

8-20-2007

## Interview no. 1617

Guadalupe Session

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## THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO INSTITUTE OF ORAL HISTORY

Interviewee: Guadalupe Session

Interviewer: James "Jimmy" Farah

Project: Farah Oral History Project

Location: El Paso, TX

Date of Interview: August 20, 2007

Terms of Use: Unrestricted

Transcript No.: 1617

Transcriber / Summary: Patrick Driscoll

Guadalupe Session was a garment inspector supervisor for Farah in El Paso, TX; she was born December 12, 1933 in El Paso, her mother from Mexico, her father from Oklahoma; she is the second of five children; she had to quit school to help with family; initially, she worked at a restaurant, then started working for Farah in 1952. Ms. Session recalls her initial position inspecting finished garments; describes the factory on San Francisco St. where Joe Farah was her manager; she outlines the managers at the time by floor in the factory; she describes the first clinic for Farah employees on 3<sup>rd</sup> Street; she details the pay procedure for Farah; says that Willie Farah was respectful to her and other women but was very strict, meticulous in his spot checks; states that she eventually was made a supervisor inspector, says that it was difficult for some people to accept a woman supervisor. She talks about the strike against Farah with the local Catholic Church's support, says she lost some respect for church representatives from the experience; she said that at the time lost her temper in an interaction with a priest that was potentially used against her and the company; she states that she ignored union supporters; she mentions that her style of working was shaped by Willie Farah, when new leadership came in it caused friction between her and them due to a drop in product quality from their leadership; she reveals she was demoted to working in the cutting room by the time she retired; she explains that she never married when her mother was alive and only married seven years ago. Ms. Session says her nephews and sister also worked at Farah; she compares the management styles of Joe Chemali Jr. and Victor Chemali; states Joe was a nice person but more outspoken; she believes that those that joined the strike tended to be newer employees from the Gateway location that didn't experience the family like work environment of the early downtown era; she mentions that during the strike only twenty percent of employees walked out. She concludes the interview by revealing that employees sang for Willie Farah even after he died to show their respect and appreciation of him.

Length of interview 45 minutes

Length of Transcript n/a