

**Oral History Interview Transcription:
Clinton Walls Interviewing
Miriam Ramirez
May 26th 2004**

Clinton Walls: The following interview was conducted on behalf of the oral history program of Washington County Museum and Century High School. The interviewee is Miriam Ramirez. The interviewer is Clinton Walls. The interview took place at Century High School at approximately 4:00 p.m.

Clinton Walls: How do you feel the Spanish News program helps Century?

Miriam Ramirez: Well, I think its a great idea because for the students who don't speak English, they now have a chance to listen and participate in school events and they know what's going on. So then they can talk to us [Miriam Ramirez & Veronica Guzman, anchors for the Spanish New program] and get involved on what's going on.

Clinton Walls: When did you first get started in the program?

Miriam Ramirez: Well, I first started, well first I came from Summer School, for those classes. Then about...well for about, one year.

Clinton Walls: Did you participate in the ESL program?

Miriam Ramirez: Yeah, when I came here around three years ago. I started then in the ESL program. Summer School was a part of the program.

Clinton Walls: Where did you come from, before living in the US?

Miriam Ramirez: I came from Mexico.

Clinton Walls: Is there anything about the ESL program that especially stood out? I mean, as either positive or negative, just anything that you really remember when you look back on the ESL program in the Hillsboro School District?

Miriam Ramirez: Yeah, I think its good, because that students that don't speak English they learn...because when you first come her you don't know anything. I mean, it's really hard for people when they first come here, to the United States.

Clinton Walls: Do you think that Hispanic students get a lot of racism from the white student here at Century? I mean, made fun of just because they are Hispanic?

Miriam Ramirez: Well, I think it depends. Because sometimes the [white students] are like "Speak English" and they [Hispanics who don't speak English] don't know....but they feel like bad.

Clinton Walls: If you had to rate it on a scale of one to ten, with one being, zero racism, just a generally friendly environment and ten being a horrible hateful place, what would you give Century right now?

Miriam Ramirez: I would give it an 8.

Clinton Walls: Tell us about your life in Mexico.

Miriam Ramirez: Well, its really different because when you start with certain classmates, that's all your classmates for the whole year. But here, its different because you are switching every class and its really hard to make friends. It's really hard.

Clinton Walls: What other differences are there between Mexican education and the schools here?

Miriam Ramirez: Well classes here are longer and there less classes, like only five a day. But in Mexico there are more like eight classes and only like forty-five minutes long. Its different because its not like switching everyday like here. Its just different having the same classes everyday.

Clinton Walls: Which do you like better?

Miriam Ramirez: Well, I like the way they do it there [in Mexico] better. I would like it here, but they just have a lots of little problems and other stuff and some things are good and some things are bad. Like here you get to pick your own schedule, and their you have your schedule set. Like you don't get to pick your schedule. So yeah, its different.

Clinton Walls: Besides classes, what are some other major changes? Does anything stand out in particular?

Miriam Ramirez: Well, school start at 7 a.m. but doesn't get out until 3 p.m. You have to take the bus and everything.

Clinton Walls: Have you been in the Hillsboro School District since you've been here? Or have you moved around between districts?

Miriam Ramirez: Always here, in Hillsboro.

Clinton Walls: How do you think the Hillsboro School District is helping Hispanics?

Miriam Ramirez: I think they are helping with the tutoring program, because the students, if they need to know, they can go for help. Because if they need help that is really good for them. They also have clubs, Latino clubs to help people get involved.

Clinton Walls: Are you a member of Latinos Sin Fronteras?

Miriam Ramirez: Yes.

Clinton Walls: Describe what kind of activities they do.

Miriam Ramirez: Well they are doing a lot of car washes and fund-raisers to get money for scholarships for Latino seniors. And, well they basically do a lot of games and stuff to get people involved.

Clinton Walls: So basically Latino Sin Fronteras is focused a lot on fund-raising for education. I mean, education is one of its main goals?

Miriam Ramircz: Yeah.

Clinton Walls: If you had to rate the school district from one to ten on how well it Helps Hispanics adjust, especially the ones coming form a different country, to language barriers and cultural differences what would you give it and why?

Miriam Ramirez: I think a nine because they do everything the can, but sometimes they need to help more people. So they are good.

Clinton Walls: Do you think there is enough Hispanic staff here at Century?

Miriam Ramirez: Yeah, I think this year there are less, but last year there were more. Of just teachers and staff and everything.

Clinton Walls: Do you wish there were more?

Miriam Ramirez: No, I think it's OK, because sometimes when you have someone [a teacher] to trying to help them [a student] they [the student] will not want to do anything and just be too lazy and you can't rally help them, so that's good for them, and the other people can keep learning. But, no not really if you had more [staff] here it wouldn't really do anything for them [the students that won't try], because they aren't going to do it for themselves.

Clinton Walls: If you could change one thing here at Century, what would you change?

Miriam Ramirez: I think I would have more people get involved.

Clinton Walls: Is there anything else you would like to add?

Miriam Ramirez: No, that's pretty much it.