February 1997

Grace Pelaez oral history interview by Ana Varela-Lago, February 5, 1997

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AVL: Okay, let's start by talking a little bit about your family. Could you tell me, how did your family first come to Tampa? Your grandparents, for instance.

GLP: Well, my grandparents came from Cuba. They were from Spanish ancestry. Do you want their names?

AVL: Yes. Please.

GLP: José Villavizanes. And he came, his ancestors came from Vizcaya. And my grandmother, Angelina Perez Villavizanes, they were from Spain—right now, I can't remember too—but they both were born and came from Santiago de las Vegas, which I understand is a Spanish colonial town in Cuba. My mother was born there. And with four, no, she and her oldest sister were born there. But then the other two sisters and her brother were born in the United States. She arrived at the age of five. My daddy was the only one from his family who immigrated to the U.S. He was born in Navias, Ponticiella. Pojos? In the province of Oviedo, I understand. Asturias. And I understand, I believe, that he came at the age of 13.

AVL: To Tampa.

GLP: To Cuba.

AVL: I see.

GLP: To work for a cousin who had a store. And shortly thereafter he came to the United States.
AVL: What did they do in Tampa, originally?

GLP: I believe that they came directly to work as cigar workers.

AVL: Both of them?

GLP: Both of them.

AVL: Your mother too. Did they settle in West Tampa, or Ybor City—?

GLP: They settled in Ybor City. And my mother and dad—married. And an interesting thing is that all my aunts married asturianos—I don't know if that, is interesting or not but, there was a—

AVL: How did your parents meet? Do you know?

GLP: I don't really know, but through dances, I think—there were a lot of social activities through the Latin Clubs. And there was a lot of opportunity for the girls to meet the guys. And right now, I can't remember when they married, but I have the, stop, the marriage license. [recording stops while we search for the document]

AVL: So your parents got married in 1929?

GLP: ’21.

AVL: ’21. Okay. Did they marry in the church? Do you know?

GLP: No. They had a civil wedding. And they both worked, and during, I understand, there were strikes. And I recall their saying that they went to live in St. Augustine. For a while.

AVL: And then they would return to Tampa again?

GLP: And they returned to Tampa. And they did not have a family for eight years because they were saving money to go visit the family in Spain. My dad wanted my mother to see where he was born. So then they started a family and I was born. In 1930. And I'm the oldest of two sisters. The other one is two years younger. And then the youngest was born in 1937. The middle of the Spanish Civil War. [recording stops]

AVL: How did your parents experience the Depression? Do you have any idea, living in the ’30s, in Tampa, in Ybor City? How did they manage?

GLP: They managed, financially?

AVL: Yes. I heard that a lot of people actually had to leave Ybor City and went to other
areas to find work.

GLP: I think—

AVL: Were they still working in the cigar factories at that point?

GLP: Yes. I guess they managed, because both of them worked. And we lived with my grandparents. So I guess that was one way of—the family, with my maternal grandparents, lived in the same house. My grandmother cared for us while my dad and my grandfather—and my mother—went to work.

AVL: Okay. Tell me a little bit more about your father. What memories do you have of him? Was he involved in the Latin clubs or in politics in any way?

GLP: My father was very involved in civic and social organizations.

AVL: What was his name? We never—

GLP: Ceferino—

AVL: Ceferino.

GLP: Lopez—

AVL: Lopez.

GLP: —Lopez.

AVL: So was he a member of different societies?

GLP: He was a member of the Centro Asturiano, and served on the board of directors. For many years. He was a very active member in the Loyal Knights of America, serving as secretary at one time. He was a founder of the Centro Obrero, which is the Labor Temple. And that Cultura? What's the name of that?

AVL: The Junta de Cultura?

GLP: Junta de Cultura Española. He was very proud of serving in these organizations. But at the same time he was very proud to be in the United States. And he did become nationalized. And so did my mother.

AVL: When was that?

GLP: He became a citizen at, in 1940. And my mother in 1942. My grandparents never became nationalized.
AVL: His job in the factory—what exactly did he do? Was he a cigar maker, or—

GLP: He was a cigar maker—

AVL: was he a foreman, or—?

GLP: —was a bonchero.

AVL: Bonchero. And your mother also?

GLP: Bonchera.

AVL: Both of them. Did they work in the same cigar factory?

GLP: They worked, generally, yes. In the same cigar factory.

AVL: And what cigar factory was that, do you remember?

GLP: Well, in several, but the one I remember mostly was Garcia y Vega, and La, what they call La Pila—I don't know if that was a nickname or the real name, on 14th Avenue and 16th Street. We lived across the street. I was born: 1716 14th Avenue. And lived at 1414—no I'm sorry, 1616 14th Avenue—until they built a home on Columbus Drive and 13th Street.

AVL: What are your memories of growing up in West Tampa and—

GLP: Ybor City.

AVL: In Ybor City. Sorry.

GLP: We never—I had a very happy childhood. We were very well taken care of. We always had pretty dresses for the holidays. They were specially made, like Shirley Temple's. We'd look at the dresses, the cut-out dolls, and my mother would take them to the dressmaker. And the two of us who were close in age dressed alike. People thought we were—

AVL: Twins

GLP: —twins. We always had pretty dresses. And shoes. But that was an occasion only for the holidays. We always had a pretty dress, but you know I'm sure they econom—you know, they had to be careful where they spent their money. But we were always well fed. We had a happy family. I had aunts that we visited, we had picnics with them, and, it was a happy childhood.

AVL: Did you grow up speaking Spanish and—?
GLP: Yes.

AVL: —pretty much in a Spanish environment?

GLP: I spoke Spanish until I went to kindergarten. At the Wolf Settlement, which was a mission, a Methodist mission for the people in Ybor City. They were very effective. They had schools, they had crafts. They had Girl Scout troops. And then they had their church. I believe it was on 11th Avenue at the time. And, I never did want to go to the Sunday school.

AVL: Why not?

GLP: I don't know. They used to come pick me up, and I would hide in the closet. But my sister would go. And enjoy—I did go to Wolf Settlement for kindergarten. And I liked it. Except they insisted that I learn to eat Anglo food. Jello. With a salad. And I had problems with that. But they said I had to become Americanized. And that was one way.

AVL: That included the food?


AVL: What other schools did you attend?

GLP: I attended [V.M.] Ybor School. Grades one through six. I liked school; I did well. Then I went to junior high—at George Washington Junior High. And then I went to Hillsborough High School. When really at the time it was understood that the Latin kids from Ybor City should go to Jefferson.

AVL: Why is that?

GLP: All the West Tampa kids went there. I don't know.

AVL: Was it the proximity?

GLP: Hillsborough High School. I think it was because of the proximity. But I had cousins who were very good athletes. And, there was a nice tradition that I wanted to follow. So a few of my friends decided we wanted to go there. And, that's how we went to the Hillsborough High School. Instead of Jefferson. [phone rings; recording stops] It's, like I say, more emotional than anything.

AVL: Yes, did your family belong to the Frente Popular?

GLP: My father was very involved in the Frente Popular. I remember that word always being said.
AVL: Do you remember any time that you actually realized that there was this war in Spain?

GLP: Yes—

AVL: Like, somebody told you this, the civil war in Spain has started—I mean, how do you remember, how the people got organized and started?

GLP: I remember the Spanish Civil War because there were a lot of protests, and demonstrations. And I was involved. As a child. Dressing up in the miliciano outfit. And we would go out to the fincas. I don't know exactly where; I was about seven years old. And it was very emotional. I loved it. I, we learned the songs—"No pasarán," and we'd sing it. Then we would make these signs [raising the fast], and marching, and it was a lot of fun. It was something really to look forward to. And we'd give the Spanish signal. With the arm up and the, I guess it's the power sign. And, I felt very emotional about it, but I really didn't know too much what was involved except it was a war with Spain against [Francisco] Franco—

AVL: Did your parents talk in the house about it? Do you have any sense of—were there—

GLP: Yes.

AVL: —discussions, in the home about—?

GLP: Yes, I had an uncle whose brother had died, in the war, in Spain. He was in Spain. And it was, I remember the sadness. Then I remember the church; that we were not—to go to the Catholic church. And we had neighbors that were going to Catholic school. And because they continued to do so, they were said to be Fascist. And I would fight with the little neighborhood kid, and call him a Fascist, but I really didn't know what it was all about. And you wanna know how I was affected by it?

AVL: Sure, yes.

GLP: Okay, My grandmother was a devout Catholic. And she was of course Cuban, so I guess she did not feel that strongly as my father did against the church. And she would go, but we did not talk about church. Maybe if we wanted to, we'd go once in awhile, but nothing was said—and my mother never went to church.

AVL: Not even before the war? Or, was the war the cause that the—?

GLP: Well, I was so young that I really don't know if it was the war—but my mother really, I think, believed and wanted to but she never did talk about the church. Because I guess she knew my father was so against it. When my next sister in age and I were married, we knew we could not marry in the Catholic church because my dad would not set foot. So we married in the Methodist church. And this went on for years and—my
younger sister who was born in '37 was not allowed to be baptized. And I still get upset about it.

AVL: Why? [recording stops] Yes, you were telling me—

GLP: I'm okay now.

AVL: —about your youngest sister. She was never baptized?

GLP: Oh, yes, yes, she was never baptized, and that was a source of sadness in the home because my grandmother insisted that she be—there were never harsh words or strong words. But my mother would not talk about it in front of her. But she—I would think I would hear her tell my dad that, you know, she wanted her to be baptized and, finally, over a period of five years, my dad, after I guess, that would be in about '42—he allowed my sister to be baptized. But I remember the day exactly because he took us. By car. And my grandparents were the godfather and godmother. And my mother, my sister, and I got down at the church. But my dad stayed in the car. He never entered the church. But there was sense of relief that she had been baptized in the Catholic Church.

AVL: And he never returned to the Church?

GLP: No. Then, when I was married—and my other sister were married—we married in a Methodist church. And, but what's ironic or strange about it—

AVL: Did he attend your wedding?

GLP: Yes, he did. He gave us away.

AVL: So his problem was with the Catholic Church in particular.

GLP: Yes, but then as he grew older and, my youngest sister got married, she insisted on being married in the Catholic church. And she was one that could convince him of anything. She was the young little thing. And I believe she married in '63 or '64. And he did give her away in the Catholic church. So that trauma was—resolved. Then I had the trauma of wanting to go back to where I felt that I really belonged, and I did that through my oldest son. He started school in the Methodist schools. And as he began to question religion—he studied all the different religions—and he one day told me, "Our religion is Catholic."

So he took it upon himself at the age of—I think it was 15—to go to the Catholic church, arrange for instructions, and made himself a Catholic. He came home and he told me that I needed to go back to the Church. And he made arrangements for my other two children to have instructions and finally we all ended up in the Catholic Church. My husband and I were, had our marriage blessed. And I feel that that resolved a problem that started—and that started during the Spanish Civil War, and finally I feel it was resolved in, I think it was, 1970. So it was a period of about—30, wasn't it about 30 years? And finally that
was the end of the Spanish Civil War. Syndrome.

AVL: How about your husband's family? Did he experience a similar situation?

GLP: No, because his father was, he was born in New York City. And his, on his mother's side they were real Asturians. And I see a picture of the uncle in the Loyal Knights book there. But, he never talked too much about it. And his father was a Merchant Marine man. So he was gone. A lot. So I don't, I never heard him talk about any discord or discussion. And he lived in Tampa Heights; he was neither from Ybor City nor from West Tampa. So I don't—they weren't involved in, in the situation.

AVL: Did you, do you have a sense that there were a lot of problems with the church? Do you remember specific events, with the Catholic church here in Tampa, during the war?

GLP: I personally I experienced it more than politically because my other cousins—now I recall—that, whose fathers were from Asturias, they, none of them married in the Catholic church either. They're all baptized in the Catholic church. But the fathers I guess felt strongly against it. Not much was said about it. But that's the way it was.

AVL: Yes. Okay, tell me a little bit, I see a picture of you here, dressed as a miliciano. Tell me a little bit about these picnics or these excursions you went to. What do you remember about them?

GLP: I just remember being very excited and happy about participating. There were the big ladies, that were dressed in uniforms that were different. But, I enjoyed singing the songs and participating very much.

AVL: Do you remember any of the songs you sang at that time?

GLP: Yes.

AVL: Could you sing some for us?

GLP: Oh, I don't. I'll say the words but I don't know that I want to sing it. I don't have a—

AVL: I have some of the lyrics. Maybe you remember some of them?

GLP: I can sing it. I have a terrible, the tune; I might be out of, out of tune, but—

AVL: Would you like to try?

GLP: I will. [sings:]

\begin{verbatim}
Ahí van marchando los milicianos
Van para el frente con gran valor
A dar sus vidas, se van cantando
Antes que triunfe Franco el traidor
\end{verbatim}
En el espacio van los fascistas
Bombas aéreas destrozarán
La bella urbe capitalina
Pero a Madrid ¡No Pasarán!

AVL: Very good.

GLP: Matan mujeres, niños y ancianos
Que por las calles suelen andar
Ésta es la hazaña de los Fascistas
Que allá en la historia se ha de gravar
Su sangre de héroes regó los campos

Aquí ya esta parte no me recuerdo muy bien. [not sung]

El cañón surge, tiembla la tierra
Pero a Madrid ¡No Pasarán!

I got mixed up in that. I don't think it—

AVL: So you used to sing these songs—

GLP: Oh, yes, we sang it all the time.

AVL: How about demonstrations? Did you use to go on demonstrations? Do you remember any of that?

GLP: No, the only thing was dressed up with the miliciano outfit. Holding the flag and parading around the, the finca. But, as far as demonstrations I think the older, the men went to De Soto Park I think, and we would go with my mother. To the park, and meet him as he came with the demonstrators, but I don't even know what it represented, what it was all about.

AVL: And who made the, the uniforms, the miliciano uniforms?

GLP: I think it was Mrs. Ramirez. I think.

AVL: She made all of those?

GLP: Yes. Well at least we went to her house to pick them up. And her daughter is—involved here. But I lost track of all these people through the years. I don't even remember who they are. Except my sister and my cousin.

AVL: So in your family everybody participated in the activities of the Frente Popular? Your mother, your father, all the children?

AVL: What kind of things did your mother do, for instance?

GLP: Well, my mother was busy working in the cigar factory and then she'd come home tired; she'd have the clothes to wash and the clothes to iron, and, she did not get politically involved. But she—did go to all the social activities.

AVL: Yes.

GLP: Yes.

AVL: What kind of activities do you remember?

GLP: Well, you mean social, like at the Centro Asturiano?

AVL: Um-hm.

GLP: We would go to las verbenas. And they would have gaiteros, and there would be dancing and yellow rice and chicken. We always went to those. The Centro Asturiano. The Loyal Knights would have outings too. They would have parties for the children. Christmas parties, I remember, where they'd give gifts to the children of the members. And I remember going to meetings at the Centro Obrero too, but I can't recall what it was all about. But my mother supported my father completely in all of these activities. But actively, I don't think—well some women did participate actively. But she didn't; she was mainly concerned with being a mother, at home.

AVL: And your father, for instance, what kind of things did he do? Did he collect money, or did he give speeches? What do you remember him doing?

GLP: I remember him maybe giving speeches and collecting money. Para el Frente Popular—But I know he was quite involved. Because my mother would complain about the time he spent, and she'd want him at home, with us, but.

AVL: Was your father politically involved with, did he belong to any political party? Do you know his political leanings?

GLP: No, he never did discuss them. But I remember having some beautiful books that I think were from—I don't remember from where; it might have been from the Russian revolution or whatever. And, they had beautiful pictures that I used to like to look at. But, I remember something about their having to be destroyed because some people were investigating, or looking for books or something and after that I didn't see them anymore, but—

AVL: So he actually destroyed them?
GLP: I think they were.

AVL: Because he feared that the—

GLP: Destroyed, because there was some fear that they might think that—he belonged to some organization or something; I was too young to really know what was happening.

AVL: You mentioned before [off the record] that you remembered a communist flag?

GLP: Yes.

AVL: On top of the cigar factory?

GLP: We lived across from La Pila, on 14th Avenue. And I remember a flag being raised, a red flag. And the workers were leaving; it was some big to-do about something and there was something about the communist flag. That I recall. And, I think there is a song about the communist flag that, called "Avanza Pueblo, el comunismo," but I really don't know too much about that.

AVL: Okay. Let's see. What can you tell me about the other groups living in Ybor City and West Tampa—the Italians, for instance, how did they relate to what the Spaniards were doing, in supporting the Republic?

GLP: Well, as far as supporting the Republic, I really don't have too much of a recollection. But we had a big group of Italians and my mother knew a lot of Italian ladies and she could speak some Italian and—there was good feeling, I think. We used to visit some of these Italian ladies in West Tampa; they always had this delicious fresh baked bread that we used to eat. And I looked forward to that—

AVL: Do you have a sense that they were united? In support—

GLP: In the civil war?

AVL: Yes.

GLP: No, I don't think they had—

AVL: Or that there were conflicts between the Spaniards and the Italians? Because [Benito] Mussolini was supporting Franco—

GLP: That, I remember that they, I think the Spaniards might kind of feel a little suspicious, is the word, of the Italians—because I don't think they felt that they were part of, had anything to do in support of the Spanish Civil War. And I think some of the Cuban families did not—I don't have the feeling—supported the Spanish Civil War. That was my personal experience because we had some neighbors whose children still went to the Catholic school during that time when you were not to be involved with the school or
the church. And because they did, go to, attend the school, I called them Fascist, and fought with them. But, I really didn't know what it was all about.

AVL: How about the Americans? The Anglo-Americans, do you have a sense of how they—?

GLP: At the time, I did not have a sense of the Anglos because my world was Ybor City. I was only seven years old and I was going to the Wolf Settlement and to Ybor School and there were no Anglos there. So the Anglo world at that time did not exist for me.

AVL: Do you remember for instance, in your family, discussions about how the newspapers reported on the war? Anything.

GLP: No. That I don't. No.

AVL: How did your family and other people get their news about Spain? How did they keep informed about what was going on?

GLP: Well, I know my father was an avid reader. And he always had books, magazines and papers. But, I don't—he always subscribed to all, to all the local papers. So I really don't, I'm not aware of where he got the news.

AVL: And do you remember any of the Republican speakers, guest speakers they used to have here?

GLP: No.

AVL: The ambassador, or—any of the people who would come, to raise funds?

GLP: No. This for me was really more of a social than a political. And I know there were very strong feelings about Franco and all of this war, but, really, I had no sense of what it was all about. Except Franco was a traitor. But other than that, I didn't pay attention to the speakers, or too much about that. I was just involved with the novelty of the costumes and the music and the singing—and the eating.

AVL: So when you were attending these meetings and singing the song, what was your sense of what was going on?

GLP: Oh, I was—there was a big sense of pride, and this was something great that I was doing and it was very important, and that the Republicans were going to win the war.

AVL: Do you think people here thought that they would win the war?

GLP: As far as what I had seen, and the songs and all of that, it seemed like it. But I really couldn't tell; I was too young.
AVL: Do you remember when the war, when Franco actually won?

GLP: No.

AVL: The feelings of the community, of your family, your father, for instance?

GLP: Well, I'm sure there was a lot of sadness, but after that, nothing else was said. That I recall that was important to me. It was all forgotten because then came World War II, right?

AVL: Right.

GLP: And that was very important. Because then we had family involved in the—in our World War II. And then I guess the other just didn't matter any more.

AVL: How was your family's involvement in World War II?

GLP: All my cousins. One was a pilot. One was in the artillery. One was in the Navy. My uncle was—what do you call? Just a regular—

AVL: Private?

GLP: Private, yes—no, a Private First Class, yes. And my uncle was; I had one in each branch of the service. And we were very proud but very worried about them. We were lucky they all came out of it all right, but two of them were wounded. One received the Purple Heart. They wouldn't talk too much about the war afterward. But I remember that, from about '42 to '45, it was—and until the war ended—it was very consuming. My aunts were very upset, and there was, to me now this was the worst time. And then after the war, everyone began leaving Ybor City. My cousins went to college, I went to college, and, we didn't think of Ybor City anymore. We assimilated into the general—what would you call it?

AVL: Mainstream?

GLP: Mainstream, and—we all started our lives as adults and that was it.

AVL: How about your parents? Or your father in particular, did he ever think of going back to Spain?

GLP: He went back to Spain to visit. The first time in '29. His father was living, and he came back with many good memories, and stories. But he, his father, he remembers his father telling him, "The United States is wonderful, but don't bring their ideas to us."

AVL: Meaning what?

GLP: Meaning that they wanted to stay as they were and not—
AVL: What kind of ideas was he referring to?

GLP: I don't know. I don't know. He says, don't, leave your, it's all wonderful. But leave your ideas over there. And then he went back with my mother in '67. And he thoroughly loved going over there, but the United States was his country. And he was very proud to be here in Tampa and to have had his family. He was very proud that his three daughters had the opportunity of being college graduates. We three became teachers. His oldest grandson became a doctor. One grandson became a scientist, the other, one of the granddaughters became an attorney. And, he was very proud that, being here, as, with no roots or anything that the opportunity was there for his family to get somewhere.

AVL: When the Spanish Civil War was going on, was his family affected in any way?

GLP: I'm sure. In the village, yes. There was a lot of worry. A lot of—

AVL: Did he keep in touch with them?

GLP: Yes, yes. He kept in touch with them.

AVL: Through letters?

GLP: Through letters, yes.

AVL: So he was following it with them.

GLP: He was following it with the family. And then I had an uncle whose family was very involved. Like I say, a brother was killed.

AVL: He fought for the Republic?

GLP: For the Republicans, so there was a lot of—interaction there. And then there was another uncle who had a brother who was very, who fought also for the Republicans. From Aviles. So, there was a lot of communication. But I was not—you know, oblivious to it, because I was too young to worry about that.

AVL: Do you remember the people who were supporters of Franco? When the Spanish Civil War ended, did you have a sense that they took over, or they came out, in any way?

GLP: No.

AVL: No?

GLP: That I don't. No. Once it was over it was over, and I didn't hear more about it. I'm sure there was a lot to it, but I was not involved then.
AVL: And growing up, I mean, because Franco was in power for over 40 years, do you have a sense—were there discussions, as you were becoming an adult, still in your family about what was going on in Spain?

GLP: Yes.

AVL: In the '50s and '60s.

GLP: My father always thought of him as a terrible dictator. But what is ironic now is that, I have a son who kind of sympathizes with Franco, in the sense that he did a lot of, I don't know if he did a lot of good, but, he had a reason for being the way he was. I really don't get into it. Because really I'm not political minded. But, there are a lot of pros and cons.

AVL: Were there still debates going on? Later on, I mean.

GLP: Yes.

AVL: In the '40s and '50s in the community? About that. You know, how the war ended up, and what Franco was doing in Spain, and when they traveled to Spain; any comments?

GLP: No. No comments. It was more of a social trip and family trip. And in his village, when I visited in '82, even then, they didn't dare to speak politics. We kind of brought it up, but I don't even know how they feel. I don't know if they have some fear of expressing themselves, or—I sense that maybe they felt strongly but didn't want to discuss it in front of us. I had that sense. That my cousins' husbands had a strong sense of something, but they never expressed it. We went to Franco's tomb.

AVL: Oh, you did?

GLP: Yes. And, I kind of questioned a little bit, but they would not commit themselves so I didn't press. So I don't know how they feel politically over there.

AVL: Now why, let's say, somebody who doesn't know anything about the Tampa Latin community. How would you explain this reaction during the Spanish Civil War? Why was the community here so supportive of the Republic?

GLP: I don't know, because to me it's amazing that here they left the country, to leave it forever, because I think when the Spaniards came, they came to stay here. I don't understand why they felt so strongly toward what was happening in Spain. I don't know if it was a matter of pride. Or if they had some idealism. I think it was mostly idealism that they felt. But I can't see where it was that, a sense of patriotism. I don't understand that. Do you?—You know, because when they left, you don't have me on, do you?

Recording paused
AVL: Your father always told you that he didn't have to return—

GLP: No, I always had the feeling that he was in Tampa to stay because I asked him, "Why did you choose Tampa?" Because he traveled up north. And, he went to Spain, and he said that of all the places he had ever been to, Tampa was the best. And that this would be our home. He did love Spain. Because he traveled there for my mother to see his family and the home where he was born, and—he was proud of being a Spaniard. But then they came back and raised their family, and I think he realized that this is where he wanted his family to grow up—with the opportunities available that I don't think he felt the opportunities were back there in Spain. He did go back in '67. To see his family again, and they traveled all over and enjoyed Spain, and loved it. And he always loved Spain, and was very happy to have been born there, but as far as making his home, the United States was his home.

AVL: So did he ever tell you, or did you ever ask him, I mean, why was he so involved in this war? Back there, when he was so obviously—

GLP: No—

AVL: —American, or he was trying to become one?

GLP: I never asked him. But my son and I have wondered. You know why and, point out the fact that he left when he was so young, why should he be so involved in this Spanish Civil War? When he left it. And we at times, kind of laugh and say, "Here they all left, and came here, and they're so worried about what's happening over there." I would never have told him that, but I don't know what he would have said, because, I never asked.

AVL: That's interesting. Looking back from today, what would you say was the impact of the war on your life? And in the community?

GLP: In my life it was emotional, having to do with religion. It was spiritual, because of the grandmother being so devout a Catholic. And my mother so repressed that she never could express herself. And, he was so against it that, there were never any arguments, never harsh words. There was no quarrel. But there was this emotional tension. That I experienced growing up—with the church. That it took years for me to resolve.

AVL: Was there any kind of boycott in any way? Like you mentioned before, some of your neighbors—attended the Church

GLP: What I can understand—

AVL: —were they ostracized in any way?

GLP: Yes.
AVL: Really? In what ways?

GLP: Yes, those who remained were called Fascists. And, some of these older girls that were in this milicianos thing will tell you, because I understand some of them were going to the Catholic school at the time. And their parents took them out. And most of them went out of the school, but then those that remained were ostracized.

AVL: In what ways? I mean, what happened to them, did people—

GLP: No, just people would talk of them as "Esos son fascistas." Those are fascists.

AVL: Now if they went to the clubs for instance, I mean, would they be able to attend the clubs, or—?

GLP: Generally, those that stayed were not in the clubs, I guess. This was a particular Cuban family that I recall. Other than that, that was my direct experience. But, if they were ostracized in some other manner, you know I don't have that knowledge.

AVL: Did the Catholic church in Ybor City, did it actually do anything—?

GLP: They never did anything.

AVL: — to upset the Latin community? I mean was there any particular reason why the parents decided to pull their children out of school? Do you remember any single event that that was why?

GLP: I don't, no. I just think that it was like a war, with the church, and Franco, against the Republic. And there was—

AVL: So the Catholic church in Ybor City, expressed their support for Franco in any way?

GLP: No, I don't recall that they did. The Catholic church really didn't do anything. They did not communicate with the people. I understand that years back they would go to the homes and tell the people that were not married in the church that they were living in sin, and antagonize them. There was no good communication between the church. They did nothing to try to get the people into the church. They were just there. But the Protestant churches, they would go and, like the Presbyterian church had a strong influence in Ybor City because they would go out and they'd have pre-natal clinics, and they offered community services and they really encouraged the Ybor City residents to come to their church. But the Catholic church, absolutely, that I know of, did nothing to encourage that.

AVL: Why do you think people were sending their children to Catholic schools?

GLP: There's always been a feeling that the Catholic schools, give, have a better education than the public schools. It's always been understood that they, in part—
AVL: That was more the reason.

GLP: Yes, I think so.

AVL: An academic standard more than anything else.

GLP: I think so, but I really don't know.

AVL: Okay, well, to conclude the interview I would like to ask you, is there anything else you would like to add, or a question that I haven't asked you that you would like us to discuss?

GLP: No, I think we have covered it pretty well.

AVL: Okay. Thank you very much.

*End of interview*