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## Interview no. 1752

Valenzuela

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

Interviewee: Valenzuela

Interviewer: N/A

Project: Farah

Location: El Paso, Tx

Date of Interview: N/A

Terms of Use: Unrestricted

Transcript No.: 1752

Transcriber: Roberto Cristoforo

### Summary of Interview:

Her last name is Valenzuela and she was born and raised in El Paso, Texas. After she graduated from high school, she got her first fulltime job at Farah. She was working in setting pockets, that involved a lot of hard work and many hours of work. The training that she was, was how to use the machine but like her many other people wants trained well. She says that many supervisors where over them all day long. She says that thru out the day they get 2 breaks from their job and they can rest on site and can have a coffee or eat something or even take a shower. She says that many women and men had ability with their hands and people that don't will have a hard time and it was her case. She says that one of her coworkers got injured and was sent home but the next day she had to come to work but she was really hurt and at the end she had to get a lawyer and sue because the working conditions weren't good. She was let off for 6 months and after that she quitted her job and since then she has not been contacted by the union. During the strike they had a really hard time, but after they came back from the strike, she was working less hours and they were getting paid more, because the strike had finally improved some of the working conditions, but some things were getting worse for example the union was making them work without any raise. The conditions after the strike didn't get any better because women weren't allowed to use the bathroom many times in a day and some of the women were getting harassed, and their rights were being violated again. She says that there were many workers that came from Mexico and most of them were either crossing the border or living with a relative here in El Paso

and they were part of the union as well. She says that when other workers hear you speaking bad about the union, they will tell the supervisors and, in some cases, they will get fired. She says that many company's were closing because there were many workers that wasn't happy with the working conditions and they were part of the strike so they had no other choice but closing completely. She mention that during the strike many people were either fired or never contacted again by any supervisor and if you wanted to come back you will have some type of penalties. She says that coming back was hard for them because they knew that some of the issues went fixed and some of the super visors wanst listening to what they needed. She says that she was a supporter for the strike, because she knew that was the only way they wil hear what they wanted.

She attended highschool at Jeferson Higschool and she says that many professors were Mexicans and they are bilingual, and now her kids are going to school some professor do speak Spanish but they willonly speak to them in English so they will have ahard time understanding and learn Spanish. She says that she used to read a lot and she want her kids to do the same. She says that she support her kids being taught by a Mexican professor because they can learn two different languages and that could help them in a future. She had a brother and a sister and his brother died at the age of 13. She says that back in the day there was no health care for them so they were vulnerable tomany sickness. She went thru a lot and she says that those time made her what she is today.

She saya that when she was working at Farah there was a supervisor that was a women that will treath them really bad, but they didn't understand why if they were a minority in the company, she will expect a women to figth for their rights as well. There was cases where is you speak up you will get in truble and they could just fire you even tho you where doing your job correctly. She syas that some supercisor will make things up just to get you in truble or even not give you a raise or a break that you deserved for working long hours. She syas that she will encourage everyone to figth for their rights and to do the right thing to help others not only yourself, because there is people that have it worst than you.

Length of interview 2:14:15

Length of Transcript N/A