

Guide for Interviewing Border Patrol Agents/INS Employees

Background

When and where were you born?

Where did you grow up?

When did you start working in the Border Patrol? Or for the INS?

Tell me about your training to be an agent.

How many years did you work for the Border Patrol? Or for the INS?

Do you speak Spanish? Were you required to learn Spanish for your job?

Experience working with braceros

Describe your role in the bracero program.

What year/s did you work with braceros?

Where was your job assignment? Describe what you did.

At screening stations/recruiting centers in Mexico

Where was the recruiting station/screening center where you worked? Chihuahua, Monterey, Hermosillo?

Was the screening done inside a building? Outside, weather permitting?

Did the center operate year round? When were the busiest times?

How many applicants were there on a given day?

Describe the screening process.

What were the qualifications to become a bracero? How did an applicant prove he met those qualifications?

Did you have to perform any kind of background check on the candidates?

What role did the Mexican government have in the screening process? Were Mexican officials present at the recruiting center?

What happened to the candidates after they passed the screening process? Where were they taken? How did they get there?

Where did you live while working at the recruiting/screening center in Mexico? Hotel?

Describe your typical workday.

What were your normal hours? Weekly schedule?

Besides paperwork, what other tasks did you perform at the recruiting/screening center?

Is there any particular incident that stands out in your mind?

At reception centers in U.S.

Where was the reception center where you worked? Eagle Pass, El Paso, Hidalgo, Nogales, El Centro?

Describe the building/s.

On average, how many days did a bracero stay at the reception center before processing was completed and he received his work permit and a contract?

Describe the process the candidates had to go through at the reception center.

What constituted the medical examination?

Were inoculations administered? Which ones?
Were the braceros required to bathe, shave, get hair cuts?
Was any disinfecting performed? Explain.
Were the braceros allowed to keep their personal belongings?
Describe the mess hall. How many meals per day?
Describe the housing at the reception center.

How were the work contracts arranged?
Did potential employers come personally to the reception centers to obtain workers?
When a bracero completed his work contract and returned to Mexico, was he required to pass back through a center, thereby making his departure from the U.S. official?
When a bracero returned to work in subsequent years, was he required to pass through the U.S. reception center each time?

Where did you live while working at the reception center? Hotel? Housing?
Describe your typical workday while at the reception center.
What were your normal hours? Weekly schedule?
Besides paperwork, what other tasks did you perform at the reception center?
Is there any particular incident that stands out in your mind?

Law Enforcement

What effect did the bracero program have on illegal crossings?
How did the bracero program affect employment of illegals?
As part of your job, did you check documentation of workers on farms and ranches? If so, describe your experiences.
Did you encounter mixed crews of braceros and undocumented workers?
Were there incidents when farmers or ranchers attempted to “dry out” some of their “wetbacks”? How did that work?

Did braceros cause problems while working in the U.S.?
If so, what kinds of problems? Labor unrest? Criminal behavior?
Describe any incidents in which you were involved.

Final Reflections

What were the effects of the bracero program on the work of the Border Patrol/INS?
What is your personal opinion of the bracero program?
What were the advantages and disadvantages of the program?
Should the bracero program be revived?