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Interview no. 1690

Emma S. Villa

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THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO INSTITUTE OF ORAL HISTORY

Interviewee: Emma S. Villa

Interviewer: Yolanda Chávez Leyva

Project: Voices from the Border Project

Location: Jefferson High School in El Paso, TX

Date of Interview: July 28, 2016

Terms of Use: Unrestricted

Transcript No.: 1690

Transcriber/Summary: /Ana Urías

Summary of Interview: Emma was born and raised in El Paso, Texas in 1935. She had two brothers and one sister. One of her brothers has passed away. She is the youngest. Her father was from Mexico and crossed illegally into the United States. He had no education but had his own business building houses around Austin School. Only her sister graduated from Bowie School because her brothers had to quit in order to run the business when their father got sick. Emma was around ten years old. Both of her brothers went into the service and the oldest was in the Korean War. Emma attended Lincoln School and liked her experience there. All of her teachers were Anglo except for one who was Mexican. The teachers were very strict. All the students were Mexican American and they started without knowing any English. Her favorite memory was going to the library to fix torn books. She then attended Zavala School for one year. She knows that there were students that were in gangs but she cannot recall having any issues with them. After Zavala, she attended and graduated from Jefferson High School. She describes some of her elective classes. She took a Journalism class and had her own column called *Here and There* in which she would write about students, fashion, and things going on in school. After high school she got married and had five children. After her children had grown up, she applied and worked with El Paso Public Schools as a teacher's aide. She worked in Hawkins School and then in Cooley School. She transferred to High School and worked for twenty-eight years until she retired. Her advice to young people is to continue their education. She talks about her children's education and careers. She describes the area near Manzana, Madera, and Tularosa streets around the time she was growing up. Emma as well as her parents got married at El Calvario Church. Her mother, Aurora was born in El Paso in El Segundo Barrio and her father was born in Zacatecas, Mexico. Her maternal grandparents were Florencio and Placida Villareal. She recalls going to Zavala School and having friends since kindergarten who turn in her *comadres*. She remembers having to cross under the stopped train because they did not want to be late to school or else they would wash dishes.

Length of interview 24 minutes

Length of Transcript N/A