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## Interview no. 1761

Rios

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

Interviewee: Rios

Interviewer: N/A

Project: Farah

Location: El Paso, Texas

Date of Interview: N/A

Terms of Use: Unrestricted

Transcript No.: 1761

Transcriber: Andrea Santos

### Summary of Interview:

Everyone at Farah hated their job, that's how Rios described it when she first started working there. She didn't understand the problems happening at Farah at Paisano that made every worker hate going to work every day. A couple of days pass, she received her first check and realized that she got payed very little, when the manager told her that she would be getting payed more. She realized that she started her work there as a lie and that the contract that she sign was also a total lie that the managers didn't respect.

At first, she thought that it was so easy the hiring process and that Farah hired anyone who was willing to work. Soon after Rios noticed that her contract was not being respected and she was receiving a horrible treatment by the company and her managers. The managers at Farah were the worst aspect of the company, with their lack of retail experience and inability to lead. Rios claimed that her bosses were disrespectful and unbothered if you were to get cut or burned with the machines. Because the workers were not given any training prior to utilizing the devices, accidents were common. Rios didn't know how to operate the machines and she didn't receive any sort of training before using them, which led to her having multiple accidents while working.

After being at Farah for 3 long years and having no representation by the Union, the Farah workers decided to begin a strike that lasted two years. Rios first new about the strike because some of her female coworkers were talking about joining. After listening to what they told her about the strike, Rios decided to join to fight for the right to be represented by a union. The strike also began because the Farah company paid low wages, pressured its employees to work faster and faster, consistently ignored health and safety conditions, and swiftly fired all those who complained. As the strike began Rios noticed that about 85% of the strikers were Chicana women. Soon after other workers of America quickly moved to support the Farah

workers; the strike was declared an unfair labor practice strike. One month later a national boycott of Farah products was begun. In El Paso the strikers began to picket the Farah plants and local stores that carried Farah products. After two long years of strike Farah company rehire employees who had been fired, including Rios. The company also negotiate a contract to improve the working conditions in the company. As Rios mentioned, the Farah strike will always be an inspiration for Chicana women.

Length of interview 1:55:51

Length of Transcript N/A