

1:25 pm

# Lonsing Fisher Body Historical Team

3-22-06

Interviewer - Marilyn Coulter

Interviewee - Richard Hegmon

Seniority - 7-29-47 DOB 3-25-29

Married - Yes

Education Graduated from JW Sexton 1947

Military = None.

Born + raised in Lonsing

History of Lonsing = The smell of new cars coming out of the factory, The factory was more open at the time.

A Good memories were the way the grounds were beautiful all around Fisher Body.

A Boob in the thirties was watching the ball games at the park on Logan St. Richard remembered people looking at them walking along Vertinder Ave from Fisher Body Plant. Calling them names and derogatory comments. So eventually they began to throw rocks at the

A Fisher employees. Everytime they did this they would stop the line because of the kids throwing clay and rocks. There were very few houses around the factories back in the 30's and 40's

A Boob at this time was when the UAW was trying to organize G.M and the national guard had machine guns on and around the different plants to

(1)

Maintain order back in 1936. In school at sexton Mr. Heyman ran track in the Fisher Body Parking lot. Because there was no where to run track at.

\* Richard never worked at Fisher Body Auto plant but worked at Plant II Forge plant. He also got a call from Fisher and the Forge plant together. People that he knew at Fisher Body told him not to come in because black people were put on the worst and hardest jobs. So he went to work at Plant II.

His father worked on the railroad car coach then and he knew many of the people who lived in Lansing and RE automobile wanted some good waiters for his hotel and hired his father.

\* Jobs back then were hard to get so it helped to know people, or be in the right organization, the right church etc. Richard also felt that Lansing has benefitted from G.M., but also G.M. has benefitted from the hard work of many individuals.

Plant Closings = very sad to see our witnesses.  
\* Richard believed that back in the seventies G.M. has lost too many jobs in the past because they are not ~~being~~ doing the right things and got started over again.

(9)

Both then also most kids walked where they were going because they had no money or bikes to ride.

A. Richard was a benefits rep for UAW beginning in 1969 or 1970. This was a daily battle. Much racism in the factories and also in the UAW. He was fortunate in his term as benefits rep, got to meet Walter Reuther, travel around the U.S., got to visit the White House etc. Richard was also strongly against the retirees who are in combat for their benefits. He feels that they need to leave GM and the UAW to work this out and he feels they are jeopardizing his pension and the future pensions of future retirees.