

Ed Rankin
1/30/92
Page 1

Rankin: Yeah, they had ... as sponsors. Here is another one of the newsletters, but we used to have Reo items. When I first went to Reo, Cy Rath was quite active Alright, now he had an awful lot of memorabilia. He was personnel director he wasn't when I was, he was in the parts cost department downstairs with Art Hempsted. And, of course, there I'm getting Eager Beaver there.

IA: What was the Eager Beaver Award?

Rankin: Well, it is a sort of a little silver, it is made of pewter but it was silver plated and it was an Eager Beaver, show em. Of course, I didn't get I just showed you what, and then they had what they call a golden award for the out in the shop keeping their places clean. But you got to look at all these and Ralph Lott, he was down in the cost accounting and a few others. You are going to be able to have *that too.*

IA: Oh wonderful.

Rankin: Down here....

IA: These will be nice artifacts. And who lived here? This

Rankin: ~~Zumun~~ Hansen. *Zenon*

IA: Okay.

Rankin: And here is Cappaert

IA: Oh Cappaert, we've heard a lot about him.

IB: Yes, we sure did.

Rankin: Well I don't think you heard too many good things about him in general, but ah,

IA: F. L. Cappaert, was his first name Frank?

Rankin: No, I don't remember.

IA: It says F and I just wondered.

Rankin: It might have been Francis, but I don't know. You can have this. Of course, I know you get all kinds of Now ... now before we get into anything else, I want you to just go down through here is one that you talked to Ted *J. Metzke*

IA: Oh yeah, well we are going to be talking to him later.

Rankin: Now that was in the paper after I think our meeting down here.

Ed Rankin
1/30/92
Page 2

IA: Yeah.

Rankin: Now he might have. Just if you want somebody just to look through this stuff and if there is any letters in here, a lot of it is different meetings and stuff and here was a brief history of Reo. And, of course, I was looking for ah, we had a tour guide, and it was *sheaf of papers* (can't hear) ~~sheet~~ papers and I was one of the tour guides quite a few times down there. Of course, it was on the days when I wasn't that busy so to speak, but you can look through this and just see what all these things are. Some of these are some of the letters and take what you want.

IA: Okay. We'll have to take some time though to go through this.

Rankin: Well that's alright. I'll leave it with you and then now those ... these are field service representatives. A big part of them are dead by now.

IA: Yeah, that's a great ~~pension~~ *picture*.

Rankin: Yeah see

IA: Oh they are on the back.... on the back. Oh I see, okay.

Rankin: But I knew most of them because I dealt with them in my parts distribution.

IA: (can't hear)

IB: Oh yes.

Rankin: Frank was with the labor unit. *drawn at the Union Hall* (can't hear)

IA: Okay.

Rankin: But I knew most of these..... on there right now, I'd have to ... *back* my memory.

IA: Mr. Rankin, before we begin I am affiliated with the university.

Rankin: Right, ah huh.

IA: I need to have you sign some things.

Rankin: *okay Be happy to,*

IA: This is really to protect you.

Rankin: Well that's alright. Both my kids graduated out there.

Ed Rankin
1/30/92
Page 3

IA: Oh really.

IB: Okay.

IA: They make me do this, you know, if I talk to anybody a lot, I got to do this. This is just um, to let you know about the variety of options for doing oral history which is what we will be doing here.

Rankin: Ah huh.

IA: And that you can refuse to answer any question. That you can tell us to turn the tape off.

Rankin: ... in 1947.

IA: 1947.

Rankin: And I left there on March 31st in 1973. And if you go down through the letters there is my letter of resignation and ~~(can't hear)~~ *everything so I give it to you.*

IA: From that and information

IB: Yeah I put it all right here.

Rankin: You can make copies *If you want,* (noise) if there are two copies there you can take one.

IA: Okay.

Rankin: It don't make any difference.

IA: And what did you start at, what was your first job?

Rankin: Well my first job was inventory control chief clerk.

IA: Okay.

Rankin: But, of course, that was a step down from where I had just come from, but that doesn't matter too much. I came back to Lansing. See I had worked for this just previous at the Reo. I came up to Lansing, I just, this you can use if you want to. Ah, I came up to Lansing to work for Nash Kelvinator in their propeller plants. That was in 1941. And ah, so I was ~~in~~ *given* schedule (can't hear have volume turned all way up) *in the Lansing Plant on corner of Mt. Hope*

IA: Yeah sure. *you know where that is?*

Rankin: That's good, we build propellers

IA: Ah huh for the war.

Ed Rankin
1/30/92
Page 4

Rankin: And ^{where they built propellers.} the plant where John Bean was there and I ^{had my first}

IA: And what was your job there?

Rankin: Production scheduling.

IA: Okay.

Rankin: I did all the scheduling in the parts (not very close to mike) and then when they the war was over, thank gosh, (laughter) and ah, I was there for finishing up and I had a ^{chance} which was ^{to go to} ^{work for Ed Bean.} ^{ideal plant} and ah, they were situated in a building where Capitol City Lumber Company office was ... building that's where ^{I had} was. And I had worked there possibly three months and worked there for a month the company and they also ^{made Indian Machinery} in Springfield, Massachusetts. So they wanted to consolidate ^(loud clearing voice) my job then to get it all boxed up and shipped to Massachusetts. And I was production material control manager and ah, at that time I was doing a great deal of purchasing for certain things. ^{at the factory} Well that disrupted everything for a while and ^{went down} got them all set up and and then I ah, it just happened that they wanted to consolidate ^{depts} just about a year and I had told Mr. I'd get a job ^(loud buzz and can't hear) ^{not be} ^{man} to somebody else when I'm already in charge of something.

IA: Yeah.

Rankin: So I took my separation pay and I went to Lansing. Well that was just about the end of '46 and I took a couple weeks of looking around finding a place to live ^{all that} and I decided then that to start looking for a job. ^{didn't look} too far, I went to Reo. ^{they were} ^(can't hear) ^(loud buzz) ^{were receptive & I got interview & went to work.}

IA: Let's go back to Lansing, did you grow up here originally?

Rankin: No, I was born and raised in Duluth, Minnesota. Oh yeah, back in 1910, I'm not a spring chick ^{you can't} possibly one of the older fellows you possibly will be talking to, as far as that's concerned. But ah, my ah, my high school education, of course, was all directed towards manual arts and ah ^{that was at the} I'm sure. Ah, but you weren't. ^{at that time.} ^{end of the great Dep. you weren't around}

IA: No. (laughter) My parents were though.

Rankin: I was already accepted at Stout Institute in Wisconsin to go to manual arts school, but boy I tell you things were rough So, all I've ever had is an informal high school education and a lot of hard work of that. But things weren't too robust. I did work for Pittsburgh Coal Company on the docks ^{office} just dropped right out of sight. So then I stayed around and worked farm labor and stuff like

Ed Rankin
1/30/92
Page 5

that and then finally decided to *get out of Minnesota* ~~Michigan~~ based on lumber industry and *wood mining camp* and just *wasn't* So I decided to go to Detroit. *anything you.*

IA: Oh so you went to Detroit.

Rankin: I went in 1935. *and I did just about* ~~And ah, everything~~ *did add job* there..... I never got on welfare.

IA: Did you pick Detroit because

Rankin: Well because *of the* auto industry I figured well there would be a lot of work but oddly enough I didn't really get any *work*.. *and I would* sailed the Great Lakes for a couple of years. I sailed the Great Lakes out of Rouge and I sailed *with*.... dock and *in*.... cooking *etc.*:

IA: Yeah. *me*

Rankin: *I don't recall* around (loud buzz) and then I finally got, I finally got a job at Atlas Foundry south of Port Huron..... It has changed a lot since then. I worked in there as a core maker and *over time* to the ... setters for castings. And I *do* recognize some of the names that came in for experimental engines out of Lansing, Michigan, I think some were definitely old. But that is back in 1936, '36 and '37. But you know *But keep*.... try to keep away from getting *we're* We never had to get... I kept working, I always did save. If you want to work, you can find a job. I mean some kind of job. You don't want to be too proud. If you are too proud you may never work.

IB: How does family

Rankin: Well it is getting, it is getting rough right now. When you are on retired pensions which aren't too good and if you didn't save for a rainy day, it would be a lot tougher. I look at it *try to get it* as just a record, I think that anybody *retired*... *describe* interest on savings and CDs. percentages gone down so low, I'll tell you you are going to have to start changing your way. Unless you got a lot of money. *Then I mean a lot in reserve*.... Well, my wife is a good manager and and we've been married for 57 years.

IA: That's wonderful.

IB: Oh wow.

Rankin: With a good manager and both she and I see eye to eye on issues, you can manage if you set your mind to.

IB: Your pension from Reo wasn't what it would have been?

the sale

Ed Rankin
1/30/92
Page 6

Rankin: Oh no, my pension from Reo, I took out a small pension on my own personal pension, at that time. But right now it is taking both of them just to pay my *Blue Cross, Blue Shield*

IA: Yeah, we've heard this from other, with the health care ~~and~~

IB: Yeah.

Rankin: But it is unfortunate that it has to be this way.

IB: Yeah.

Rankin: Except that Blue Cross, I think has just went too high and I don't think switching over to ~~HIP~~ *ADP*, because I've heard ... say that and you got to look at it and say well, ah, we got to eat, so we better *stay all the time. same* ... Now I don't have nothing wrong with Blue Cross, it's coverage don't get me wrong. The premium will cost you \$300 a month. *It's a good plan*

IB: A month, I know.

Rankin: That's terrible. I think that is, somebody ... somebody. *bleeding*

IA: It certainly bears looking in to, if anybody would.

Rankin: Now getting back to Reo.

IA: Well what I want to know is how you got from Detroit to Lansing.

Rankin: Oh well, now there is a kind of a good story and I always did say it isn't what you know, it is who you know.

IA: Ah huh. (laughter)

Rankin: ... a story which I think is quite interesting now. When I went to work for Nash Kelvinator I had been at the foundry and I made an acquaintance of a few people, we lived on Hubbard Avenue in an apartment and in that apartment of *Mr. Summers* and ah, then I made another ... Mr. *Bowman* and ... *the* head of personnel (can't hear) and ah, I ah, I went to work for Nash Kelvinator and then ... went on strike and then I was out and, of course, then between there I went over to *DESOTO MOTORS* ... *Wards* and worked for ... and I was *ROCKERS* stuck to *STOCK TO THE* the line. And, of course, on Kelvinator I was strictly working on the line with nuts and bolts together and Kelvinator's and refrigerators and ah,

IA: And they went out on strike and you lost your job because of the strike.

Ed Rankin
1/30/92
Page 7

Rankin: Well, just like you say temporarily, until they get the strike settled so to speak.

IA: Yeah.

Rankin: I went to work for *DeSoto Motors* for awhile.

IB: Was that here *I.N. LANSING?*

Rankin: No that was on Mark Twain Avenue in Detroit. It is off Plymouth Road.

IB: Oh I see.

Rankin: Towards Lansing. And I and then went on strike.

IA: Was this '37? When everybody was going out?

Rankin: Yeah, '37. And ah, I shuffled between the two and then I went to work, I got a job with *J.M. Waters* Motor Sales. Now they built Skyview taxicabs, most of them were headed for New York. And ah, and the man in there, Mr. Fox, and he was *the MGR* and I was working with receiving and we were getting to quite a story and so now between the two things as it come up to a land lease, in 1938 right around that.... and then ah, the ah, J. F. Waters had a director ... he couldn't ~~to~~ continue with Skyview cabs and they were building Skyview cabs on DeSota chassis. So, between there and my good friends that were working as personnel directors in a couple of companies, I ah, I found a job over in Wayne, Michigan with the Bendix Aircraft *Plant* and I was in charge of tools and buying tools for the production.... And I worked there for possibly oh, maybe close to a year and in the '40's and ah, and made me keep my nose to the grindstone ... and keeping my face clean, and talking with ... *the*... personnel directors *over... (can't hear) play bridge* so I came here to *Danbury* and ah, when Kelvinator got the directive to go ... in Lansing and I knew Mr. *Halsman* he was with Bendix Aircraft and so that was my lead to get into Bendix Aircraft. All I can say it isn't what you know, it is who you know. And ah, they knew I had experience in certain amount of scheduling and parts, so they got together and I had a call at this Mr. Pollen's office and he said how would you like to ah, go up to Lansing. I says, well it all depends. I'm not unhappy with the tool room here, and I hope I'm doing a good enough job that you just don't want to get rid of me. I get the word. And ah, he says well I know Mr. Summers quite well up there and he says he is not up there yet, he doesn't have it opened. But if you are receptive we will start working. And ah, so *they were kind of it* and they decided that I would *go*.... so it came around pretty close to that 41..... (can't hear) called me again and said if it is all right with you is defense industry, so you are 4A rating won't be affected we are in defense industry right now and ah, Mr. Summers

Ed Rankin
1/30/92
Page 8

asked me to fit in. So I left there on Friday night and next Monday morning I was at Kelvinator in Lansing. Now that brings ^{THE WAR,} ~~done~~ ^{WA. WP. TO} and I don't, all the production ^{scheduling for Kelvinator} I had the first office I had was upstairs in the old John Bean ^{plant.....} there is an engraving place up there on the floor there ^{remember where the old comp manufactura?}

IA: Yeah, we've talked about that before. Yeah.

Rankin: come right in to that

IA: That on the spot engraving

Rankin: Yeah, he used to be at Reo.

IA: Oh he did.

Rankin: Oh yeah, oh yeah, he used to work at ^{Reo} In case you didn't know that.

IA: No I didn't.

Rankin: And Reed I think was ^{his name}.... Mr. Reed and his wife I had an office in there and my ah, my immediate supervisor was Mr. Baldwin which I think today I don't know if he is living or not, but he was ^{FOOD MACHINE} CHEMICAL Corporationand he was, he was chief at that time. Then he left and ^{I-moved} (can't hear) on Mt. Hope, right over the main entrance at that time.

IA: Ah huh.

Rankin: And so I worked there all through the war.

IA: What did this company make during the war?

Rankin: Propellers.

IA: Propellers.

Rankin: Yeah. That's right. So, that's when ^{preliminary} ... history before the ^{WAR} and to ^{Idea} .. lawn mower and then going down to Springfield, Massachusetts, which was moving the family and everything.

IA: Yeah, so you'd just as soon stay in the Lansing area.

Rankin: And then come back to Lansing.

IA: Right.

Ed Rankin
1/30/92
Page 9

Rankin: Because I liked Lansing when I was here and I thought well I won't go back to Detroit, so I worked in Lansing. I knew Detroit pretty well by that time.

IA: Yeah. Were you happy about working at Reo.....

Rankin: The thing and I'll say this *without full life's culture* it is just, you know, you get into a company that is what you call and I think is family oriented and ah, and you realize that after you got in. Everybody seemed to be so friendly *with one another* and ... right now..... They didn't seem to have a prejudice in their mind. I think because .. Reo, my previous history was quite *an.... (can't hear)*

IA: Oh.

Rankin: And they train people and *come back* and talk to people my age and older if they are still living, if they have had some ... *(can't people hear) at some time for Reo* They produce people that have gone out and done good jobs for other *people*.

IB: Oh I see, yeah. *and moved up in the company.*

Rankin: *Yes*..and moved up and they were, I think, very much of the mind to promote from within.

IA: Ah huh.

Rankin: And that is good for them. And you can work there and all of a sudden go out and hire somebody that can do the job from outside, I think it could cause a little hard feelings. What am I working for here. So, I had quite a history of advancements. *I'm not talking about* just not knowing.

IA: Right.

Rankin: I didn't *get... a my place.*

IA: And so you started out as inventory, inventory control chief clerk.

Rankin: Right. That is right directly under the parts manager.

IA: Okay. And then you worked your way up.

Rankin: I worked my way up as things opened up, I was asked if I would care to try it. So I was on that job for possibly I'd say, it seemed to me it was six months, six or seven months and keeping inventory control and I don't know if anybody mentioned Mr. Post, ~~Post~~

IB: *No*.....

Ed Rankin
1/30/92
Page 10

Rankin: Alex Post had the pricing operation, all the parts pricing. And he decided ~~to leave~~ (can't hear) and he asked me if I'd like to take over the pricing room. I says well I'll try anything once and if that guys says well you got a pretty good record in the past from wherever you've been, so ~~done the job~~ and ah, I said yeah, I'll give it a swing, so I was moved over to pricing ~~then~~. That entailed setting all the service parts pricing where it is based on manufacturing costs and ah, and getting the price list from the various suppliers, ~~like Davis Clark~~ and whoever we bought ~~from~~ ^{for our} catalog. And you had to get all those lists and ~~you published them~~ based on your cost from them, but you usually followed, if they had a retail price list to the to the outside ~~their~~ ^{outlets} you usually follow their retail price, but you ~~made your~~ price ~~is~~ based on your cost to get the product to your dealerships and your ah, distributorships and to your branches. ~~There were~~ ^{can't hear} about 300 prices. And it lists a dealer and a distributor and ~~if it~~ ^{was a branch} got an override. I didn't know too much what the override was, so whatever it was ~~Billed~~ ^{built} after they bought parts ah, the accounting department usually gave them what override was or a discount ~~offer~~. I wouldn't know that because I wasn't in the ~~country~~ ^{accounting}. but I worked at that job for 10 years. Now I had a very efficient young lady, Bertha Painter was her name when we started and she had worked for so she knew pretty well the procedures, so ^{Polson}

IA: Now she assisted or secretary or

Rankin: She was secretary and typist and everything else ^{only 2 yrs} running the jobs, so ... and ah, I will say this much, you could never get a secretary so versed in doing things and not afraid of a job. She was ~~at~~ she was Al. And she lives over on Climax Street here in Lansing.

IA: Oh sure.

Rankin: Just off of ^{Pennsylvania} her name is now Bertha Muniz.

IB: Muniz.

Rankin: Muniz.

IA: What is it now?

Rankin: Her name is Muniz, M u n i z.

IA: Oh and her maiden name was Heiner, H e i ^(a Painter)

Rankin: It was Heiner, she was born I think in Fowler, Michigan. And I know that was between there, Fowler on Highway 21, west of St. Johns.

IA: Ah huh.

Ed Rankin
1/30/92
Page 11

Rankin: But then, of course, she married Pete Muniz ah, and otherwise I know them very well. I still send Christmas cards to them. We worked together for about 10 years and ah, we kind of changed the pricing department We farmed out most of the price lists compilation with Franklin Decline. Now Franklin Decline was, *DECLINE* it was that building right next to the main fire station, just to the south. That used to be Franklin Declines. And they done most of the binder work and everything else for a long time. We submitted the typewritten copy of our prices and the listings and the way we wanted them, ~~the name~~ *they made the book up.*

IA: I see.

Rankin: While I was on it, we changed over and we *took* complete assembly *of the book* and we had a good print department and so we used Tom Shoulders was the manager of the printing department at that time and that was in the basement of the clubhouse.

IA: Oh.

IB: And then kind of printed up the Spirit and all the journals and

Rankin: That's where everything got printed.

IA: I didn't know that.

Rankin: And I think Bob Myers was the, ^{*BOB*} ~~put~~ on the cafeteria over in that basement.

IA: Ah huh.

Rankin: Which was quite a great guy too.

IA: Ah huh.

IB: I did know there was a cafeteria down there. I didn't know there was a print shop though.

Rankin: You should get most of this ... also from a lot of the other folks.

IA: Yes.

Rankin: So we changed it all over and we got that so we done all our own printing and we done all our own art work. ~~and several of catalogs~~ somebody *did the makeups* (can't hear) I always like to experiment with things and do some extra work just to try to get the job done better. And like I always, my philosophy has always been if you got a benefactor and don't ever *let him down* just work a little harder and put that extra *bit*.. so it makes you

Ed Rankin
1/30/92
Page 12

support his confidence in you. That's been my philosophy all through that.

IB: It is a wonderful philosophy.

Rankin: Never, never, never let ^{you} ~~you~~ ^{benefactor down,} down.... Make him look good in his judgment.

IA: Ah huh, yeah. At least with Reo what we've been hearing from other people you could pretty much count on getting good response to that ^{kind of philosophy}

Rankin: Well I think it is, I think everybody has forgotten you know, like I said..... it is who you know. But if you work and develop a you can you can make yourself ... and I like to think that ah, I have created that much confidence that I can do and what I was willing to try. And I would at least make it go. And ah, you might have read in the paper just the other day where Pete Hamelink died in Holland, Michigan. He was general service manager when I ^{worked there} ~~worked there~~ and he just died over at Holland and he was in his late 90s. And he was a swell fellow.

IA: Was it Hemley?

Rankin: Hamelink.

IA: Hamelink

Rankin: H a m e l i n k. A very fine gentleman.

IB: And you mentioned Tom Shoulers

Rankin: Tom Shoulers is not Shoulders, leave the d out. Shoulers. Yeah, he was in charge of the printing department at Reo at that time. And I think at that time, I don't know, oh let's see now, the manager was ^{lets} see, Charles, well anyway he worked for the state capitol in records and things, something like that after he left Reo. And he was ^{a... ballplayer too - a Reo ballplayer}

IA: Oh.

Rankin: Well somebody else will tell you.... talk to ah, I know that ah, Red O'Brien will know the name, it will come to me. ^{Maybe I'm getting Alzheimer's.}

IA: Oh no I don't think so.

IB: I don't think so.

IA: The ball team, that sounds interesting.

Ed Rankin
1/30/92
Page 13

Rankin: Well Reo had a pretty good ball team at one time. That was possibly more before I got there.

IA: I see.

Rankin: Yeah. They practically ran everything at one time. In fact, they had a bowling alley down in the basement in the early days, but they weren't there when I got there.

IA: Oh they weren't there by then.

Rankin: No, that's where the printing department was.

IA: Oh I see it took over.

Rankin: Yeah.....

IB: Sports teams still by the '40's.

Rankin: Well the bowling team was pretty well known all through the league and all that. In fact, I still ~~bowling~~ we play bridge with Glenn Sine who's dad was one of the earlier bowlers with Reo..... but Glenn Sine was a, he.. we play bridge with him at times He was with Shevern Shoes for years. His dad worked for Reo before I ever got there.
Ah,

IA: What about *Reo's band* was that disbanded?

Rankin: No Reo's band ah, Reo's band I don't know, it was more than likely just as things got more modern I suppose it just faded out, it wasn't there when I was there, but they still had the nice ah, in the clubhouse.

IB: Clubhouse, sure.

Rankin: And there was a real good organ. I hope it is still working for somebody someplace. Somebody bought it I don't know where it went.

IA: Is that the big organ that had been in the R. E. Olds home at one time?

Rankin: I don't.. that part I don't know where it come form, but I knew several people that played it. I never played an organ, but I do have a little ah small organ at home, it is not a, it is one of these Yamaha's but I'm just monkeying around with it, I don't really play it. But anyway, getting back to the pricing department, and the progression that *we go*... it was about 10 years and then Tom Bates and that's a name

Ed Rankin
1/30/92
Page 14

IA: I know that name, yeah.

Rankin: He had the export department, export parts and service and ah, *one night he*
had a heart attack

IA: I was going to say he was around before the war.

Rankin: Yeah, and a very fine gentleman.

IA: Right.

Rankin: Very friendly and all that. I never had any experience in export *in the past*
until he died and Pete Hamelink called me into the office in the
morning and said well we lost a good man over there, I suppose you
heard, I said yeah I heard. He says I don't, I don't envy you
changing jobs because you are doing a good job at what you are doing.
One thing, then he said frankly, he says, ah, no matter what you
think, I think you can handle the job *of Tom Bates*. You know, and if
you look at it and say well, for pricing going into export and parts
and service for export, and you got to know a lot of export
regulations. He says well as of right now, if you want it, if you
will take it, ~~your~~ *YOU'RE* export parts service manager.

IA: Wow.

Rankin: He said I'll give you a couple days to *comment* .. and later *the* secretary
that's over there more or less handle the main stuff, I want you to go over there
and get all those export books out and start looking at them. And
..... see what it looks like. And in a couple of days if you've
decided that's too much for you, just tell em. We'll get somebody
else.

IA: Ah huh.

Rankin: Well I went up to Herb and I says well, it doesn't look that bad,
with the good ... training like I went when I left your pressing
department, I got an awful lot of guidance. And so between the two,
I went and talked to the young lady and ah, she said well, I know
pretty well what the documents are dated and ah, just so we get the
right stuff and all that. He said you know parts and ah,
interpretations, if I had to do all my own interpretation, with the
orders that come in the place for it. If they come in like wording
in Spanish, we set out the letters that we have them transcribed into
English, I changed that by the way. But after a while then we done
that for a while until we got going and then you talked to Louis
Garcia. He may not have told you,

IA: He did the Spanish for you.

Ed Rankin
1/30/92
Page 15

Rankin: Yes, from something I needed to know right now. He went down to the pressroom and I said Louie, I say Louie what does this say.

IA: So he was valuable in ways that he didn't tell us.

IB: ... never.... and give you the wrong explanation.

Rankin: No, no. No he, he would tell me a lot of times that in the Spanish there are sometimes multiple versions of ... In other words, it all depends on which context you were, you were talking in. So he would explain it to me that he might mention this particular phrase and it wouldn't apply in general conversation, but in parts and servicing here and this is what it more than likely means. So he would tell me and I'd come back up and I'd be able to get the order. Now, for a while, I would send some of those out anyway and get them interpreted, just from the interpreter we used to send them down to Detroit. And, of course, by the time you got it back it was three or four days. And sometimes the essence was that you had to get something out pretty quick by air and so you'd do it. (My eyes are watering like the dickens, it isn't because I'm crying or anything, my tear ducts, possibly the drainage

IA: Spill over, huh?

Rankin: Yeah. *without my glasses & can't see anything* But anyway, things went on like that and we worked at it for a long time and (can't hear) we got along pretty good. Came up to the time, see the company at the time was floating between fires.

IA: Oh it was.

Rankin: See it Bohn Aluminum and Brass had us and then it went on for a while and then White Motors

IA: We heard about that.

Rankin: That's when White Motors, I was in *EXPORT PARTS A.N.D.* service and I was running the job alright and then White Motors whatever the date was I can't tell you exactly, but when they bought us, they wanted to consolidate the export. So, getting things altogether and everything and getting our export dovetailed in with the export in Cleveland, I had to go down to Cleveland. The first time I went down I took most of the workers with me. Ah, and I was down there for two weeks. And ah, working with Joe Strauss, he was the export parts and service manager down there. And ah, went down there and worked with him. They were very nice, everything was nice. I had an office and I was mostly in Joe Strauss' office anyway, but I had an office to work in and correlate things. But ah, we got along fine and ah, then I came back to Lansing and I had to go down oh, I didn't go back down for a week, but then I was going down every morning for a couple of

Ed Rankin
1/30/92
Page 16

weeks. I would go out to the airport and I'd get down to Hopkins Airport on one Eastern Airlines and I'd come on down there and by the time I'd get to the office it would be lunch hour and we'd sit and talk about things that they had and the stuff that I had brought down before that they didn't quite understand.

IA: Ah huh.

Rankin: We'd go in and we'd talk maybe a couple hours and dovetail them and get them lined up for either I thought or Joe Strauss thought because their system was a little bit different. And ah, then I'd have to head back for Hopkins Airport to get a plane to come back into Lansing. Now that was a bad routine, I was kind of glad when it stopped. Because, you know, it didn't last too long with White after that. And ah, we ah, got it worked in, I was it just happened to me that I was back, I was down in Cleveland one day and I got a call from ah, Mr. Collins, he was general sales manager for Reo in Lansing and he said I want you to come back. I seen you and I want to talk to you. Well I knew there must be something up and I didn't know what, but ah, naturally being flexible, I had to catch that same plane I normally caught and I went right to the office. But he wasn't in, he left for the afternoon, so the next morning I had a note on my desk says, I'll see you as soon as you get in. So, Mr. Collins, he says I don't want you to feel that you are at loose ends now that you don't have a job. (laughter) I said, well what do you got in mind. He says ah, we need a warranty manager and that was in between a lot of things and in the meantime, between that, and being part of White, that was in there and Harold one of the servicemen on that big picture that I'll show you which one is Harold Link. He is dead now. He lived in Fostoria, Ohio. See ... that's Harold Link and this is Bob Johnson here and this is Harry Finn, I know those three. He took over as general service manager after Pete Hamelink at one time. that is Bob Johnson, he is now, he is dead also. And Harry Finn is dead, I know that.

IA: That's Harry Finn, F i n n.

Side 2

Rankin: Yeah, F i n n. And he was a good help with a lot of things around the office because he had been there for a long time.

IA: Now the exporting, they just decided to keep up the Cleveland end and phase out the Lansing end.

Rankin: Right. That's right.

IA: Okay.

Rankin: So, alright, I might think a couple of these others But anyway, between them and um, I'm talking about warranties.

Ed Rankin
1/30/92
Page 17

IA: Right, so you went on

Rankin: We are talking about these are field service and they go out on the problems, if you got a problem at a dealership or distributorship and you are thinking that they are trying to ship you off or something like that, they know

Side 2

Rankin: as I get a warranty claim in and then not knowing all of the features of the truck and all the things that can happen, ah, I would, Harry Finn had a desk almost right across from me and ah, he'd be, if he was in I'd ask him or Tony Rose who had been with the company a long time, he was working and he worked also with me on warranty. And ah, between them and we'd decide whether we could give them what they were asking for or No not always, but yet if you possibly owed them something, but maybe not, not the whole truck.

IA: I see.

Rankin: So you worked it out. And I worked at that for quite a while and then when Cappaert bought the point, now at that time when Cappaert bought it, they were at lose ends for pricing So, ah, and all that, now look I got along good with Cappaert. Ah, I realize that some people didn't, ah, I, of course, made the wrong attitude. I don't know, I don't believe that ah, everybody is bad all the and ah, but ah, some people couldn't get along with Mrs. ~~Jones~~ *Johnson*.

IA: Oh we heard about her....

Rankin: So, they knew my qualifications for this anyway and if they bought the company, they must have looked at the record. And I, they wanted to get somebody to handle the pricing and so I talked to Mildred and she was quite receptive, she says well you've done it before and you should know, so pricing again, and ah, of course, I had moved my office. No there was one just in between there.

IA: No, no, okay.

Rankin: Alright. In between that

IA: Between the warranty and the pricing?

Rankin: Yeah. They needed a, they needed a systems export salesman.

IA: Oh, so back to exporting now.

Rankin: So I went back to exporting, but in a sales capacity.

Ed Rankin
1/30/92
Page 18

IA: I see.

Rankin: I worked under Mr. Chuck Dunford, Charles Dunford. He lives out on Sunset in East Lansing. We get together quite often now.

IA: *D. DUNFORD?*

Rankin: *Yes*.... Dunford, Jr., his dad was ah, ah, professor at the college in finance. But somebody else too. And Bernie too, he passed away too. But ah, then Chuck and I *we get along fine* together as a lot of people did. (can't hear) Well, Chuck, did keep himself apart Because you know, you are in a sort of a business ah, export is peculiar to a business. Anything that comes in from a foreign country has got to be handled maybe in a little different manner and I think a lot of, a lot of people from an export *COUNTRY* and *TREAT* them a little bit differently, have a whole different idea of etiquette. .. treat them different and you got to respect so, you try to conform..... Well, as assistant export sales manager, which was a different field entirely, it has always been parts and service, I also then when White I got back in contact with a lot of people I hadn't been in contact to the exports parts and service, because you were corresponding also on cars versus buying trucks. So, then I got reacquainted with some of the people that I had got away from for quite a while and they were kind of happy to hear from me again, but in a new capacity. Especially a few of them in South America. And as an assistant export sales manager, I did make a trip over to Iraq and Iran and

IA: Oh I bet that was interesting.

IB: When would that have been?

Rankin: That was in 1966, I think, Heinige was the general manager of the company at the time and he thought that I would fit in to go over to Iraq because there was a joint venture between ah, American Motors and its jeeps and so forth, and ah, they sent Walt Jenson and myself from Reo with a representative from American Motors. And ah, we went over to Iraq, well I went for a dual purpose, I went over to see our neighbors in Lebanon, because they were really good neighbors and so along with that, then we went over to Baghdad and set in, they were a dictatorship at that time..... But nothing ever worked out.... There was a question of content. They had to make so much equipment to put in and you had to do all the assembling and ah, whatever the reform was from Mo Jenson and our general area of service manager that was over there, also we had to look into it. I mean ... parts setups and all that. service manager for it. But ah, I don't ... a letter like that in my folders.

IA: In your folder?

Ed Rankin
1/30/92
Page 19

Rankin: In the folder, I don't know, they may not be in there and maybe in the general file. Now this at Reo, but ah, I wrote a final lengthy report and ah, had a good trip I got an ear infection, otherwise I would have gone on to Pakistan and a few other neighbors before I came back. The doctor over there says you better get back. What they called Asiatic ear,

IB: Oh my.

IA: Like a fungus of the ears.

Rankin: It hasn't affected it too much, but I came back and went to the company doctor and he took quite a few cultures here medicine..... But finally got it cleared up, otherwise everything was alright.

IB: How were you all received and treated when *you were in Iran?*

Rankin: Oh we had a very good dealer in Lebanon and ah, ah, Mr. Brovern, he was he had, in fact, I was invited to his house for dinner and he had servants coming out of his ears but and ah, and ah, he told me to go down and see his *DR.* So *I* went down and he says you've got it, it is quite early isn't it, he says but I'd advise you not to stay around here any longer than your business demands. You go back to your doctor and *do what he says or you could loose the hearing.*

IB: Oh my.

Rankin: So, I took his advice and instead of going on to Lebanon and maybe I might have even hit Japan before I came back, but that kind of abbreviated the trip. Of course *I might have* saved the company money to

IB: This was, the reason for this trip was to start Reos being sold in this country, they weren't before?

Rankin: In Iraq. See that was ones to possibly set up. They wanted to get possibly Reo trucks or Diamond T trucks too at the time and ah, and but they wanted their country demanded so much labor and so much material in the truck of their own source. See and those are the things that hurt you know, you could build, we would have to build like say build the truck up here and then tear it down and ship it over there piecemeal, except for the parts that they are going to make and put on.

IB: Oh, so it wouldn't even be a totally Reo truck you it?

Rankin: No, but it would be a Reo, they couldn't make the engines and they couldn't make the power train, but they could possibly make sheet

Ed Rankin
1/30/92
Page 20

metal and stuff to put on it. I don't know what kind of glass they'd put in it, but glass was one of the things that European area....

IB: Yeah.

IA: I wonder why they didn't want to just import the truck as it was made.

Rankin: No, the laws over there dictate that anything imported has to be assembled in their country and have certain much of that countries content. So and that's the thing you have in export in a lot of cases, countries want to put a lot of their stuff in it to protect their own industries. That goes through a lot. We didn't have that problem with Australia. We shipped an awful lot of trucks to Australia and South Africa.

IB: Oh really just as is.

Rankin: Oh yeah, as is, yeah. We even sent them built up or very few times built up, but you'd built them up and make sure they would run and test them and ah, then tear them down and box them.

IB: Oh and they would have reassembled them.

Rankin: Then reassemble them.

IB: How many countries ... *I wonder were we* shipping trucks to during the '60's?

Rankin: The biggest share of the truck, the biggest I would say, 90 percent of the trucks at the time that I was assistant export sales manager went to Australia and South Africa. Now, South American was pretty well closed off, although still a lot of trucks found there *possibly sent on* well not too many of them. And Puerto Rico, we sent a lot of trucks *occasional trucks down* to. In fact, I went to Puerto Rico to *U.S. one trip*

IB: How was South America closed off?

Rankin: Well *they have laws that dictate* ... dictate and their own content and all that and some are a little harder to sell Of course, a lot of time that became part of my job to determine those things too, but Chuck Dunford was the general sales, export sales manager so he usually knew pretty well. He kept up with *things* but every once and while, we'd get a .. and try to change *laws*

IB: Oh the regimes were changing very fast in South America at that time.

IA: Yeah, that's true.

Rankin: We had a few deals going with ah, both Pakistan and we never did ship too much there, parts we did, but not trucks. And I think they had *a deal in Pakistan*

Ed Rankin
1/30/92
Page 21

a deal in Phnom Penh in Laos

so we ah, (can't hear) but parts and trucks. We tried to get trucks in there, but we couldn't.

IA: What about Japan in those days, you mentioned

Rankin: Japan, we had a dealership there, but we never done too much with em. They came in, they were very nice people to talk to when .. come in to a factory.

IA: They did ship some, but not a lot

Rankin: We shipped parts to trucks that had already possibly got there through some roundabout way I don't know.

IA: Yeah, they were ~~kind of~~ *trying to learn as much about us,*

Rankin: Oh yes, I'm sure of that. And I think *like to* ~~we~~ know a lot about them too.

IA: So then you went from

Rankin: ...

IA: Then back to

Rankin: Then I went back to pricing after that and I also you may have heard somebody mention Harry Olsen.

IB: No, not that name.

Rankin: Well Harry Olsen ever was my golf partner most of the time. He had government and parts sales. and ah, I also inherited that after that along with my ... pricing..... and ah, so I worked at that until I retired, pricing. And I trained trained, I can't remember what the name was, one fellow to handle the export, because exports were a pain in the neck. The government parts was nothing ~~but didn't hear~~ too much. I talked to different government agencies like mostly *Navy* and the Air Force and my biggest problem with them was trying to convince *them they didn't have* ~~to buy any more parts~~ parts.

IB: Oh really?

Rankin: Well now it is contrary to a lot of things. But I don't like to say it, but I think a lot of times they are a little bit bull-headed. I think you get fed up in their importance. They wanted to ~~know~~ *it* right tonight by air and I would say well, and I ~~wouldn't go to the~~ *record* I say we ship so many, if it was coming out of LA I'd say we've shipped so many of that part to Fort ~~Wallem~~ *Depot* and I'd give him the date and and the number of the order. Can't bother to go to the depot to get it, got to have it over here tonight. I said you know that kind of

WANEMi

Ed Rankin
1/30/92
Page 22

burns you when you've sold them at a oh I could say, I don't care what or not, you can delete it if you want to, but I think that's what we are talking about toilet seats for \$50 and that thing.

IB: Yes.

IA: Yes.

Rankin: ... sent them a couple of very, very critical screws or bolts for a certain area of the engine and by the time you had to package that for non rust and make sure that it was going to be ready for the day they needed it, they could have gone over there and got it for a lot less than we might have charged them \$5 for one bolt. By the time

.....

Rankin: it is the special handling that you try to avoid, by the time you went and got one *sub. of stock*... put it in a box and put it on an aircraft they pay five times what you even done for packaging but you are sending it to them.

IB: Right.

Rankin:But they didn't want *to wait* and Harry told me the same thing. Harry Olsen before I took over, when he retired. He said, they'll want it right on the plane and they don't want to take time to go and look for it, the government. The inefficiency of of all I can say in government in general. Governments should not be in business under any condition.

IB: Well I just saw

Rankin: Governments should only be in the business of governing. *who* says back in the '80's ah, I can't remember who quoted this, to the extent is that we government is too, we are too busy doing everything to do the job that they were elected to do as a government.

IB: Well Thomas Jefferson said, government that governs wastes government *best.*

Rankin: *Bill Nigh* that goes back a little bit farther than... another senator or somebody said it later on in the '80's and I think back in the '80's somebody said in there, *can't even find* ~~hear~~ *that has been discovered* has been discovered.

(laughter)

Rankin: How untrue that ever

Ed Rankin
1/30/92
Page 23

IB: At least I hope that is not true. I mean you know a lot more discoveries.

Rankin: Do you know what Al Jolsen said, (can't hear)

IA: Right.

Rankin: I can't imagine what there is to discover. I don't have a mind to analyze the technical aspects of electronics

IA: I know, I think about my, I have a little baby girl at home and she is going to be 20, 30 years down the line, what is going to be common for her is just going to be amazing.

Rankin: just second nature, it is born into you possibly.

IA: Well I remember when I stayed up as a teenager to watch the moon shot, you know, and my grandfather was staying with us and I was thinking when he was born there wasn't even electric lights.

Rankin: Yeah, that's right. That's right.

IB: It is just amazing.

Rankin: Whereas you see now we get difference once and a while, ... shoot I'll go out to see if the satellite is going over clear and just to see it. ... seen them before, I says yeah, but I marvel at how they can keep that thing up there.

IB: The kids just take it for granted.

Rankin: And I said when I was a kid I liked scientific articles, Buck Rogers, that was the *thing*... and if I think back and if you think back, how many of those things as a kid you'd say oh they are just imaginative, we are never going to have them.

IB: That's right.

Rankin: Everything I've imagined is happening.

IA: And you know, I'm pretty young comparatively, when I was in college, nobody had computers.

Rankin: Well that's right.

IA: Every one of my students now at the university level does their papers on computers.

Ed Rankin
1/30/92
Page 24

Rankin: Ah, ... just made comment on computers I would ban them from high schools. Until they learn the basics.

IB: Right.

Rankin: When you learn the basics and you can do it on pencil and paper, forget the computer.

IA: Yeah.

Rankin: That's time, and you may have learned it, but don't use it here.

IA: Until you learn it, yeah. The calculator

Rankin: The basic Now don't get me wrong, I left the company in '73, computers were just nicely getting started. Sure, we had computers between the stockroom and my desk. I could tell whether I had a part in stock or not.

IA: Right, that helps a lot.

Rankin: Sure. I didn't even have to get on the telephone, I'd just punch that and if they kept the inventory control properly in the stockroom, and wouldn't let it go.

IA: Yeah.

Rankin: It would say on the computer how many there was in ... I suppose somebody on the telephone and look I got it in. You want it, I'll put it on the order desk right now.

IA: Ah huh.

IB: When you left in '72, could you (coughing) coming or the ... I said when you left in '73, could you see that it was going to be going into bankruptcy,

Rankin: No not necessarily. Ah, I thought I thought myself, I thought there was one a kind of an unsteady footing. Ah, I didn't leave from there. I had ah, and I possibly could have stayed, but my letter of resignation I'll tell you primarily why and I'll tell you And when you get up there and of course I was only 62, just about 63, I would going to be 63 in April and I left at the end of March in '73. So, I was going to be 63 and all the time between the time I worked for Reo and we traveled every summer we went some place. We liked to and when you get restricted down to two weeks to go someplace and it maybe be places, I decided well, I'll get out now while I'm still able, still physically able to do other things and we'll travel without any having to hurry back.

Ed Rankin
1/30/92
Page 25

IB: Ah huh.

Rankin: In fact, the last few years at Reo my boss almost told me. He says if we could get rid of you for five weeks without needing you, we wouldn't need you. That almost told you that you better re-manage your vacations and take it, and take your vacations a split. I was allowed five weeks of vacation, but I could only take two weeks at a time, to run the store so to speak. So, part of it was to not have to break it up. In fact, the last year I was there I didn't even, it was so busy and hectic that I didn't even get any vacation time. In fact, I asked for that as paid time when I got my retirement. And the union seen the letter and I expected to get paid for that vacation which I had to forgo.

IA: Right.

Rankin: And they agreed to it, so I've heard them say this now, I've heard them say that in several places that vacations are fine and lengthy ones are great, but if a company can get rid of you for that length of time, you are not on the job, why do they need you in the first place.

IA: Yeah.

Rankin: You can see the philosophy.

IA: I can see the logic in it.

Rankin: But I also felt that my department was well run by my secretary when I wasn't there. Because she knew what she was doing. And I was fortunate to have very good secretaries.

IB: Well sometimes of the year it is not as busy as other times of the year.

Rankin: Well that's true, but in the parts business there isn't any, there isn't any slow time. A truck breaks down

IB: It could be anytime. Yeah, that's right.

Rankin: Any day, any time. I wouldn't say I was to a lot of males, but ah, I try to avoid ... if I could, see what I mean. Anticipate and I anticipated that I am living on government time now, but unfortunately a lot of people died before just a comment on my, my vision of certain things during the time I was there. Reo had a retirement, you could retire at 65, but you had to retire at 67.

IB: Oh mandatory.

Ed Rankin
1/30/92
Page 26

Rankin: Mandatory. I still say mandatory retirements are the thing that should be and I'm not talking about discrimination though, age discrimination. I think, in fact, I'm almost sure of it, that as you grow older, our efficiency drops to an, I mean your physical ability to perform and if a company thinks that 67 like they did, thought that that was the time that to leave the job for somebody else and get out. I've seen people forced to retire at 67 down there, liked the people and knew them personally, they were dead within a year. Their routine had been disrupted.

IB: Yeah. Yeah.

Rankin: They had wore a path to that truck door over the years and without that and they hadn't provided for retirement. They hadn't thought of retirement as being loose of those responsibilities. Their life was based on them doing this every day and if you'd have left them on the same job all the time

IA:

Rankin: Your line rules and the fact that they were at a loss, those things. Mine never was that way. I was ready for retirement. I had too many things to do and I felt that whoever was there and worked for me, it was in good hands.

IB: Ah huh.

Rankin: That they were doing the same thing. And it would be up to the company to change it. But it only lasted another two years and a half after I left. I was really I did comment on reasons for retirement or reasons for collapse, and say the company should have been operating yet. you more than likely knew Charles Chamberlin, Representative Chamberlin in Congress.

IB: Yes, I remember him.

Rankin: And Charles Chamberlin was my idea of a champion for Reo. He stood up for us in a lot of things. We were in government business and we were in ah, in certain government contracts of course with the Army and ah, if he would have still been in office, when Reo was in that I think they owed the government I think somewhere \$5 million.

IB: Oh my.

IA: Oh.

Rankin: Well \$5 million if you look at it today

IA: Is not that much.

Ed Rankin
1/30/92
Page 27

Rankin: It is just pitiful.

IA: It is hard to imagine that, but I guess you are right.

Rankin: Yeah. I think he would have went to and said look, they are in reorganization and I think they can make a go, I think they might have had a stay and I think Reo could have reorganized and then operating.

IA: Yeah, and it would have been better for the community.

Rankin: It would have been much better.

IA: The community needed the jobs.

Rankin: Right. Because at that time Clare Loudenslager was down there, he was in charge of all the material handling in the plant and he, I think Clare was a very efficient man in material, he was in there for years and he should know, he had a much floor plan. I don't feel a question about (can't hear) And the factory possibly had was antiquated, it could have been updated with a lot newer equipment that they gave to Louis Garcia by the close of that.

IA: Oh that machine.

Rankin: So if they don't keep up with

IB: And Reo was not the only one guilty of that in those days either.

Rankin: No. Reo was getting down pretty low on some of their machinery, it was pretty well wore and needed replacement. But I'm sure that costs money.

IA: Right.

Rankin: And ah, but I do think if Charles Chamberlin would have still be in Congress at that time, I think he would have seen the handwriting on the wall and would have argued for the holding off of the debt until reorganization was we lose money every day on the government for foolishness. That wouldn't have been foolish.

IA: That's right.

IB: Um, I on why Reo owed the government \$5 million, was it because they couldn't fulfill Army contracts?

Rankin: Ah it might have been Army contracts and things like that, but of course, I didn't get into the finance. If I was doing that, I

possibly sit in Glen Wisemers job when he was secretary or treasurer for the company. And um, Bob Darror when he was and people like them. I didn't sit there and chair and finance on that end of it wasn't my problem. The only thing is when I was in export, of course, I had to think of financing of Congress but they came through on a letter of credit. Until I could see a letter of credit, I couldn't firmly put the order in. And foreign countries unless they could get the letter of credit

IB: They had to get it up front.

Rankin: to get it up front, you didn't dare start work on it, until you knew whether unless it was a standard model coming off the line every day. A lot of forms

IB: Oh right.

Rankin: Which I don't think is a bad idea. I suspected Japan.

IA: Yeah.

Rankin: If we could have built right-hand drives for America, we could build them for several of the Japanese

IA: Sure.

Rankin: But you are in business to conform to their market.

IA: Well that's what they do with us.

Rankin: Rather than their market conform to your product.

IB: That's right.

IA: Yeah.

Rankin: Let's put the responsibility where responsibility belongs.

IA: Yeah, yeah. Can I switch the topic, did you have anything more questions about this? I just want to switch it a little bit.

Rankin: Go ahead and ask me anything.

IA: Okay. Um, you know, I'm also interested more in the personal part a little bit too, you know, that you,

Rankin: Right.

IA: I'm interested in you lived in Lansing the whole time that you were working in Reo?

Ed Rankin
1/30/92
Page 29

Rankin: Oh yeah, yeah.

IA: Yeah, you were part of the Lansing community.

Rankin: Now, when I went to work for Reo, I lived in, well..... until we got married, we got a home. We rented a house on Alta Street, 1708 Alta Street, that's just north of Mount Hope between there and almost down to Baker Street. But there is that where they had the skating rink.

IB: Oh sure, I know that.

Rankin: We just lived south of that.

IA: Oh yeah.

Rankin: On Alta Street, the first street east of Pennsylvania, Lindbergh Park area.

IB: Sure, I know definitely where that is.

Rankin: We lived at 1708 Alta Street. We lived there quite a long time. And ah, I used to walk to work. ... walk to work which I think have a path worn ... and I'd go in through the engineering building and walk through the plant and I done that a lot, who was it Ah, then I and the wife, after a while, we was scouting around and we went out to Ravenswood, that is just north of Willow, east of Waverly and Ravenswood subdivision is in that corner, in the northeast corner between and I lived on Ravenswood, we had a house that was being built

IB: Great.

Rankin: We lived at 1512 Ravenswood for oh about 26, 27 years and I sold it and moved to Texas.

IB: Oh, when you

Rankin: I sold the house in '87 and then moved to San Antonio, Texas. Now don't get me wrong, we moved back to Lansing

IA: I guess so, otherwise you wouldn't be sitting in front of us.

Rankin: But ah, that becomes a good story too. But we moved to Texas because we'd travel and my wife's brother runs a chain of liquor stores in Texas, the biggest chain in Texas, Don's and Ben's Liquors are ... San Antonio.

IA: What's the name of it?

Ed Rankin
1/30/92
Page 30

Rankin: Don's and Ben's.

IB: Don's and Ben's.

Rankin: Don is living yet and Ben died. But it is still running. Don's and Ben's Liquor Barns ... stores and they have 23 of them.

IA: Wow.

Rankin: And all in San Antonio or in the ... surrounding. So we went down there and we lived there for two years. The only thing about it, it is a beautiful city, lots to see. In fact, I would advise anybody to go and tour and see the sites. It is a beautiful and there is something on the river to see. And ah, lots of other things too. But when it gets hot after Fiesta time comes just about in April, that is and that was but ah,

IA: (laughter)

Rankin: There's another little story. (laughter) But we moved down there, we liked it, we had a beautiful apartment, about the same as we have here and ah, but it gets hot about the first of May, it is going to get hot. And it is going to stay hot and it is going to stay hot until at least the middle of October.

IB: Oh lord.

Rankin: And if you done any walking, and my wife and I love to walk, and we walk a lot of times we walked from our place or to walk to the mall and back, maybe two times a week. In the wintertime, maybe not quite but once a week, we'd do it Sunday. And ah, we'd go by the ... and by the counties just for recreation. And so, we decided to move back to (can't hear) in San Antonio. Nobody loves to play bridge down there. I don't know they play golf and I don't know, I've played golf a few times with my brother-in-law down there in the mid-summer, boy I tell you I was glad to get back to the clubhouse.

IA: Where it is cool.

Rankin: Yeah. And ah, well we moved backed because of the extreme temperatures. We might have done better if we had decided to move to Arkansas or south Kentucky or Tennessee and split the difference or go to the North Carolina.

IA: Carolinas.

Rankin: Or Yeah, she is in Rockingham, North Carolina. Ah, so we moved back. The house was sold. We go by it once and a while and look at it.

Ed Rankin
1/30/92
Page 31

IA: Oh sure.

Rankin: But then

IA: You were pretty close to paying it off too.

Rankin: And somebody said not too long ago in the paper it says well when you get to your '70's, you might still be able to do all that yard work, but you might be better thinking about an apartment too. Get rid of all this trouble.

IA: All that maintenance.

Rankin: All that maintenance. But, it has only been this last year that I have been thinking with this arthritis which has kind of slowed me down. It takes away all my craft. See I like to work in a shop and do little things. In fact, ah, in fact that's what my hobby is, I make cedar chests from grandfather and a nice big for my grandson.

IB: Now you said your kids you were telling me that

Rankin: No. My daughter graduated from high school with high honors and also out at Michigan State with high honors. And my son done the same thing, only he didn't go to Eastern, he went to, went to Sexton, went to Waverly the final part, but he started in at Sexton, but then Waverly School out there with honors and also at Michigan State. He took ah, boxing or packaging, but you know packaging kind of petered out about the time he graduated.

IA: Oh it is still going.

Rankin: Packaging, I know, packaging is quite a thing, but it was got an awful

IA: Oh I see.

Rankin: My daughter graduated in teaching. She taught down in Niles ... teacher and she's taught and now she is teaching just older people in Rockingham, Texas.

IA: Oh.

Rankin: She hard time, because people that haven't really got up on their reading, older people that possibly and a lot of them are colored, possibly to say they were neglected but I think primarily they neglected themselves in ... years.

IA: Sure yeah.

Ed Rankin
1/30/92
Page 32

Rankin: I don't say a lot of them haven't wanted to get ahead. Maybe beyond their capacity, but still But they are both doing very well.

IA: And Reo was an employer that let you take care of your family properly.

Rankin: Oh yeah, as far as I think if I look at it that Reo had two In 1954 I ah, had the pricing operation and I um, I had hang on the edge of the desk, before I get straightened out. In fact I don't get up too gingerly even now and I had the first back operation and she's a great lady too. And ah, then I went back and I was only gone for 10 days because we go back down there and I sat at a desk and did some work and then we'd go down and, I didn't get any treatment on the back and feel pretty good. It was in '61 I had another one. I had the disc removed.

IB: Oh dear.

Rankin: And they took care of me very well.

IA: Yeah. You had good benefits then.

Rankin: Oh yeah, my Blue Cross and Blue Shield at that time Except for the excess of the specialist, one I had a bill of that I paid for quite awhile and there was a specialist out of Birmingham, Michigan, Dr. Morda. He was good, he done the second operation too, but apparently he didn't charge so much the second time.

IA: I see, it wasn't that serious.

Rankin: Well it was every bit as serious, but you know, when you get to the point where I was going around, I had a chair back brace on most of the time. And ah, carry a chair back steel and leather and keeping you up towards the end..... '54 and '61, '62 you talk about six years and seven years and part of that my back was deteriorating again and so I wore the brace and finally got to the point where I couldn't even pull up my own socks or pull up my long underwear (can't hear)

IA: I have just a few more I'd like to try here..... Um, you mentioned that your ah, you were from Duluth, your family was from Duluth. Were they farmers up there? Or

Rankin: Well I was the first child born after we moved off of the homestead. They had a .. in Minnesota. And that's 40 miles out of Duluth.

IA: Right.

Rankin: To the west. It is on the main highway 35 going down to Minneapolis and my brother, my older brother was now but ah, he was born in ... and I was born in ... two years apart. So and I was born actually in the railroad, almost in the railroad yard and they showed me the old shed that was still there when I got old enough to know it was used as a toolshed for the Northern Pacific Railroad. It was the house I was born in down by the railroad tracks. But back in those days, of course, Duluth was almost based on lumber. Lumber and the iron ore comes range. And so it was oh let's just say as a kid I sold papers and

IA: Did your dad work with the lumber industry?

Rankin: Well he, at one time he was a timber cruiser.

IA: Oh.

Rankin: But that went for cutting in certain tracks, because he knew which ones should be cut. But then he went to work for Lumber Company which was in Duluth, which was sawmill right down, well I think possibly half a mile from where I was born. Then after a while left closer to But I learned a lot of the techniques in farming as far as that's concerned. I can (can't year)

IA: right.

Rankin: But I worked for a dairy farm for a while gave me something to do. It was about 10 miles out of town. I milked 21 cows you never heard of 100..... They knew how to work. And then I'd go to milk in the daytime after the first milking, get back in time to start cleaning udders and get ready to milk for the evening.

IA: Wow. Now a lot of the people that we talked to, not necessarily gone through extensive interviews, but still just talked to..... Reo came from farming backgrounds.

Rankin: Oh yes. I remember

IA: Still even lived on the farm.

Rankin: Yeah. Alright I say because this town has grown quite a bit since then and even since I came here in '41 it has grown. In fact, I can remember coming up here about the only place you could get an apartment was Hills ah, that was about the only apartments there were in this town.

IB: That's where my husband lived.

Rankin: In fact, Bill Summer, he lived in Hillcrest.

Ed Rankin
1/30/92
Page 34

IB: Hillcrest? Nice place.

Rankin: So, oh it is a small town, small world too when you stop to think of all the experiences and things. I don't know if there is anything else.

IA: I just have one more thing. Um, ah, I wanted to know if you were part of that steering gear?

Rankin: Oh yeah, oh yeah, right now, there we were all, that's where all the supervisors were. ... was strictly supervising.

IA: Right.

Rankin: Then they got down to ah, like ah, some forms of and

IA: Ah huh.

Rankin: And I let you know I worked with the March of Dimes for years.

IA: Right.

Rankin: In fact, Harry Helson got me into that, that's why I mentioned that. And government sales and he got me into the March of Dimes and shortly after the epidemic. See I didn't come up here until '41, but he had been here before that. But he '30's late '30's

IA: Oh yeah.

Rankin: when polio In fact, I handled all the on the streets and in the theaters and I was chairman of the board for a couple years..... and

IA: That was just steering gear people were involved in that?

Rankin: The steering gear people were involved in that, ... March of Dimes, butand we all.....