

Fisher Body Historical Team

2-6-05

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am

Interviewer - Marilyn Coulter

Interviewee - Milton J. Vann

Seniority - 10-9-67 - Hypothesized (6-1-2004)

Married - Yes 35 years (2) sons

Education = High School, BS Social Science MSU (1971)

Military = Air Force 4 years

MSU Student before being in at Fisher Body

* Reason for hiring = Basically the only place hiring around Lansing, believed they were hard working people everyday.

Fisher Body had a hard time hiring at this time because of Vietnam War.

* First Day = Trunk Rubber job in trim shop. Putting rubber around the actual car.

Very overwhelming, strange people, strange place. Easy to get lost when you went home. Also very few women in the plant at this time. Women had to go downstairs to use the restroom. 30 different car styles were being built back then. Station Wagons, Police cars, 2 doors, 4 doors, different colors.

Not very many African Americans working here. People in that plant were hard working and adapting to a new life style of working on the line. Diversity among the people was different from each other. Some people even became teachers and lawyers and

even retired to these professions. Mill worked night shift for most of his time. He felt that night shift was more vibrant and having the same people on nights for years + years. John Powers was general foreman at the time. Mill felt that John had a reputation for firing his own son, but went out of his way to help you if you did a good job. Safety locks then was not as readily available locks then, but today more of these are in place for a safer workshop.

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Mill felt that co-workers became your actual family because you spent so much time with them 5 or 6 days a week. Being on door glass was an opportunity to build faster so there was so much free time in an 8 or 10 hour shift. This group could build up their stocks every shift and get free time. Mill spent about 11 years in the glass dept. He also was able to spend time with co-workers outside the plants and learn about their lifestyle or their home life.

Mill also felt that the peoples diversity of skills from co-workers such as craftsman, computer programmers, most people believe that factory workers

were unskilled or undereducated. Mitt felt that if he needed something around home done he would ask his co-workers.

* Mitt also felt the people had a great work ethic because they come from urban areas.
= A typical day = back then you had actual punch cards instead of computers. Figure out your gross and determine your job on that day. 47 minute lunch hour, 6 minutes wagon twice a day. A cart came by with coffee, pop, doughnuts, chips etc. Most people would eat in the cafeteria. Segregated parking lot. Segregated lunch rooms.

Good supervisor = John Powers was a good boss. Mitt felt if you did your job they wasn't any problems, or come to work everyday.

* Today the job of cuts, created problems and alot of them were loading no work on you jobs. Also noisy but much better now today. The heat also was a problem during the summer. Mitt felt like your ~~work~~ job was very hard.

* Strike = 1970 = mostly for (30 year and out) Mitt was actually working on the picket line. Pay was about 50 dollars a week.

* The pay in the plant was about \$3⁰⁰ on hour water test = This was the next job that Mitt did was a water control in the water

Test job, doing every 4th job in this group was rotated on and this was easy.

* Favorite job = was torque monitor. Took 22 years to get this job. His job was to check different parts on balls etc, with the motor.

* = New hires = Make sure you can do all the jobs + Be punctual, do your jobs everyday.

Most people dont believe that the people actually come together building a team to solve any problem that they had to perform.

* Capital of Quality = Diversity of workforce, people did their jobs, the ability to adapt to the new job and keep going on everyday. The ability to build a job.

* Comfarts = radios, newspapers, talking to your partner

* Also will again speak about this folding day. People had govt jobs done for them. Home charges = Fisher Body was and always will be home away from home.

* Will put out a letter on the floor to praise the workers there, also to critique the local union and remind people that who you vote for should be the one represents you.

* Will feels that the local doesn't want to bring on new people but to just keep their offices in place

Words of wisdom = Must continue what they are doing, continue working, to

strive to do a good quality job each day. Maintain your good employment record and enjoy yourself.

Milt = Finally spoke about testing people before hiring, he felt that this was wrong. You need to continue to have a diverse workforce, open employment should be given a better chance in the future.