

TITLE OF VIDEO: Amparo Muñoz

DATE OF VIDEO: July 16, 2018

TRANLABED BY: Sarah Barnett, Emma Bondy, Sofia Kearns

DATE OF TRANSLATION: Fall, 2018, Summer 2019

<p>[00:00] Amparo Muñoz:</p>	<p>I arrived in this country [pause] fifty-three years ago. I came when I was very young, ah, and travelled a lot until finally I met a friend in New York, and he told me about the textiles in Greenville. Then I came for a week's vacation to get to know Greenville and it really fascinated me.</p>
<p>[00:30]</p>	<p>Back then Greenville was a street, only one street. You saw a car every, how many, five hours but the textile companies lit up the whole town. I came with six friends in my old little car [pause] and we arrived here and the next day we all had jobs. It was hard at first because the house we had rented, well, when she saw that we were Hispanic, (there was a lot of discrimination in Greenville in that time)</p>
<p>[1:00]</p>	<p>she kicked us out of the house. There we were in the tiny car, all six of us, without knowing anyone or where to go. I finally arrived at a gas station and there a man told me, "I have an apartment for rent." And I asked him [pause] "Can I rent it?" And he asked me "For how many?" I said, "There are six of us." And he told me, "There's only one bed and it's a little room." So I asked him "Can you rent it to me?" And he replied, "If you are able to live there, it doesn't matter to me"</p>
<p>[1:30]</p>	<p>And I had a double bed and we took the mattress off and put it in the kitchen, and the three women slept there; and on the box spring, the three men slept. But this way we were in the textile factory, working day and night, because you could work the shift that you liked. I remember that I started earning one dollar ten cents per hour [pause] and got promoted quite a bit, and I came to be a</p>
<p>[2:00]</p>	<p>trainer for non-English speakers in the factory and [pause] the doors opened for me. My friends also made a lot of progress, at three months each one brought their own family and we got our own house. I was in the factory, Woodside Mill [pause] ah, eighteen years before it closed. And from there I went to the Beatty Plant, in Simpsonville, and I was there until it closed also</p>
<p>[2:30]</p>	<p>And [pause] Alice Manufacturing. I worked in all of the plants and I saw that the textile companies [pause] and [pause] they were closing, so I decided to go to Greenville Tech [pause] and I attended for four years. [pause] I studied English as a second</p>

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[3:00]	Language [pause] and I studied Human Relations and Customer Service. And there I got a job with the Amara-Hess Corporation; it was a very powerful and good gas station. I worked there twenty-five years. I practically became the boss of [pause] of [pause] of all the stations here. I had a lot of employees, I met a lot of very nice people [pause] and I made my way, brought all my family from Colombia. And I brought my mother here, and she also worked in textiles. She had lived with me in New York.
[3:30]	And from New York, we came here. I brought her here, and she worked seventeen years at Woodside. She managed to retire from there and died only six years ago. Luckily, I came with papers and my green card because my aunt sponsored me when I was fourteen.
Sofia Kearns: [3:50]	Do you remember what year you came to New York?
AM [3:52]	In '63
SK [3:55]	And to Greenville?
AM [3:57]	I was in Puerto Rico in '61. Then I returned to Colombia, and arrived in New York in '63. And I arrived in Greenville, around [pause], uh, I finished Greenville Tech in '81. So in seventy something I arrived in Greenville.
SK [4:20]	And tell me, how was it at the beginning, because this was something new for you, to come to Greenville and start working in textiles. Do you remember how it was at the beginning, your adjustment, what happened then?
AM [4:31]	I came on vacation and my friend worked in the textile companies. I came because he invited me for a week, and he said "Why don't you go to the textile mill and see what's going on?" And I said "But..." I worked in a nursing home in New York. I was a nurse's aid. I said to him "Look, I am a nurse and now I am going to be a nurse for the spools" And yes! He convinced me and I left and worked for three days.

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[5:01]	And I learned like this [snap three times] [pause] and [pause] my boss fell in love with me. And I said “No, I’m sorry, that I’ve chosen this training, I’ve wasted your time, and I will go back” and he says “What do you mean you are going back?” Then I said “I have my life in New York. I [pause] I have my job and everything. And I have my mother and I left everything.” [pause]
[5:31]	And he told me, “I can't believe you. Look, here is my card and my name is here. If you return there is a job for you here.” Well, I left. And I kept thinking about Greenville and how beautiful it was, and I wanted to come to Greenville. Back then, it was practically a field. It was very similar to my homeland. And I said to my mom, “Mommy, let’s go.” I convinced my mother and after fifteen days I put in my resignation letter at the nursing home.
[6:01]	It was [clear throat] run by little nuns. [pausa] It was Catholic and they did not want me to leave in order to come. But nevertheless, I managed to get them to understand, and I came here and my mother worked too.
SK [6:13]	For you and your mom, [pause] How was the work? What did you do, specifically? What was your...
AM [6:20]	My mom [pause] my mom worked in the spooling department. Spooling is the place where [pause] some machines pick up some cotton in the back, bring it forward, and turn them into thread, and they pass it into another machine that makes the thread into fabric. This is spooling. I worked in [pause] I was a doffer.
[6:50]	Doffers are the machines that carry the little tubes. You have to spin those tubes around and then remove the filled bobbin that goes to the loom [pause] that also makes fabric.
[7:00]	So that's what I was doing. When the machine arrives, filled with bobbins, it must be lowered, and there are about three hundred and something bobbins. Then I would go with a cart that I pushed with my knee and a basket here in the cart made ... That is, I’d throw the full (filled?) bobbins here and then put the empty ones back there again. I completed 30 machines each night.

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SK [7:29]	And you worked overtime too?
AM [7:30]	Oh yes. What happened was that [pause] when we arrived, you could work the hours you wanted. I managed to work up to ninety hours a week because when I came, I needed to bring my mom. I left her in New York and I came to work alone and I had to pay for an...an eighteen-wheeler so my mom could come here from New York because you know she wasn't going to leave that small plant, that puppy, that small piece of porcelain,
[8:00]	so I had to get an eighteen-wheeler, which at that time cost me almost three thousand dollars. And even more, since I had to live here too. Then I had to work a lot of over-time, I worked a lot of over-time to get the money.
SK [8:17]	And what city are you from in Colombia?
AM [8:20]	I was born in Medellín, I was actually born in Belén, which is close to Medellín. And I grew up in the Antioquia neighborhood, and in Guayabal, and in Cristo Rey, and then I came here.
SK [8:33]	Do you remember some problems or difficulties working in textiles? The relationship with other employees or with the bosses, some anecdote or something that you remember that you want...?
AM [8:49]	I'll honestly tell you that at the time that I came to the textile companies, Hispanic were just arriving. To be honest, I think we were the second or third Hispanic family to come here to Greenville and... [pause] we started and almost immediately the Americans looked at us as if to say, "where did these wizards come from?" because there was significant discrimination when I came here to Greenville, but we all kept together, the Hispanics. And we were not worried about what was happening there, because at the end of the day, we were such good workers, and the bosses of the textiles were fond of us that
[9:00]	
[9:30]	they threw parties for us and everything. I ah [pause] I had the opportunity to [pause] to dance for...for...for a party they did in gratitude of Hispanics working on textiles. Woodside did a very nice party and we performed typical dances. I danced a cumbia, dressed as a man, with my cousin, who lived with me before.
SK [10:00]	So there are a few very positive memories

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AM [10:01]	Very nice
SK [10:01]	Yes
AM [10:02]	And we learned a lot and we saw the world differently, because all you had to do was work. And you know that at work you got what you wanted because they gave you the opportunity: ah, "that I can't come in the morning." "Doesn't matter, if you can, come at one o'clock, two, three." You did not have to waste time like today, that if you do not come right on time, or two minutes late, they will fire you. No, the textile company was not like that.
[10:30]	And they learned to treat people with a lot of respect, and they loved us very much, and I truly say that [pause] many people like me for example, I say, I worked in three or four textile factories because I didn't know how to do anything else. But when I saw that they [the textile companies] all were closing, I said that I must look for other opportunities and soon while I'm young. Thank God that Greenville Tech existed, and they gave me the way to pay. Every three months I paid for my courses so I could study.
[11:00]	
SK [11:08]	So in the textile company, you worked more with fellow Hispanics?
AM [11:13]	We got to, or at least, I got to get everybody to love me. All of us, we got to be loved and respected and work together and truly we were like a family. At the time even Woodside began to do barbeques and brought a big thing and made barbeque for all the employees, we went on a Saturday and a Sunday and the whole family...  So you worked more at night than during the day or...?
SK [11:46]	Yes, I was working more in the night because I am a person that is fascinated with fishing, so I was working from eleven at night to seven in the morning. Sometimes I'd come back home and get my fishing gear and would go fishing. I would take my mother with me, and around two or three in the afternoon we would return. If we had fish, we would wash it and put it in the freezer and we went to sleep for a while. And then I worked the first shift for a while but the best shift in textiles for me was the third. It was more quiet, calmer...
AM [11:47]	
	And you said that there was tremendous noise, right?
SK [12:30]	

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AM [12:32]	oh, yes
SK [12:34]	Did this affect you?
AM [12:35]	That affects the...the ears. But they always gave us, we had no problem getting the
SK [12:44]	Earplugs?
AM [12:45]	Yes, ear plugs. They kept them everywhere for us to take, but sometimes a lazy person or a rascal, would sometimes say "And what did you say?" And he would take them off and keep them off. No longer put them back.
SK [12:58]	And when they started, and when companies started closing, would they tell you in advance, or simply say "you have to leave" or how was it?
AM [13:07]	Ah [pause] only once it happened to me that...that I went to work and the factory was closed. Yes, and that was in Simpsonville, but Woodside told us, and even gave us some money for [pause] while we found something else. Because back then it was not mandatory to tell the employees. Today, yes, but not before. I tell you, I don't have many complaints of textiles.
[13:30]	I liked the work a lot, and [pause] people learned to love me. Even when my life has been crazy, I say I have textiles to thank for everything, everything I have, all my family because thanks to them I improved life for my family.