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Mary Lou Armendariz

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UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO

INSTITUTE OF ORAL HISTORY

INTERVIEWEE: Mary Lou Armendariz (1920-)
INTERVIEWER: Mario T. Garcia
PROJECT: _____
DATE OF INTERVIEW: November 3, 1982
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BIOGRAPHICAL SYNOPSIS OF INTERVIEWEE:

Member of Ladies LULAC Council 9, El Paso.

SUMMARY OF INTERVIEW:

The role of Mexican-American women in politics, particularly voter registration drives and assistance in Raymond Telles Campaign for Mayor of El Paso.

Length of interview: 45 minutes Length of transcript: 25 pages

Mary Lou Armendariz
Interviewed by Mario T. Garcia
November 3, 1982

G: First of all Mrs. Armendariz, why don't you just give me some of your own personal background--when you were born, where you were raised, where you went to school--things of that kind just for background information.

A: I'm one of the, I think now, few real natives. I was born here in El Paso, Texas, I went to school here, and I've stayed on here in El Paso.

G: Where were you born in El Paso?

A: I think they said on San Antonio Street. I believe there used to be housing there, you know, in the old, old...many many years ago.

G: May I ask what year?

A: Sure, 1920.

G: Very good. And what did your parents do?

A: My parents were, my father was very well known here in El Paso. He was Jesus Regalado. And my mother was Eva Moreno de Regalado. My father had a business 28 miles from Fabens, on the Mexican side, a very famous spot known as the Hole in the Wall. And it was a very big business, and my father ran that. He had a zoo and he had a lot of things there to attract the tourists. And like I say, he was a very well known man here in El Paso and in Juarez. My mother was an ordinary housewife, but...

G: Was your father civically involved?

A: Yes, and especially politics, he loved politics.

G: How was he involved? With the Democratic Party?

A: With the Democratic Party, yes.

G: Did he belong to any Mexican-American organizations like the early LULAC?

A: No. I think in those days we were still kind of dormant, you know, way back. From my age you can see how...

G: So did his political and civic involvement influence you as you were growing up, do you think?

A: Well, he'd always...always was lecturing us on our rights that we could have in this country as long as we performed our responsibilities first. And we grew up, my brother and I, with that always in mind.

G: Where did you go to school?

A: Alta Vista for grammar school, and Austin for high school.

G: Those were pretty mixed schools at that time, weren't they?

A: Yes, yes, pretty mixed. I think Austin had a lot of Anglo at that time.

G: That's true, that's true. And at home were you bilingual and bicultural, as you grew up? Did you speak Spanish at home and things like that?

A: Yes, we spoke Spanish first, and then once I began school, well, I began teaching my mother English. My father knew English all the time, but my mother didn't until I started to teach her. When I started to school, I started to teach her. Then gradually she learned it, and she learned all the Constitution and everything else needed, and she became a citizen.

G: You say your father was very strong about saying that you and your brother should know your rights in the United States and so forth. Was he also strong about preserving your Mexican cultural traditions?

- A: Yes, definitely he was. But he always taught us that this country was the one where we had been born and where we were being raised, and this we should show our alliance to. He was very strong in saying that we had rights, but definitely before that he would let us know our obligations that we had to perform.
- G: After you graduated from high school, what did you do after that?
- A: I got married immediately--my certificate in one hand and the other one in the other. (Laughter) Yes.
- G: You had met your husband in high school?
- A: Well, he was going, he's an El Paso High graduate. And at the time, around those years, people used to go to a lot of parties and dances, and that's how we had met, during high school days. But we were complete foes, you know--he was for El Paso High and I was for Austin.
- G: That's right. But you ran around in the same social circles.
- A: Yes, yes. Our parents had known each other from the old country. Both families had come from Chihuahua.
- G: And what year were you married?
- A: 1940.
- G: And then you continued to live in El Paso?
- A: Yes. We were married October the 13th, 1940, and in 1941 he went into the service. And he was in the service, and when he got out of the service in 1946, my son was born in '46, and then we went to California for him to go to law school. And we were there while he was going to law school, and then we

returned to El Paso upon his graduation.

G: Which was what year?

A: '50.

G: Did you work at this time?

A: Yes. I worked in Fort Bliss. I was an interpreter in Fort Bliss. And then I went on and I worked in California with the California Government as an interpreter, too.

G: And during this time and when you came back, 1950, were you civically involved?

A: Well, right after we came back, as soon as we were able to get settled and get his office going--and I was his secretary, naturally to begin with--so as soon as we got his law practice going I started going into civic...anything, civic affairs and all that, that I could be of some help.

G: Like what kind of things?

A: Well, I started with LULAC, I became a member of LULAC.

G: Around 1950?

A: It must've been '52, '52 I think.

G: Did you join the Ladies' LULAC Council?

A: The Ladies' LULAC Council 9. I joined there, I was a member of that. Eventually I became president. And then when my husband was in the national office, I was the national secretary.

G: Tell me a little bit about Ladies' LULAC Council #9. First of all, how many women were in that council when you joined in '52, more or less?

A: Well, that was one council, there were other councils in the city.

But in Council 9 I think there must've been at least 40 women.

G: Now that was the only ladies' council in El Paso?

A: No. No, there was Council 335 also.

G: And how many women were involved?

A: I have no idea.

G: Now Ladies' LULAC Council #9 covered a particular area of the city, or...?

A: No, not necessarily. It was the first council. In fact, this council was started...the Machucas, J.C. Machuca, he brought LULAC into El Paso. And Mrs. Machuca was the founder of Council 9. And that was the oldest women's council.

G: What were some of the activities that Council 9 engaged in when you joined at the time?

A: At the time? Well, we would go down to South El Paso and we would teach the people in order for them to become citizens. We would give classes. And also we worked, raised money, to give children, the poor children, shoes. And things of that nature.

G: Most of the women of Council 9, would you say they were more middle class, or did some of the women live in the poor areas?

A: Yeah, we had...I mean, LULAC did not have, you know, anyone could come in as long as they were an American citizen. That was what we stressed.

G: Your meetings were conducted in English, then?

A: In English, yes, definitely. As our Constitution; we went by our constitution and our by-laws.

G: Prior to 1957 when Telles ran, and after you joined in '52, did the LULAC Ladies' Council also participate in voter registration?

A: Yes, very definitely.

G: And how would you participate in voter registration, what would you do?

A: Well, we worked towards...now LULAC does not involve itself in politics, but the members get out. And what we did in LULAC's name is, we would go out, and on election day we'd take, had drivers to take the people to and from the polls.

G: What about the selling of the poll taxes?

A: That also, yes, definitely. Because at the time around those years the selling of poll taxes was...and we'd have them at the meetings and we'd, you know, go around the different areas. We'd assign different people to different areas to go and see about selling the polls.

G: Like going toward it door-to-door?

A: Also.

G: And in churches would you set up...?

A: And wherever we thought the need was.

G: So the Ladies' LULAC Council, as well as all of the councils prior to 1957, were already participating in voter registration?

A: Definitely. Oh, yes.

G: And were you able to register many voters before 1957?

A: Yes we did, yes we did. Yes. And it was, like I say, we'd go this far, to take them and bring them, because we'd always find so many excuses about not going to the polls. So we started

in whatever ways we could.

G: All of the women in the council would participate in this?

A: That's right, all of the women in the council. We were assigned different committees, and everybody participated and worked very hard.

G: When did you first know Raymond Telles?

A: I think I've known Raymond a lifetime. Like I was telling you, being one of the few natives left around here, and Mr. Telles is a native too. So, I can't pinpoint it exactly to when.

G: Since childhood you knew him, or high school?

A: No, maybe...well, it was in our young days, but I couldn't remember exactly when right now.

G: Was he part of the same social circle, going to dances and things like that?

A: Oh, yes, going to dances and things. And of course, he was our county clerk.

G: That's right.

A: And you know, everybody knew Raymond. And he participated in everything with us.

G: When you first knew him as a relatively young man, what kind of person was he?

A: Oh, a beautiful person...one that everybody liked. And always courteous, always friendly to everybody.

G: Did you think ever that time that he would attain the political achievements that he did?

A: No, I don't think we... We had certainly hoped, you know, that

he would run for different things because we all loved him very much.

G: Since you knew him as a relatively young man, were you here in 1948 when he ran for county clerk?

A: No, in '48 we were in California.

G: So you weren't here at that time.

A: No. When we came back, he was already in.

G: Well, then that brings us up to the '57 election. When did you first know that Raymond Telles was going to run? He announced the third week of January. Did you know already before that time that he was planning on running?

A: Well, like I said, we were all so interested in Mr. Telles that when we learned about it, it must've been right close when it happened.

G: When he did decide to run, then what particular activities did the LULAC, particularly the LULAC Council 9, what activities did they engage in to support his campaign?

A: Well, I remember, there were several of those ranchero dances that were held to raise money for the campaign.

G: Where were they held, the ranchero dances?

A: Well, those used to be at the old McKelligon Canyon, and that was usually the place.

G: Mostly Mexican-Americans would attend?

A: Mostly, yes. But some would be by invitation, others would be just announced in the newspapers. But the LULAC councils would all participate in all of this.

G: And people would have to pay to go to the dance?

A: To pay to go to the dance, yes.

G: And then the money would be used for the campaign, or how would it be used?

A: Yes. Well, when it was specified that the money was being used for his campaign, definitely.

G: So would these ranchero dances be formally sponsored by LULAC at that time, or indirectly?

A: No, no. They would be indirectly, and by us that did belong to LULAC. But at the time, you see, LULAC taught us all about politics and elections and all that. But we, as an organization, you could not use the LULAC politically.

G: So you organized it indirectly as a social group. Was there any particular name to that?

A: No, no.

G: Were these mostly like the Council 9 that helped organize the ranchero dances, was it mostly the women who organized these?

A: No, all the councils would do it, and there were many other dinners and things that were being made in his honor.

G: But Council 9 and the other Ladies' LULAC Council, 335, many of the women would participate in these.

A: Yes. Definitely yes.

G: What about again the question of voter registration? Do you recall what Council #9 and 335 did for voter registration during the Telles Campaign?

A: We went door-to-door, door-to-door, and especially amongst our people, because we were trying to educate them in their obligation so they could get out there and vote.

G: So you'd mostly go in the south side?

A: Well, mostly, but we did go all over other areas, yes.

G: What would you tell people, in terms of trying to get them to register to vote for Raymond Telles? Did you need to convince them at all, or what would you say?

A: Many times we did. (Laughs) Well, we would, number one, let them know that it was their duty. And then after we had talked about their duty and obligation, then we went on and said about our candidate, and you know, that it would be a tremendous thing to have one of our own get up there.

G: How did they respond to that?

A: Oh, beautifully, yes.

G: Would you talk to most of the people in Spanish when you went door-to-door?

A: Well, depending on the neighborhood we were in, yes.

G: Would you go for example just by yourself, or would two of you go door-to-door? How was that organized?

A: Well, we'd take a certain neighborhood, and then sometimes there were two of us. Some of us would just take, say, our own neighborhood, and we would just go door-to-door in our own neighborhood.

G: Now was this to sell them a poll tax, or just to people that had already bought a poll tax and to convince them that they should go vote?

A: It was just to campaign for him.

G: To campaign. Would you take literature to give out?

A: Yes, definitely, when it was, you know, later on in the campaign when it became stronger and we got going on it.

- G: So you took them flyers and leaflets.
- A: Flyers and leaflets, and as the time progressed, well, we got into the stickers.
- G: These would be in Spanish and English?
- A: In Spanish and English.
- G: Do you think you have any of these left in your collection?
- A: Oh, I might have. I might have in my memorabilia, like I tell you. But I would have to go through all the boxes.
- G: Oh, I'd love to see some if you ever come across them.
- A: I'm sure you will. I'll make a point to look for them for you.
- G: So, when you went door-to-door, you were going as part of the Telles Campaign, or as a LULAC representative?
- A: As part of the Telles Campaign. 'Cause I repeat, at that time...
- G: Because LULAC could not do this officially.
- A: No.
- G: So what you're saying then, let me get this straight, is that the LULAC Council 9 and 335, I guess, were trying to convince people to vote, and you would go door-to-door. But at that point you were really not representing the LULAC councils, you were really representing the Telles Campaign.
- A: Well, you see, we represented the LULAC Council, insofar as, like I say, teaching them their duties and responsibilities. In that way we were with LULAC councils. But when it came to campaign for one particular man, it was on our own.
- G: In a way, you wore two hats. (Laughter) I understand that there were educational classes, voter educational classes, held

in various places in the south side prior to the election.

What was the role of the women in that educational process?

A: We had the same role as the men. They were teachers. They would meet. One place, the Alamito I believe it was called, where the Alamito projects were, we could use that; Sacred Heart Church and many others, where they would hold classes. And they took turns, because there was a lot of people going to these classes. And they took turns. Council 132 was very active, that's a men's council, and they had most of those teachers. But the women would go there too to help the older people.

G: Did you participate in this?

A: Yes, definitely.

G: And it was to show them who to vote for, and how to use the machines, is that how it functioned?

A: Well, I'll tell you, we started from scratch. We started first teaching them about our government. And once we taught them about our government all of them, like I repeat to you, the duties and responsibilities that they have towards their government, then afterwards when there was going to be the election, we taught them, "This is the way you vote."

Then it was all...we didn't have as many machines as we do nowadays, it was all written.

G: But you would point out to them who they should vote for. for example in the Telles Campaign, the particular ticket-- Bender, White, Seitsinger--so they would be in their minds?

A: In their minds, yes.

G: And how many weeks before the actual election would you do these things? A few weeks before?

A: Months before.

G: What you're saying, some of the classes, then, were just in terms of civics classes.

A: The classes were always going on.

G: These were the citizenship classes.

A: The citizenship classes.

G: But prior to the election you would actually have classes to show them how to vote and who to vote for.

A: Well, we certainly stressed, you know, and brought up for our candidate, what we thought. We gave them his good points, and all of this.

G: And would many people participate in these classes?

A: Yes, yes.

G: Now, there were rallies, political rallies, that were held in various places of the city during the Telles Campaign and some held in the south side. Did you ever attend some of these rallies yourself?

A: Yes, yes. I went with my husband to some of them.

G: Did many of the other women in LULAC participate?

A: Oh, yes, yes. Women have always been very much into politics.

G: What other particular activities do you remember that the LULAC Ladies' Council engaged in? We mentioned fund raising, the educational classes, the voter registration. Were there any other particular activities that the Ladies' Council did to support the Telles election?

- A: Well, there were so many things that, you know...enchilada dinners and little things like that.
- G: Would you engage in these kinds of activities throughout the week or just on weekends? For example, like going door-to-door, would this be on weekends or during the week?
- A: No, because for instance we would meet once a week. And then they would assign to us, you know, a certain chore, a certain committee or something, and then we would report back the following week on it. Now, we would work together with other women, other members, one or two, whatever it was, and then we would come back and report the following week on it.
- G: So, would you go out during a weekday to do some of this work?
- A: Yes, of course.
- G: How did that affect the raising of your children? And the other women who had children at home, would that cause any kind of a hardship?
- A: Well, I think the ones that undertook it, you know, by the time we undertook it we already had been aware that we would need to have someone with our children. I was very, very fortunate, 'cause my mother lived with me and so I would just leave them with her and have no, in no way be...you know, I could just leave them with my mother. But of course there were many others that weren't that fortunate. But anyway, when it would come to doing the thing for LULAC

and for Raymond Telles' campaign, we did it.

G: Were you an officer, then, in that time of 1957, in LULAC?

A: Yes.

G: What was your position?

A: I think I had the presidency at the time.

G: In 1957 during the campaign.

A: 'Cause this was what?

G: That's 61. But you had been one of the officers.

A: I had had several posts.

G: Outside of Council 9 and 335, the other LULAC Councils were all men?

A: Were all men.

G: Did you ever come together, all the councils together?

A: Oh, yes. We got together at district meetings and state meetings and national meetings, we got together all the councils together.

G: What was the relationship between the men and the women in the LULAC Council?

A: It was always very good, very cooperative.

G: You never felt that there was any kind of second class position for the women during that time?

A: No. We were not into this movement yet (laughter).

G: So you felt it was a fairly equitable relationship?

A: Yes. We had some very, very highly intelligent women that could really lead.

G: Who were some of those women at that time, do you recall? Who were some of the leading female figures?

- A: Well, we had Belen Robles. It's been so long I can't even think. Lucy Acosta from 335. Lucy Howze. Amalia Santos who's still, still there. And she was, I tell you, that women is a worker. She's still in 9 and still working hard.
- G: She worked with LULAC, still working there?
- A: Oh, yes.
- G: And she was one of the leaders at that time?
- A: Amalia Santos.
- G: How about a Mrs. Albert Valdez?
- A: Oh, yes. Mrs. Valdez is one of the old timers.
- G: Mrs. Rose Arrieta.
- A: Yes.
- G: A Paula Perez?
- A: That must've been from the other council.
- G: The ones you mentioned were in Council 9?
- A: Council 9.
- G: What was the difference between Council 9 and 335? Was one more of a leader than the other, more active than the other?
- A: No. I think we were always on a competitive basis, you know.
- G: 9 was the older one?
- A: 9 was the oldest. Council 9 and 132 are the oldest councils in El Paso.
- G: But that didn't mean that Council 335 had younger women at that time?
- A: No, no. Of course we had a lot more older ones in ours.
- G: What would you say was the medium age of the women in Council 9 or in 335? Like in their 30's, in their 40's?

A: In their 30's, in their 30's, middle 30's. We had some very young. Like for instance we participated in all their... when the Feria De Las Flores came, we had our representatives. And we worked with the men for the Feria De Las Flores. That's what's always made that a big success, which was one of their big money raisers. And, well, we participated in...and also there was a Council 8, men's, that came later and we participated with both men's councils.

G: So in 1957, how many LULAC councils were there in El Paso?

A: Let's see, men's was 132 and 8, and then women's was 9 and 335.

G: So there was four LULAC councils?

A: Four LULAC councils. That's not counting the Anthony and around the areas. Locally, that's what it was.

G: Do you have any idea of how many members total at that time? Two hundred, three hundred?

A: At least. They were big, they were big councils, especially 132.

G: During the '57 campaign, did you have an opportunity to talk to Raymond Telles about the campaign? Did you ever talk to him at a personal level, maybe at a party or in a social function, how the campaign was going?

A: Yes, definitely, you know.

G: He would come to various social functions during that time?

A: Yes.

/PAUSE/

G: So, do you recall what you and the other women in Council 9 and 335 on election day, do you recall what you did to get the vote out?

A: We scurried about all day long, giving out literature and talking to people and carrying them in the cars, you know, to the polls and back.

G: Did you drive a car at that time?

A: Oh, yes.

G: So you were to go down and actually pick up people.

A: I had all my children with his signs and everything, giving them out and carrying them on them.

G: So some of the women actually drove people to the polls.

A: Oh, a lot of us.

G: Well, it was on a Saturday, so the men would also have been...

A: Available, most of them, yes.

G: But many of you actually went down and picked them up in your cars.

A: That's right.

G: And you did that throughout the day.

A: Throughout the day.

G: Do you recall exactly where you worked that day, what particular area?

A: No, I don't to tell you the truth. Because we had a sort of a headquarters, and the calls would come there or they would be sent here and there.

G: And so you drove a lot of people that day to the polls? Were there a lot of people?

A: Yes.

G: Did you have a pretty good sense by election day that Raymond Telles had a good chance of winning?

- A: Well, we had been praying very, very hard (laughter), and our hopes were way up there. And what do you do on election? Just hope your darnedest.
- G: But you could see that there was a lot of people going to vote.
- A: There was a lot of people going to vote, definitely, definitely.
- G: Let me ask you this about the campaign. Do you recall any incidents or examples of how there may have been a bias against Raymond Telles because of his ethnic or even religious background? Do you recall any examples or incidents or stories about the people saying negative things about Telles because of his background.
- A: I go again into a blank.
- G: Election day, do you recall what you did that evening, as the returns started coming in?
- A: We all went to his headquarters to await for the returns there.
- G: Were many of the other women of the LULAC Council 9 and 335 there also?
- A: Yes.
- G: And when the returns finally came in and your man had won, how did you feel?
- A: Oh, it was a very joyous occasion. (Laughter)
- G: Did you stay and celebrate there at the headquarters?
- A: My husband stayed on. I went on home cause I had my little ones at home. But he stayed there. But you know, it was terrific because that was the first time someone by the name of Telles had come in to a post like that.

- G: After the election, did the LULAC councils specifically the ladies' council, did you do anything to help celebrate his election?
- A: Oh, yes. You mean right after the election?
- G: Well, say several days later, or a week later, or two weeks later, did you organize any kind of celebration?
- A: Well, a celebration, yes. We had a banquet, and of course we always had him, you know, our guest of honor right up there at the head table, and introducing him in whatever glory we could give him.
- G: Were these specifically organized by the ladies' council, or by the LULAC council as a whole?
- A: By the LULAC as a whole, yes.
- G: What about during his four years as mayor? What was the relationship between the LULAC councils and Mayor Telles? Was there a good relationship?
- A: Very good, very good relations. And, you know, we got our people some of our people, named to posts also, that they had never been in, you know.
- G: Did this include any women?
- A: I don't remember.
- G: But several of the LULAC people had been...
- A: Several of the LULAC people, yes. I know for instance my husband was named to the Civil Service Commission.
- G: He was telling about that, and that was a very effective appointment. Let me go back to the election. Did you know at that time Richard Telles as well as you knew Raymond Telles, his brother?

- A: No, I've never ever been at all close to Mr. Richard Telles.
- G: Do you recall his particular role in that election? Did you ever encounter him as you and the other ladies went out and helped support the campaign?
- A: Well, he was a LULAC member, too, at the time.
- G: Do you recall what council he was a member of?
- A: I think he was with 8, I think. And, well, I knew him as one of the members. You know, when there's a lot of members you don't know everybody real close. But we knew him, but I didn't know him as well as I did Mr. Raymond Telles.
- G: You never encountered him out there in terms of organizing voters or things of that kind? Do you recall ever seeing him out there?
- A: Oh, well, yes, he was out there. He was a hard worker, I'm sure.
- G: During the years that Mayor Telles was mayor, did he participate in specific LULAC council activities, was he invited to conferences or to be a speaker at various things of that kind?
- A: Well, I couldn't answer that very well, because, like I say, his being in Council 8, you know they'd perform their things, and unless we were invited to the functions, or when we got to go to the district meetings. I'm trying to recall but I don't recall if he was president of the council.
- G: When Mayor Telles decided not to run in 1961 because Kennedy had offered him the ambassadorship to Costa Rica, do you recall

how you and some of the other people in LULAC, and especially in the ladies' councils, what your reactions to that was? Did you feel that he should continue and run for mayor, or did you feel that he should take the ambassadorship? Do you remember how you felt?

A: Well, we hated to loose him, insofar as for our city, but we were very happy that he had gotten the opportunity to go higher. Naturally, being one of ours, anything that'll help our people get...

G: After he decided not to run, did you and the other people in LULAC and in the ladies' council, did you work just as hard for the election of Seitsinger in '61 as you had for the election of Telles?

A: I think so, yes. Of course, with our party, 'cause he was Democrat, and the ones that were Republican would'nt work as hard.

G: This brings up a question. When you were involved during the '57 campaign in the LULAC were you also active in the Democratic Party?

A: I've always been.

G: You were a working member?

A: Yes, I was one of the founders of the Kathy White Democratic Club. In fact, I was the first vice-president.

G: What was the Kathy White Democratic Club?

A: It was a group of Democratic women. That was a club was started for that, and we worked with the same ideas, you know-- to work for our party and to get the votes out.

G: What year was that organized, do you remember? Was it before the election of Telles, before '57?

A: Yes, it must've been.

G: Well, after we do the interview, maybe you can see if there is some material that you think shows us.

A: Yes. And we named, because Mrs. White then, Kathy White, was one of the founders, and that is the reason that when we named it, you know, when she passed on, we named the democratic club for her. It's called the Kathy White Democratic Club.

G: Is that any relationship to Richard White?

A: That was his wife, that was his first wife. And she was very active in politics. And she died in Washington when he had first...I don't remember how long he had been up there. And she met with an accident in her own home and died. And that's why we named our club for her.

G: But you were one of the co-founders of that.

A: Yes.

G: And you were an officer also?

A: I was the vice-president, the first vice-president of it.

G: Were there other Mexican-American women involved in this democratic council?

A: Oh, yes, yes. One of them was an old timer that just recently passed away, the owner of the La Hacienda, Queta Lopez

G: There was a good number of Mexican-American women involved?

A: Not too too many, but there was some.

G: And were some of them also, like you, members of either Council 9 or 335?

- A: I don't think we had any LULAC members that I can recall.
- G: But you did the same kind of things that you were doing in the '57 campaign--voter registration, all these kind of things?
- A: We worked for our particular party in that one.
- G: I don't think I have any other questions. I think that covers everything. You've given me a lot of good information here. And I think it shows that there were in fact a good number of women that were involved in the election of '57, people like yourself even before, women that were involved in politics. That's very important, because I think we don't have that image of Mexican-American women that involved in politics in this period of time. We tend to think that it comes at a later time, but you're saying that's not so.
- A: No, we just kept a low...(laughs)
- G: A low profile.
- A: A low profile, yes.
- G: But you did a lot of hard work, and went out to the precincts and got the vote out.
- A: I tell you, we used to carry, pull our children with us, so they could pass out the papers.
- G: Mrs. Armendariz, do you recall what role you and maybe some of the other women in the LULAC councils played in the election of John Kennedy? Did you in any way participate the same way you had in 1957 with the election of Telles--voter registration, those kind of things?
- A: Very definitely that, yes, yes. We really started working hard

on going out and talking to the people, and reminding them about having to vote.

G: What attracted you to the candidacy of John Kennedy?

A: Well, he had a...maybe I'll sound silly, but he had like an aura around him. I mean, you just saw the man and you couldn't help but just loving him. And then the way he spoke, well it just made you believe him.

G: You had met him personally?

A: Yes, I had met him personally when he came to El Paso in those days that my husband had something to do with it. And I had met him personally, and it just, well, like I say, he just overwhelmed you.

G: So that many of the LULAC councils members of 9 and 335 worked on the Kennedy Campaign, do you remember?

A: Yes, yes. All of the ones that belonged to the Democratic Party.

G: I see. Did you belong to the so-called Viva Kennedy Club that was organized? Do you remember that?

A: Yes.

G: There were mostly Mexican-Americans.

A: Mexican-Americans, [yes].

G: Many LULAC members, do you remember?

A: There were, there were LULAC members.

G: Did you have a headquarters with Viva Kennedy Club?

A: I am sure, but I cannot recall just where it was right now. We did have one, but I can't recall where it was.

G: But you went out and registered people and got them out to vote.

A: Surely, and definitely we worked very hard with that.

G: Very good. Thank you.

END OF INTERVIEW