

8-9-1977

Interview no. 1760

Parra

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THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO INSTITUTE OF ORAL HISTORY

Interviewee: Parra

Interviewer: Emily

Project: Farah Strike

Location: El Paso, Texas

Date of Interview: August 9, 1977

Terms of Use: Unrestricted

Transcript No.: 1760

Transcriber: Andrea Santos

Summary of Interview:

Parra started working at Farah in the Spring of 1968, she then quit for two years and came back in 1969. She decided to go back because his son wanted to go to college and Parra wanted to support him monetarily. After a couple of years, she started to get tired of the continuous bad treatment, soon after the strike began.

As soon as she started to work for Farah, she noticed the different and superior type of treatment each worker received. Parra remembers some of the workers would go out with managers to try and get a raise. She was once asked by a manager to go out with him, but she said no and the next day she had an awful schedule and more work to do for less pay. At that time, she was making \$1.90 an hour for 40 hours a week. Since she said no to the date her pay decreased.

Some of her coworkers did accept to go on dates and do other things with their managers and they did get a raised. Parra felt frustrated and tired of working so hard, but receiving nothing in return. While all of that was happening some workers at Farah who were tired of the favoritism were planning to have a walk out to talk about the treatment they were receiving. Parra decided to join the walk out that was schedule for May 9 of that year. A lot of people went out to the walk, by the second day even more people hop on the strike.

Parra's experience at the strike was very strange. She mentioned that as soon as the strike began the Farah company started to hire new workers to replace the ones that were part of the strike. Some of the new workers were people from Ciudad Juarez, which was weird because when Parra started, she had to become an American citizen to be able to work at the company. Now they would hire anyone no matter if you had a green card or not. Parra and her coworkers tried to talk the new workers out of the job and would tell them the awful working conditions. But the new

workers from Ciudad Juarez were pretty happy with the salary, because when you convert it to Mexican Pesos it would be a lot of money.

When Parra realized that the new workers were able to tolerate the working conditions just for the pay, she realized how bad the working conditions in Ciudad Juárez were so she never told them anything anymore about how bad Farah Company was. She was very confused about their condition to be able to accept that treatment, but she realized that it wasn't her place to try to change their opinion. At the same time, she felt sad, because they would never speak up about the conditions, they were working in. Parra started to become frustrated with the people from Ciudad Juarez that got to come and work in the United States, but they didn't pay taxes. She mentioned that she doesn't hold any grudges against them, but she feels like it is not fair. She mentioned that she doesn't care if they take jobs because no American want to pick cotton or do any actual hard work. Another thing that bothered Parra was that when there is a strike in Mexico, no Mexican will go back to that certain company. But when there was a strike for Farah, they did come to work for the company ignoring the awful status of the company.

By the end of the strike Parra mentioned that she lost some friends because they wouldn't support the strike. She didn't care because she knew that it was the right thing to do, so she did what she needed to do to fight for her rights. She is now proud that she was part of the Farah strike and for contributing to a change in society at that point in life.

Length of interview 2::05:12

Length of Transcript N/A