely-unknown administrative practice called "deferred action" from deportation. Presidents employed deferred action on a case-by-case basis to protect immigrants from deportation. What if this could be implemented more broadly? Working with immigration attorneys, organizers presented their case to the Obama administration requesting action on temporary relief. When the White House failed to act, they took to the streets. Undocumented people demonstrated, marched and even took over President Obama's re-election campaign offices. By applying pressure to the presidency, undocumented youth were once again putting forward all their energy to stop their own deportation and arrive at a solution, even if a temporary one.

On June 15, 2012, President Obama announced an executive action, Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA). The program offered some undocumented youth a two-year, renewable protected status to pursue employment if they could prove the following: that they arrived before their 16th birthday; could demonstrate living continuously in the United States since June 15, 2007; had not committed a felony; and were under 31 years of age.

DACA was in effect for five years when the Trump administration rescinded the program on September 5, 2017. Challenging the administration in court, undocumented organizers eventually took their case to the Supreme Court

and won. Yet the June 18, 2020, Supreme Court majority opinion ruled based on a technicality and made no judgement on the validity of deferred action. At the time of this writing (March 31, 2023), legal statuses such as DACA, Temporary Protected Status (TPS), and Deferred Enforced Department (DED) face intense challenges in the courts, the U.S. Congress, and state and local legislatures.

After securing DACA in 2012, the movement shifted. Recognizing that DACA only protected youth, and only a fraction of that population, undocumented organizers expanded their action to advocate for all 12 million undocumented U.S. residents. While some continue to organize nationally, successfully swinging presidential and U.S. Congressional elections and aggressively pursuing action in the courts, others explore goals aimed at relieving systematic oppression. Daily deportations separated families, leaving infants without parents and grandparents without loved ones. Building upon political practices from their home countries and combining them with lessons learned from Black freedom struggle, the Chicano movement, indigenous claims to sovereignty and LGBTQ+ liberation, undocumented activists organize for liberation. Moving beyond a civil rights/ immigrant rights paradigm, undocumented organizers are reconfiguring fundamentals of U.S. democracy by calling out the exclusionary nature of "rights" and "citizenship." Likewise, they actively wrestle with identity-based politics through coalition building across Black, (Afro)Latinx, Asian and queer communities against deportation, incarceration, and state surveillance. Grounded in community needs, they take a holistic approach that refuses to focus on one issue, one identity, over another.

These actions include (but are not limited to):

287(g): To protect residents from deportation, many successfully swing local elections to elect anti-287(g) candidates. 287(g) is a small clause in the U.S. Immigration and Nationality Act that permits sheriffs to notify Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) whenever they detain a person. In many places, 287g means that a random traffic stop, a broken taillight, jaywalking, or simply looking "foreign" can trigger a deportation pipeline—regardless of whether a person has broken the law.

Anti-Deportation Measures: As deportations spike, undocumented organizers employ a variety of tactics to protect families and communities. Many work on educating community members, organizing "Know Your Rights" campaigns. Others coordinate with abolition groups to halt the militarization of local police by federal agencies through direct action campaigns and court filings. Since September 11, 2001, the federal presence in local communities has spiked. Undocumented organizers closely monitor these agencies to block new policies that otherwise fly under the radar in the national political arena. (Also see 287(g))

Citizenship for All: After DACA (2012), many organizers began to question the tactic of emphasizing "Americanness" and "worthiness" to gain citizenship. Only an estimated 800,000 undocumented people applied for and qualified for DACA, leaving over 11 million without protection. Undocumented organizers shifted focus to campaign for citizenship that was not exclusionary, advocating for citizenship for all.

Economic Empowerment: To immediately address limited economic and homeownership opportunities for undocumented individuals without social security numbers, many organizers across the country devised innovative economic empowerment programs to support or create businesses owned by undocumented people. Others have formed economic cooperatives to acquire property.

Cultural Activism: The threat of deportation leaves many undocumented people living in isolation with limited access to community. By organizing around culture — festivals, music production, artistic expression — activists provide spaces, both virtually and in-person, for undocumented people to celebrate the richness of who they are as individuals and as a collective.

Beyond Citizenship: Those deported or voluntarily returned to their home country quickly recognize that they were misunderstood and stigmatized in both countries. Both "nation" and "citizenship", they argue, perpetuate exclusion, removing acceptance, services, belonging, and a life free from persecution. Emphasizing trans-local organizing, activists work to connect people on both sides of the border to provide the resources they need. They advocate for normalizing and decriminalizing migration to permit families to see friends and loved ones regardless of where they live.

Definitions

Undocumented refers to an individual's status who reside in the United States without a pathway to U.S. citizenship. Whether migrating to the United States as minors or adults, these residents are not granted permanent legal status by the U.S. government. Those who identify as undocumented have unfixed (or liminal) legal statuses including those 1) who are stateless (without citizenship in any country); 2) who are without U.S. citizenship or U.S. visas; and 3) who have temporary legal status such as Temporary Protected Status (TPS), Deferred Enforced Department (DED), or Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA). Without the protection of U.S. citizenship, undocumented individuals live and work with the constant threat of surveillance and deportation. Moreover, they are blocked from national programs providing access to fair housing, healthcare, and workers' rights, among others.

Undocumented organizing refers to political mobilizing led by undocumented individuals from 2001 to the present. The essential feature separating undocumented organizing from earlier forms of activism is the public declaration of legal status by movement leaders. Risking deportation, family separation, and loss of community, they choose to openly declare themselves "undocumented." This action provides the opportunity to speak freely about the conditions that they and their communities face. By "coming out of the shadows," they step into leadership positions and form their own organizations. By directly representing their communities, undocumented organizers have created a new sphere of highly effective immigrant rights organizing.

History of the Collecting Process

The Undocumented Organizing Collecting Initiative is a multi-year effort to preserve histories of undocumented organizing in the United States. Collecting oral histories and objects from undocumented organizers in Southern California, Chicago, Massachusetts, Nebraska, North Carolina, Washington, D.C., and Mexico City, the Initiative was the first collective research initiative to provide a national perspective on the multi-focal, multi-vocal undocumented organizing movement.

The Initiative is based out of the National Museum of American History's Center for Restorative History (CRH). The CRH works to redress exclusions in United States history using the principles of restorative justice. This project therefore centers the knowledge of undocumented organizers to address and document historical harms, present needs, and obligations in an effort to make history more accurate and inclusive.

The project's core team includes Patty Arteaga (Project Lead), Dr. Nancy Bercaw (Curator, Political History; Deputy Director, Center for Restorative History), José Centeno-Meléndez (Oral Historian), Delia Beristain Noriega (Assistant Oral Historian), and Alex Hanesworth (content creator and Project Director of Digital Media).

Scope and Contents

This collection contains oral history interviews, interview transcripts, and indexes with timestamps and descriptions documenting the lives and experiences of undocumented organizers. In some cases, the original recordings and transcripts have been redacted upon request of the interviewee.

The oral histories cover immigration to the United States, community organizing work, and such topics as deportation, mass incarceration, anti-Black violence, family separation, and food insecurity.

Arrangement

This collection is arranged into three series, each organized alphabetically by last name of interviewee.

Series 1: Transcripts, 2019-2022

Series 2: Born-Digital Interviews, 2019-2022

Series 3: Indexes, 2019-2022

Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

Subjects:

- Access to Higher Education
- Activism
- Asian American
- Black American
- Black Lives Matter movement
- Black people -- History
- Black people -- Race identity
- COVID-19 Pandemic, 2020-
- Central Americans -- United States
- Citizenship
- Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (U.S.)
- Deportation
- Detention of persons -- United States
- Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors Act (DREAM Act)
- Drivers' licenses
- English language -- Study and teaching -- Foreign speakers
- Immigrants
- Immigrants -- United States
- Korean Americans
- LGBTQ+
- Latinos
- Mexican Americans
- Oral history
- Personal narratives
- Political activists
- Political campaigns
- Protest and social movements
- Social justice
- South Americans -- United States
- Southern California
- Storytelling
- Student movements

Cultures:

- Asian American
- Black American
- Central Americans -- United States
- Korean Americans
- Latinos
- South Americans -- United States
- Southern California

Types of Materials:

- Born digital
- Identity cards

Transcripts

Names:

Arteaga, Stefania
Barrios Chay, Elver Udiel
Carvente, Miguel
Castellanos, Maria Fernanda
Choi, Glo Harn
Godinez, Gladys
Gonzalez, Yajaira
Hinojosa Ruiz, Bruno
Jeon, Hyo-Won
Kim, Jung Woo
Magaña Linares, César
Merino, Oliver
Morales, Jairo Javier
Ramirez, Marla Andrea
Salgado, Julio, 1983-
Serrano, Moises
Siliceo Perez, Carolina

Places:

Chicago (Ill.)
Los Angeles (Calif.)
Nebraska
New York City
North Carolina
Washington (D.C.) -- Washington

Container Listing

Series 1: Born-Digital Interviews, 2019-2022

Item NMAH-AC1581-
BDA0001

[Arteaga, Mayra Stefania, 2019-11-05](#)

5.3 Gigabytes (Total Running Time: 03:50:01; audio/wav)

Notes:

Mayra Stefania Arteaga, more commonly known as Stefania, is an immigrant rights organizer in Charlotte, North Carolina, who co-founded Comunidad Colectiva, a grassroots organization that led a successful election campaign to terminate a longstanding immigration enforcement partnership between Mecklenburg County and the Department of Homeland Security called 287(g). In this interview, Arteaga shares memories of life in El Salvador, coming of age in the Boston area and in Charlotte, North Carolina, her introduction to immigrant rights organizing, Comunidad Colectiva's role in helping elect the first African American sheriff in Mecklenburg County, and the termination of 287(g). She also reflects on the evolution of youth-led immigrant rights organizing in Charlotte.

Item NMAH-AC1581-
BDA0002

[Barrios Chay, Elver Udiel, 2020-01-18](#)

4.95 Gigabytes (Total Running Time: 04:46:37; audio/wav)

Notes:

Elver Udiel Barrios Chay's early organizing work helped form undocumented youth-led activist spaces in Charlotte, North Carolina. In this oral history, Chay reflects on his migration journey to the U.S., his educational experiences in Charlotte, his introduction to the world of activism, and his role as a co-founder of United 4 The Dream, a youth-led organization that advocated for the passage of the federal DREAM Act and tuition equity. This oral history also includes numerous memories of campaigns for tuition equity and pushes for immigration reform, including a multi-city van tour, a walk from Charlotte to Raleigh, and the meaning behind wearing a graduation gown at rallies.

Item NMAH-AC1581-
BDA0011

[Carvente, Miguel, 2021-02-15](#)

3.75 Gigabytes (Total Running Time: 03:37:08; audio/wav)

Notes:

Miguel Carvente is a formerly undocumented social studies teacher who organized with one of the earliest undocumented student-led organizations in the country, Improving Dreams, Equity and Access (IDEAS) at UCLA. In this oral history, he reflects on his youth growing up in a predominantly undocumented Mexican American community while attending a predominantly white school, struggling to pay his way through higher education as an undocumented student, the huge importance of finding community with other undocumented students in intimate ways, the difficult decision to "come out" publicly as undocumented to further his advocacy, working in media relations on behalf of IDEAS while advocating for the DREAM Act, the complex process of applying for citizenship, and how being formerly undocumented informs his work in education today. Miguel also

shares his personal experiences working on the landmark book *Title Underground Undergrads* alongside other organizers and professors, his time at the UCLA Labor Center, and memories of working with Tam Tran.

Item NMAH-AC1581-
BDA0012

[Castellanos, Maria Fernanda, 2022-12-09](#)

1.68 Gigabytes (Total Running Time: 01:41:41; audio/wav)

Notes:

Maria Fernanda Castellanos, more commonly known as Fernanda, is an immigrant rights organizer at Organized Communities Against Deportations (OCAD) in Chicago, Illinois. In this oral history, she shares memories of growing up in Mexico City, and later adapting to life in the South Side of Chicago where she navigated challenges like gun violence and a lack of structural support for immigrant students. Fernanda became politically active after the life altering moment in which her mother faced deportation proceedings, leading her to organize, draw national attention to her case (Abuelita Genoveva campaign), and file a lawsuit against USCIS in order to keep her family together. She reflects on the role of civil disobedience, coalition building, and the use of popular education to organize for Abuelita Genoveva and to dismantle broader systems of oppression, such as the hyper-policing and racial profiling of Black and Brown communities through gang databases, and the prison-to-deportation pipeline.

Item NMAH-AC1581-
BDA0013

[Choi, Glo Harn, 2022-12-08](#)

1.82 Gigabytes (Total Running Time: 01:50:36; audio/wav)

Notes:

Glo Harn Choi is an immigrant rights organizer with the HANA Center in Chicago, Illinois. Originally from South Korea, Glo and his family immigrated to the U.S. in 1996. His parents came to the U.S. to continue their education and decided it was necessary to remain in the U.S. when Glo's sister was diagnosed with autism. In this interview, Glo reflects on his early years, growing up in Arlington Heights, attending ESL classes, and building community at the HANA Center. Glo shares what it means to grow up and enter adulthood as someone with liminal status and later navigating life as fully undocumented. He delves into the lack of structural support and the consequent financial struggles he and his family experienced, which were directly tied to their immigration status. His experience working in the restaurant industry brought to light some of the systemic changes he wanted to see in his workplace and in broader society, and he eventually attended college classes that provided the tools to frame those issues. Glo first connected with a community of organizers at the HANA Center in 2018, during a fundraiser gala for the Journey to Justice Bike Tour that would become his entry point into organizing. He shares highlights of the bike tour and the connections and friendships that emerged from that shared experience, as well as his personal growth as a community organizer. Glo reflects on the various campaigns they worked on, including Citizenship for All, their push for the RISE Act and Healthy Illinois which focused on education and access to health care for the undocumented community. He shares what it meant to not only participate, but also capture these moments in real time through his

photography as this movement unfolded before him. He pushes back on the DREAMer narrative that has historically excluded him and many others from the conversation about who is undocumented in this country. Finally, he shares his hopes for the future, namely seeing his parents and community thrive and participate fully in society.

Item NMAH-AC1581-
BDA0014

[Godinez, Gladys, 2022-08-10](#)

2.82 Gigabytes (Total Running Time: 02:51:11; audio/wav)

Notes:

Gladys Godinez is a community organizer based in Lexington, Nebraska, and co-founder of United by Culture Media. In this interview, Gladys shares memories of growing up in Guatemala, migrating to Inglewood, California, and later to rural Nebraska with her family. She reflects on her experience co-founding multiple student groups to support immigrant communities in Nebraska during high school and college, her work within the nonprofit sector, and working alongside concerned community leaders to address the disproportionate effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on immigrant workers in meatpacking plants. She also details her experience developing rapid response efforts during the massive ICE raids in O'Neill and surrounding towns in 2018, the emotional toll this work took on her, the numerous women who mentored her throughout these efforts, and her approach to storytelling via United by Culture Media for organizing and building communal care across racial lines.

Item NMAH-AC1581-
BDA0015

[Gonzalez, Yajaira, 2022-08-10](#)

3.24 Gigabytes (Total Running Time: 03:16:21; audio/wav)

Notes:

Yajaira Gonzalez is a formerly undocumented community organizer and social worker raised in Omaha, Nebraska. In this interview, Yajaira recalls childhood memories of Monterrey, Mexico, of migrating to and growing up in a predominantly Latino immigrant community in South Omaha, and the steps she took to organize local residents to push for access to Professional and Driver's Licenses for DACA recipients in the state of Nebraska. Yajaira recalls the origins of Young Nebraskans in Action, their numerous campaigns to support immigrants regardless of status, supporting Get Out The Vote efforts during the 2016 presidential elections, building coalitions across the state, navigating the politics of Nebraska's unicameral legislator, overriding the governor's veto in favor of LB 623, and the significance of training a new generation of organizers through her work in higher education.

Item NMAH-AC1581-
BDA0008

[Hinojosa Ruiz, Bruno, 2020-01-20](#)

2.51 Gigabytes (Total Running Time: 02:25:13; audio/wav)

Notes:

Bruno Hinojosa Ruiz is an undocumented local community organizer in Asheville, North Carolina, whose grassroots efforts span building cooperative community spaces to fighting for access to driver's licenses, and from participating in immigrant rights marches to responding to deportation raids and police checkpoints. In this oral history, Hinojosa Ruiz shares memories of the aforementioned experiences while unpacking how organizations like CIMA (Compañeros Inmigrantes de las Montañas en Acción) and

PODER Emma Community Ownership Project center the needs of undocumented people. He also shares memories of his childhood in Mexico, moving to Asheville, experiences in higher education, life in the city's service industry, and his introduction to immigrant rights organizing spaces.

Item NMAH-AC1581-
BDA0009

[Jeon, Hyo-Won \(Esther\), 2021-08-23](#)

3.51 Gigabytes (Total Running Time: 03:23:25; audio/wav)

Notes:

Hyo-Won (Esther) Jeon is a middle school teacher and former organizer with the National Korean American Service and Education Consortium (NAKASEC) who fought for immigrant rights and Citizenship for All. Her activism began in high school through online research and organizing as a way of connecting with other undocumented students around the country. In this interview, Esther reflects on her initial encounter with NAKASEC, the Journey to Justice bike trip with NAKASEC members and the importance of building community within the movement, the vigil hosted outside of the White House preempting Trump's plan to cancel the DACA program, the fight for the Clean DREAM Act, the movement for Citizenship for All, building a coalition across racial / ethnic lines, the COVID pandemic, and the 2020 presidential election(s).

Item NMAH-AC1581-
BDA0003

[Kim, Jung Woo, 2020-12-16](#)

3.6 Gigabytes (Total Running Time: 03:28:33; audio/wav)

Notes:

Jung Woo Kim is an undocumented community organizer who builds coalitions across race and national lines in the fight for citizenship for all. In this oral history, he reflects on the cultural differences between South Korea and the United States, the difficulty of survival as a young undocumented person who had to entirely support themselves, his journey towards securing in-state tuition in California through AB 540, how obtaining DACA affected his personal life, and what it took NAKASEC to organize multiple communities across the U.S. Campaigns mentioned in this interview include 24-hour vigils in front of the White House in response to Trump's plan to cancel the DACA program, the fight for the clean DREAM Act, a Journey to Justice bike trip with NAKASEC members, and building a movement for Citizenship for All.

Item NMAH-AC1581-
BDA0017

[Magaña Linares, César, 2022-08-07](#)

1.73 Gigabytes (Total Running Time: 01:45:15; audio/wav)

Notes:

César Magaña Linares is an immigrant rights advocate, a Temporary Protected Status (TPS) holder, and an immigration attorney based in Omaha, Nebraska. In this interview, César reflects on his life in rural Fremont, Nebraska, what it means to grow up in a meat packing plant town where people are targeted for immigration raids, and life as a TPS holder from El Salvador. César identifies the DREAMer Movement and his college years at the University of Nebraska Omaha (UNO) as his entry point into organizing, which propelled him to advocate for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), fight to pass Driver's Licenses and professional licenses, and participate in efforts to stop the rescission of TPS during the Trump administration.

Item NMAH-AC1581-
BDA0004

[Merino, Oliver, 2020-09-15](#)

3.64 Gigabytes (Total Running Time: 03:30:41; audio/wav)

Notes:

Oliver Merino is an immigrant rights organizer who co-founded Comunidad Colectiva, a grassroots organization in Charlotte, North Carolina, that led a successful election campaign to terminate a longstanding immigration enforcement partnership between Mecklenburg County and the Department of Homeland Security called 287(g). In this oral history, Merino reflects on his early memories growing up in Buenavista, Mexico, migrating to Monroe, North Carolina, his introduction to immigrant rights organizing spaces and the need to create immigrant-led spaces, his work fighting for DAPA (Deferred Action for Parents of Americans and Lawful Permanent Residents) and immigrants who have been criminalized, the impact of Black organizing spaces, and the importance of the Charlotte Uprisings for cross-racial coalition efforts.

Item NMAH-AC1581-
BDA0005

[Morales, Jairo Javier, 2020-02-22](#)

1.22 Gigabytes (Total Running Time: 02:21:36; audio/wav)

Notes:

Jairo Javier Morales is a mixed-media artist and student affairs professional who notably came out as a DACA student at his college graduation ceremony in 2019 upon revealing custom-made fabric monarch butterfly wings attached to his robe. In this oral history, Morales shares stories of his childhood in the Pilsen neighborhood of Chicago, Illinois, the roles education and community-based activism played early on in his life, what the process of getting DACA was like for him and his family, and social justice efforts he led in college through organizations like La Unida and Queer Student Alliance. He also speaks at length on political activism through art, building bridges amongst different student groups in college, the process of creating custom-made monarch butterfly wings, memories leading up to crossing the stage on graduation day, and embracing his own intersecting identities as a gay Mexican immigrant.

Item NMAH-AC1581-
BDA0018

[Ramírez, Marla Andrea, 2020-12-02](#)

1.65 Gigabytes (Total Running Time: 03:20:41; audio/wav)

Notes:

Marla Andrea Ramírez is a history professor and former organizer with one of the earliest undocumented student-led organizations in the country, Improving Dreams, Equity and Access (IDEAS) at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA). In this oral history, Marla reflects on her early life in Zamora, Michoacán, Mexico in the early 1990s, and shares how NAFTA's impact on small businesses resulted in her family migrating to Los Angeles in 1996. Marla also shares memories of the economic and legal barriers she navigated as a student seeking access to higher education, details around the origins, community building, and advocacy efforts that helped IDEAS' presence grow throughout California, and reflections on the national impact fellow organizers Tam Tran and Cinthya Felix made in early undocumented student-led organizing spaces.

Item NMAH-AC1581-
BDA0010

[Salgado, Julio, 2020-11-23](#)

2.6 Gigabytes (Total Running Time: 02:29:56; audio/wav)

Notes: Julio Salgado is a queer artist who chronicles the immigrant rights and justice movement through his visual art. In this oral history, he reflects on his childhood in Mexico and the ways masculinity was pushed on him growing up, his family's decision to stay in the United States when his sister fell ill on a family trip to Los Angeles, seeing his openly gay uncle and the impact this had on his life, the role art and journalism played for him in college, the mentorship he received by other artists and writers, and making art about the undocumented movement. He also reflects on the complicated legacy of different symbols and narratives that were taken up by the undocumented movement, his evolution as an artist, queer ancestry, and his work to uplift undocumented artists in media through CultureStrike/The Center for Cultural Power.

Item NMAH-AC1581-
BDA0006

[Serrano, Moises, 2019-11-06](#)

1.48 Gigabytes (Total Running Time: 02:51:25; audio/wav)

Notes: Moises Serrano is an undocumented community organizer and public speaker whose activist trajectory has brought visibility to the intersections of being gay, brown, undocumented, and Mexican American in the rural South. In this oral history, Serrano reflects on his early memories growing up in Yadkin County, North Carolina, within the context of rising anti-immigrant sentiments post-September 11, 2001, the struggles he faced to embrace his own queer and undocumented Latino identities, and work conditions in rural North Carolina. Moises also reflects on his experiences participating in a nascent immigrant rights movement out of rural North Carolina, including forming a grassroots organization called El Cambio in 2010, the challenges of being a storyteller, and the significance of shifting DREAMer narratives on a local and national scale.

Item NMAH-AC1581-
BDA0007

[Siliceo Perez, Carolina, 2020-01-19](#)

1.13 Gigabytes (Total Running Time: 02:11:11; audio/wav)

Notes: Carolina Siliceo Perez is a writer and, at the time of the interview, a clerk in the communications department for the Buncombe County sheriff's office in North Carolina. In this oral history, Carolina shares her experiences growing up between North Carolina and Florida as a daughter of migrant farmers, how she found stability in storytelling and books, and the multiple challenges she faced navigating everyday life in western North Carolina due to her undocumented status. She also discusses how language and education shaped her life as a writer and an interpreter, significance of narratives, and how the media has produced incomplete stories of undocumented people.

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