

Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Jose Alberto Lera

Part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library
Immigrant Stories Oral History project

Interview # IM-A-L-2016-030

Jose Alberto Lera immigrated to the United States in 1995 from Venezuela, to begin life with his wife, Yeni, also a Venezuelan immigrant. This interview is part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's *Immigrant Stories* Oral History Project.

Interview dates & location:

Date: Feb 25, 2016 Location: Carol Esarey home, Key Colony Beach, FL

Date: Jul 17, 2017 Location: Carol Esarey home, Key Colony Beach, FL

Interview Format: Digital audio

Interviewer: Carol Esarey, ALPL volunteer

Transcriber: _____

Edited by: _____

Total Pages: _____ Total Time: 1:21 + 1:18 / 1.35 + 1.3 = 2.65

Session 1: Growing up in Venezuela, marriage and immigration to Florida

Session 2: Adjusting to life in America and starting a business

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on September 21, 2017.

The interviews are archived at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library in Springfield, Illinois.

Transcript
being processed

© 2017 Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library

Abstract

Jose Alberto Lera, *Immigration Stories*, IM-A-L-2016-030

Biographical Information Overview of Interview: Jose Alberto Lera was born in Caracas, Venezuela on February 1, 1965 and raised there in the late 1960's to early 70's. Lera recalls that his childhood was simple, family oriented, and filled with storytelling by the family members, a key part of typical family gathering. His father instilled a strong work ethic in Jose, and he continues to live by the credo "be the best you can be." His father died when Jose was nineteen. Jose became a mechanic, working on any kind of boat, yacht, or marine engine. Eventually, he decided to immigrate to the United States, arriving in Miami, Florida in 1995 with little money and no fluency in English but with hopes and dreams to succeed and pursue a career in the marine maintenance work. Jose immigrated with his wife Yeni, and the couple struggled to live and survive in a new country. They worked together as a team in all aspects of life.

Jose eventually decided to move down to the Florida Keys and set up a home, establish roots, and use his extensive knowledge of maintaining watercraft to start his own business. He experienced defeat and discouragement, but also true encouragement and eventually success. (Jose is a master Yamaha Technician and owns his own business.) Both Yeni and Jose have found great friends and mentors over the years. They are raising two children. They are respected members of their community, and proud American citizens.

Subject Headings/Key Words: family life in Venezuela in the 1970's; Venezuela in the 1970's to 1990's; career choices and work opportunities for men in Venezuela, 1980-1995; difficulties for immigrants in Florida-1990's; learning English; adapting to life in the United States.

Note to the Reader: Readers of the oral history memoir should bear in mind that this is a transcript of the spoken word, and that the interviewer, interviewee and editor sought to preserve the informal, conversational style that is inherent in such historical sources. The Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library is not responsible for the factual accuracy of the memoir, nor for the views expressed therein. We leave these for the reader to judge.

COPYRIGHT

The following material can be used for educational and other non-commercial purposes without the written permission of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library. "Fair use" criteria of Section 107 of the Copyright Act of 1976 must be followed. These materials are not to be deposited in other repositories, nor used for resale or commercial purposes without the authorization from the Audio-Visual Curator at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library, 112 N. 6th Street, Springfield, Illinois 62701. Telephone (217) 785-7955