

9:10 am

12-14-05

① Fisher Body Historical Team

Interviewer Cheryl McQuade.

Interviewee - Don Brown, Doreen Brown

Seniority = Don = 1-29-54 First hire 1950

Seniority = Doreen = 8-50

Education Don = 11 grade education

Married = yes Children also. (3)

Reason for Hiring at Fisher = On inside job. Came in in 1950 quit and went to automobile then came back here in 1954 to stay.

They have a son who hired in in 1981.

* First Day = Never seen such a big place, noisy etc. Come from St Lawrence. Came for the wage increase from St Lawrence to Fisher Body.

* First job was paint dept on a relief job. Quite a few women here in 1950.

* Union Activity = \$5⁰⁰ join \$2⁵⁰ per month dues.

Strikes = seemed like every contract was a strike.

Biggest one was in 1970, also the longest. Strike pay back then \$15⁰⁰ to \$25⁰⁰ at the union hall.

Don was a Zone Committeeman during this strike.

His career on Zone began in 1965 till he retired in 1984. (19) years. Sometime in the early 50's

the change from an open shop occurred, where you had to pay dues to work at Fisher Body.

* Elections = First to District Committee. You had to campaign on your break times in the plant. Constitutional Convention election first in

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1965-1966. To Van Nuys California and met with
Leason Chavez. Also they walked with Walter Berther.
Also met with Doug Frasher.

Then there was a 15 hour rule for time ~~being~~
during the week was changed to full time after
a few years. During the 1970 convention this was
asked about 30 and out security for retirement.

★ Women = spoke about the women who became
pregnant and would lose their accredited service.

★ Health Care Issues = Don felt that this was not
the employees fault but managements fault.

During WWII they could not ~~be~~ ~~the~~ strike
because they were making war materials.

Both then the insurance was 5450 between company,
and the union.

★ Changes in the plant = 1950-1984 = Mostly back
in wartime years was when most of the women
were hired in. Only so many black people came
to work at Fisher Body, most blacks were sanitation
workers, or office cleaners, or elevator operators.

Work hours = Women 54 hours Men unlimited. They
had to work Christmas eve for 4 hours. to get
holiday pay. Women in general had a hard
time getting on skilled trades and moving.

Blacks also had a hard time getting hired
and transferred to good jobs, but later years
things got better for them. Pay inequity between
men women and minorities was very serious
not fixed until the late 1970's

(3)

- Dimmers = There was not very many in the early years but later they were better. Collections also
- * ~~Sally~~ in the factory = They both worked in some dept, some shift. Met in 1955 and married 1957 and married to this day
 - * Chaperones = Back then no women were allowed to work, Bosses ~~was~~ picked their own people, until that changed in the 1980's.
 - * Family = Doreen. when you were pregnant you were paid for only 6 weeks then back to work. Always a problem having a day off. 3 days off you needed a doctors statement to prove this.
 - * Foremans working on the line was a big problem in the past. so Paragraph 715A guidelines were written.
 - * Collections were a big thing also, for someone who was hurt, or a death in the family, etc.
 - * Mgt and Employees back in the 50's played ball together and did things together. This didn't last long.
 - * Back in the 50's the Cafeteria was in the basement. Executive cafeteria was segregated for bosses only in 1960's
 - * This union hall was built and Doreen bought a brick for \$1.00 to help build this union hall. Mostly done by contractors and a few employees.
 - * Doreen is near from Cherrington ME. She came here to go to work at St Lawrence for work. Rented a room for \$5.00 per week and only went home about once a month by bus.

(4)

A. Cars = mostly GM cars were owned by them.
all the way from the 50's till present. They weren't
happy when the Olds division was done.

A. Learning Capital of Quality = Doreen felt that when
you went to work you made friendships and you
worked hard and helped each other out!

A. QWL was looked at. Workers wanted some input
on the job while they spent time in the plant.
Don Chenoweth was plant manager and set up
a meeting for mgt, union etc had a 3 day class.

* Factory Culture = hourly and supervision did drink
in the early years. Marijuana was coming in during
the 1970's. Don't buy a car that was made on
a Friday. In the early years there were no
radios, or newspapers. Some people would
watch the Sexton ball games from the roof.

A. Name changes = Doreen spoke that this will
still be Fisher Body. Most retirees are sad
that they spent most of their life in the plant.

A. Women's issues = Doreen spoke that in point there
was no harassment but the less pay than men.

A. Health & Safety = This was very much better
now than back in the 50's and 60's.

A. Elections Committee chairman = Doreen was elected as
chairman, 8 people on the committee, and all people would
stay the entire 24 hour election. Most important
election was swing shift. 4 weeks days 4 weeks
nights. This election changed so there wasn't no
more.

Most appreciated Benefit = Ion, Pension and Health Care
Saves - 30 and out retirement.

* Proaks = There was no time for this back then.

* Wagon = The Union had to give up the 6 minutes that the wagon would take for shutdown. This was a traveling reader twice a day, coffee, donuts sandwiches, juice, pop etc. Mgt wanted to put large vending satellite areas with microwave ovens and seating in established areas.

* Population in the plant = (highest was 6000 people) (in 1984 it was 5000, people) People were called shoprats in the past.