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Frahm: ....women you should contact beside us. You know, one of them is Ardith Pathen.

IA: Right, we know about her.

Frahm: You know her?

IA: Yes.

Frahm: And then Fern Placley, you know about her?

IA: Yeah.

IB: Yeah. We do?

IA: I've got her, oh

IB: You do?

IA: It was on some information that Mr. Rankin gave us last week.

IB: Oh okay.

IA: She was the nurse at the first-aid

Frahm: Pardon me?

IA: Was she the nurse at the first-aid or

Frahm: Yeah, she was the head of the hospital.

IA: Yeah.

Frahm: Arts wife, Fern

IA: Fern Placely, I didn't know.

IB: Oh Artis was, I'm sorry. Fern Placely was

Frahm: In personnel.

IA: To personnel.

IB: Oh okay.

IA: I've got her name and address and everything.

Frahm: I think Fern Placely is the one that wrote this synopsis.

IA: Oh I see.

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Frahm: I'm almost sure she was.

IA: Okay. Um, we just found out that the women all meet, I'm sorry I have a bad cold,

Frahm: Well I do too, I got it for two days now. My wife she has really got it bad.

IA: I caught this one from my daughter. Um, we just found out that the women all have lunch at the, we just have a backup in case one of us messes up.

IA: This is February 10, 1992 Lisa Fine and Shirley Bradley at the R. E. Olds Museum, we are interviewing Arthur Frahm on Reo Memories.

IB: Okay, you need to remind us what .....

Frahm: I hope you have questions, because I'm not sure where you want to start on this.

IA: Yes we do.

IB: We have plenty of questions.

Frahm: Okay.

IB: There is no problem there.

Frahm: There are so many variations and memories and things that I think we all remember and some are good and some are bad.

IA: Right. Right. First you need to remind us when you worked there and what your job was at Reo.

Frahm: Okay. I went to work there in March of 1947 and ah, left in March of '72.

IA: You were there almost to the end, weren't you?

Frahm: Right and I began work at Diamond Reo in the accounts payable department. And my job was to, to ah, check invoices with purchase orders for accuracy.

IA: Okay. And where did you end up going to?

Frahm: Pardon?

IA: Where did you end up going to?



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Frahm: Oh I see then I remember I didn't particularly like this job because it was a stressful and uninteresting. And one day this fellow that had the service purchasing department on the third floor came down, he says I'd like you to work upstairs for me. I says tell me what it's all about. He did and I said I'm ready to go. And the funniest thing was that Carl Godfrey who had been at Reo Motors at one time and then Diamond Reo later, ah, he went to work many, many years ago when they were still making passenger cars.

IA: Ah huh, before '37, '36.

Frahm: Yes, and he became purchasing agents for truck service parts and I became what they call an expediter. There was, I think there were two others beside myself and two girls. And ah, that was a big operation because all of the parts that went into trucks from here on back he bought and put them to stock and then the branches and

IA: Would call if they needed something?

Frahm: Right, right. That was, pardon

IB: I'm sorry, I didn't mean to interrupt you. I just wanted to know what you physically had to do in that department.

Frahm: Oh in that particular job, I actually, we had purchase orders, of course, and we had copies went to the supplier and we had copies in the cost department and we had copies, a follow-up copy which was a stiff back copy and it gave the part number to Pop(?) and the vendor and what time it was or how many and what scheduled over a long period of time and so forth. And when we each day we went through these files and made sure that the supplier was shipping correctly. And he hadn't and why he hadn't been. And this involved many times actually going to the supplier and seeing what the problem was. It was an interesting job. I really enjoyed it and Carl Godfrey was a real whiz, because he kept the cost up to date currently, other words, if a vendor changed a price ah, ordinarily in most companies, that particular change doesn't occur until later, they wait. But this was almost immediately so that we in turn could, could increase our prices to our branches and customers. And like I say, I enjoyed that job and I don't recall how long I worked for him, but when he retired then they asked me if I'd like to have that job, which I did.

IA: So you were head of that department?

Frahm: Right, in fact, it was amusing because Jim Durabon who was vice president of the company at that time, whenever he come up to me and he said, do you think you can handle it. I says certainly I can. I've been here X number of years and I'm very familiar with what the operation consists of. And also, then, we start to build military trucks and so we were buying ah, military parts and commercial truck

parts. And then to back up a bit, I don't know if you were aware of it, it is not publicized much, but Reo Motors at that time was really one of the first companies to build a power lawn mower

IA: Yes.

Frahm: for home use.

IA: Right.

Frahm: And so I bought lawn mower service parts as well. So that was three divisions you might say. Well that job went on for a long, long time and then when White Motors bought Diamond Reo, first a merger came. Diamond Reo ... combined and then White Motors of Cleveland purchased the Diamond Reo operation.

IA: This was in the '60's, right?

Frahm: Yes. And the decision was made to move the purchasing of service parts to Cleveland. Well they offered me the opportunity to go down there, well I went down and looked and there were several things against the move. The first place, the money wasn't there and secondly it was more expensive living costs there and I didn't .. my family to move there for a little less money. It was kind of ridiculous and they would not pay the moving expenses either. So I turned it down and made the director of purchasing at Diamond Reo angry, but I had enough seniority there so they kind of kept me just around downstairs in the main purchasing department. Well, ah, it wasn't too long and Frank Huxtable who was buying what they called nonproductive materials and services, he retired, also back up a second. He was also buying how do you call fasteners which included bolts and nuts and washers, clips, small items. Well when he retired they offered me that job, so in turn I got that. And that was a very interesting job. Because I bought everything from let's say roof repairs to furniture, engineering

IA: Oh anything that the plant needed.

Frahm: Yes, everything that was used in the plant offices that was not used on the truck itself.

IA: I see.

Frahm: Because I used to get in the plant several times a day and so I learned to know everybody. And it was, it made a big family operation more or less. That was truly interesting because I can recall many incidents that happened there. Of course ... I can say some good, some bad.

IA: Yeah, well we like to hear them both.

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Frahm: Here is an interesting thing. When I, when we were buying military service parts, now that included everything imaginable from the engine, to the transmission, to the body, all of these things. And I remember one thing was was ah, transmission gears. Now those are highly precisioned round and they are packed individually and I walked out one day into the plant where they were packaging these parts and there was a guy, an employee, throwing those gears into a gondola, .... you know what that guy is doing, those gears cost us like \$42 a piece, I mean it wasn't like a ..... just a nickel will ruin them. And, of course, then we ah, that was in many, many interesting things happened. Well, for example, ordinance department, we had an ordinance inspectors in there to inspect those parts before they went into the boxes or containers for shipping to different ordinance depots.

IA: Ah huh these were meant for the military?

Frahm: Yes, military. For the military. And I remember that we got a call one day from, from the boxing department that they were holding up a shipment of chains. Now these chains come from the manufacture in let's say 10 foot lengths and they are used to move one truck to another that was down. Well, the .. how they packed them, they put them in a barrel and rolled them like that so they and the ordinance department was complaining because the paint was chipping off.

IA: Of the chains or the barrel?

Frahm: Of the chains. And

IA: It doesn't affect its performance.

Frahm: No. No, how are you going to prevent that.

IA: Yeah.

Frahm: And then they were going to shut down the packaging department so I told them

IA: Well, ..... wrap them right?

Frahm: Pardon?

IA: Wrap the chain.

Frahm: Yeah, that's crazy. But anyway they ah, the head of the purchasing department called the ordinance and they got it cleared up.

IA: Cleared up.

Frahm: Yeah got that cleared up.

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IA: That wouldn't affect the performance of the chain.

Frahm: No, no.

IA: ... pull the truck out of the mud.

Frahm: You can take the move the chain from here to there and there would be paint off.

IA: Let me ask you, you are talking about suppliers. Um, engines and all these different parts, all those things came from small shops around Michigan?

Frahm: No, not necessarily. The big shots, small shots, whatever, it could be anywhere from right in Lansing to New York or California or Texas, Florida.

IA: Oh is that right?

Frahm: Yeah.

IB: I guess I just thought everything for the Reo Truck was made in the Reo factory, that's not so.

Frahm: Oh, no, no, see everything, the only things that were made at the factory were the the chassis frames and that would be on channel which was assembled you might say at Diamond Reo. Then the engines they were built at Diamond Reo. The crank shafts, the cam shafts, transmissions and axles and everything else.

IA: And they ... up the bodies, right, here?

Frahm: Right, right.

IA: Okay.

Frahm: Yeah, we actually we had a sheet metal plant and they built the bodies here.

IA: Okay.

Frahm: Um, what else I want to tell you. Too many, many things I'm trying to remember.

IB: I suppose the wheels and tires and all of that.

Frahm: Oh I know what I was going to tell you. You know, there is always a problem, I think, even the Big Three even find this that there are some things that are difficult to get. I mean delivery is to length long time and consequently demand is greater than supply, so we had a



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couple things happen that really were amusing in one way. When I was buying service parts for the trucks, we were buying the axle came from what was known at that time as Timken Detroit Axle, now it is Rockwell Standard and my turn I was buying the axle shafts. Well it just seemed that we could not get enough axle shafts from Timken to keep the customers of ours happy. So it was always a screaming, yelling, you know, when will you ship us those axle shafts? So one day a fellow came in that I knew from Detroit, he came in and he said Art, he said, there is a firm in Chicago and I want you to see it for building truck axle shafts, that's the only thing they build in there. He said I'd like to have you see the plant and see what you think about it. So we flew from here, out here at Kessler(?) Airport to Chicago and the plant a very good operation. So I came back and I talked to my boss and I told him what the situation and he says sure, go ahead and get them and get out of trouble. It wasn't only a few months later that the service manager starting raising, just raising hell about it because he said, well that, that, that ah, cancels our warranty with Timkin Detroit Axle.

IB: Oh, on the existing, the truck that has those axles in them already.

Frahm: Right, but then we find out later that because legally we had a legal staff there too, I talked to him, and he said if Timken Axle cannot supply them and you can get them and they are a quality product, that's fine. He says and they cannot

IB: Cancel.

Frahm: nullify your warranty, because they cannot supply the axle shafts, so that was another.

IA: You had your own legal staff at the factory?

Frahm: Pardon?

IA: You had lawyers on staff at Reo.

Frahm: We had one attorney and a girl.

IA: I see.

Frahm: Yeah.

IA: Okay.

IB: That's interesting, I hadn't heard that before.

IA: No, I hadn't either.

IB: No.

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IA: But it would make sense. Because obviously these kinds of questions come up.

IB: Yeah.

Frahm: We have a lot of questions come up legally.

IB: Right.

Frahm: Questions.

IA: I bet you did.

IB: Did you have any parts or any um, materials come in from overseas anywhere that you .....

Frahm: No.

IB: Everything was U.S. made.

Frahm: Oh yeah, right, right. In fact, we had, isn't it interesting how things, when it came to military parts, you know, like I said we tried to or possible to supply, give those orders to small firms and I didn't know this until a short time, I was buying a part from a little firm here in Lansing underneath the Kalamazoo Street bridge there is a Zel-Hart Products, you remember that? Anyway, come to find out it is a second cousin of mine. And he was building parts and doing a good job too. But when, when this bankruptcy thing came in to play, the, the ah, IRS came in there, of course, and they froze everything you might say. I'll never forget, Ken was shipping his, Ken Hartzel his name, he name was Zel-Hart, Hartzel spelled backwards.

IB: Oh I see. That's interesting.

Frahm: Yeah. A little firm, he had, he probably had maybe three, four employees. They were doing a good job, too. And I don't remember, let's say the figure was \$6,000 I think, he had coming. So the accounts payable department paid the bill. Well, the IRS came back to him and said, well you, well of course came back to us and also him that we were not suppose to pay those bills. It was suppose to be approved by IRS first. So they went to Ken and told him to pay the money back. He says ..... and hell with you. He closed the door and went to Florida.

IA: I know you don't think about that, but when a company like Reo goes out of business, it is not just the people who work in the company, it is all the other, the suppliers you know.

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Frahm: Oh yes. You know, it was a little firm that was, they were doing a fine job and that little money they were getting, was their payroll and expenses.

IB: And now ... you know, ...

Frahm: That's right.

IA: Everything is related to the automotive industry from an early 1900's right, you know, everything it spreads out like a ripple effect.

Frahm: Oh yeah.

IA: It is just so interesting.

Frahm: If things go bad, it filters down through all the small firms too.

IB: Right, um, how did you end up at the Reo to begin with?

Frahm: Oh I went in the Service.

IB: Right, I remember you mentioning that when we were at lunch.

Frahm: Right, and I'd worked at Oldsmobile and I often say this, that is one I regret now, two-legged camel back up and .... But when I came back from the Service, when I went in the Service I worked for Oldsmobile and I had a good job, which was called, detailed car inspection. I had a license plate and a pass and my job was to go to the warehouse and pick up a car at random, bring it back to the engineering department, put it up on the hoist, go through it with a fine-tooth comb inside and out, and make a report on it. Take it out and road test it and bring it back. And gees that's a wonderful job.

IA: It sure is.

IB: How old were you then?

Frahm: And then the war came and ah, I remember that they closed that operation and I went to work in the gauge(?) division which was a nice job too. Because we were checking the, we were making 20 millimeter gun barrels, other military parts.

IB: Oh they are already starting with the military.

Frahm: Right, right.

IB: I see.

Frahm: We were, like I say, the ah, commercial thing had more or less ceased. And now we were in to military.



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IB: Yeah, you should tell us, you know, how old you were and what years ... remember.

Frahm: Oh,

IB: So when the war first broke out, you were still too young, you were still working.....

Frahm: Right, right. Um, see I went into the Service in '43, I was ah, I can't, ..... I was 29. I was married and had one child.

IA: Oh you were?

Frahm: Yes.

IA: And you got drafted?

Frahm: Right. Well that's another thing that really grinded me. I had a child, I had a wife and I asked for deferment and I was working there in that gauge(?) division which was a military part. .... And I never forget this, and this kind of really got to me and my father felt the same way. And the girl, I think she worked, this was a woman that worked for Brandle and he had charge of the deferments at Oldsmobile. Her husband never went in the Service. So that is politics again. So we went and when I came back.

IA: You were born in 1914?

Frahm: Pardon?

IA: What year were you born?

Frahm: 1915.

IA: 1915.

Frahm: Right.

IA: You don't look your age.

Frahm: So when I came back from the Service, we had sold our house before I left and we went to my wife's parents who live in Coldwater, Michigan. And I laid around for a month or two and then I got ah, upset and I went to work for a plant, a firm called Federal Mogul.

IA: Yes.

Frahm: And let's see, maybe I should back up a second..... No, no, I remember when I got back from the Service, I went to Oldsmobile and

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IA: Did you get your old job back?

Frahm: Try to get my old job back. It wasn't available.

IB: Nothing there.

IA: I thought they had to hold jobs for the returning servicemen.

Frahm: Yeah, that was that was an outright lie.

IA: Was it really?

Frahm: It really was an outright lie.

IB: It wasn't a lie if you got it. But it was a lie if you didn't. I guess.

IA: Oh I just thought that that was

IB: But some have told us that they had their jobs back when they came back.

Frahm: Well so they offered me a job in the, in the at um, press plant checking shell molds. They were still making military they were.

IA: Oh were they?

Frahm: And god what a dirty, noisy place. I just couldn't stomach that. I went to the union and complained about it, but I wasn't a member of the union. No they said we can't do anything about it.

IA: They couldn't?

Frahm: No. You know and I realized later I made a serious mistake. I should have gone to the home of the father I worked for before.

IA: Oh from Oldsmobile?

Frahm: Yes.

IA: Yeah.

Frahm: Went to his house first. And I think I would have gotten back in with that particular section. So, I became discouraged and I went back to Coldwater and I went to work for Federal Mogul. It was an outfit that made rod bearings for engines, car engines. I worked there for a year and half, but living with your wife's parents isn't ... no way. You know, how that

IA: Not when you've got your own family.

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IB: Yeah.

Frahm: Right, right. So, I came back to Lansing and rented a house and I went to Reo and a friend of mine was in the cost department and I talked to him, he says yeah we got openings here. So I got a job with, within a few days went to work for them.

IA: Did you think that was a good place, you know? Obviously you would have preferred to go back to Olds, but

Frahm: Oh definitely so.

IA: it really was okay.

Frahm: Definitely so.

IA: Yeah.

Frahm: And they ah, and you can't brood about it or feel bad about it.

IA: Right.

Frahm: We almost lost our pension literally. We did, we don't have any pension.

IA: Yes.

IB: I know.

Frahm: So it is scraping

IB: Yeah, right, we heard about that from other people too.

Frahm: Yeah. I .... did too.

IA: But if you'd been able to go to, you would have preferred to go to Olds because you had worked there before.

Frahm: Yes.

IA: Because the pay was better or

Frahm: Yeah, the pay was much better and then secondly too, they carry your seniority when in the time you were in the Service. See, if I went to work there in '35 and left in '43, so I had eight plus ... years.

IA: Plus your Service....

Frahm: Yeah. Service time.

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IB: So when you started to Reo, you had to start from the bottom.

Frahm: Right, from scratch really.

IB: Who was your friend in cost accounting that help you get in?

Frahm: Pardon?

IB: Who was your friend in cost?

Frahm: Oh Otto Gerginski.

IB: Otto

Frahm: Gerginski. His mother was my godmother.

IA: Oh.

IB: Oh, how would spell his name do you think?

Frahm: G e r

IB: G e r

Frahm: g i n s k i.

IB: Thank you.

IA: We have someone that is going to be typing this up later and I can imagine them hearing this on a tape and not knowing what, how to do this. Thank you.

Frahm: And I went to work in the ah, accounts payable department for a man named Howard Vigés, V i g e s. He was a nice, nice, nice guy, but I don't know. We had so many personnel changes in that Diamond Reo that

IA: Oh you did?

Frahm: you couldn't keep Reo Motors and Diamond Reo all the time the changes, changes. They brought a fellow in as, first was Ano Schraft was here, was controller and then he became ill I think and left and then Howard Vigés, oh wait a minute, Joe Newman came in as controller. And I'm not, I don't have any discriminatory thoughts, but he was a Jewish guy who will just, he used to sit at the back of the room and yell at Howard. Oh you know, like a calling a dog.

IA: Yeah.

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Frahm: I felt so sorry .... because he was such a good guy and had to put up with that. And I think actually it killed him, because he died of a heart attack not too many months after that.

IA: Oh gosh.

IB: The stress builds up.

Frahm: Stress.

IB: You are saying every time that that Reo underwent new management, they brought in new people.

Frahm: Oh I got, that's another incident I cannot believe, gees. We had so many inept, incapable people that came in in positions of, bit positions. And every time, this is amusing one way, yet it was ridiculous. For example, um, manufactured manager, now he would be directly under the president of the company. They might even label him as a vice president. We had changes continually and every time we'd get a new manufacture manager, I got a call, our Mr. So and So wants to see you. Go up there, he'd want new furniture, new carpeting, new drapes.

IB: Oh and you'd have to buy it.

Frahm: Well buy all that stuff. And we had, and you know, the thing that make you mad is that so many of these birds were they had a big ego. This one fellow, he became, I don't know if he still is head of the Liquor Control Commission in Michigan. I can't think of his name right now. And he called me in. He came there from Clark Equipment. And ah, he said I want a new desk and credenza, chair and carpeting and this and that. And he said I want you to contact Sears Commercial Sales. Well I says, I told him I says, fine I'd be glad to, but as I want you to know that we had experience before with them. The delivery is bad. Oh he says it is not either, I got, I bought it from from was it Clark, I says okay, it is your baby. ... we waited for months and months and then one day he called me in and that furniture it was nice, I'll have to say, it was in all fairness it was nice furniture. He brought me in and I don't remember that was swivel chair and I think four side chairs. He said now see that side chair, it is a little bit crooked.

IB: He doesn't have other more important to worry about, right?

Frahm: Right. Such insignificant things. And then, you know, I couldn't see it. So after he had gone to lunch I brought a couple of other people there from purchasing and I says can you see anything wrong with these chairs? They looked them over thoroughly. No.



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IB: I have to mention your salaries .... you know. You are being paid to do more than that.

Frahm: That's exactly right. It was just peanuts and nothing important.

IB: Um,

Frahm: And I got like another incident. This may be interesting to you too. Clare Loudenslager was the last manufacturing manager.

IB: Now we've heard his name before.

IA: Quite often.

IB: Yeah.

IA: Heard of him a lot.

Frahm: Before he, he had been a Reo at one time and then left and then he became a sales representative and again, this was at the time when I was buying nonproduction. Among the things I bought for nonproduction were parts materials for the maintenance department, which included forklift trucks. We had a lot of those, gasoline, propane, electrics and among them was I think we had two long arm cranes. Well, those lift trucks were old, really old. A good share of them, most of them were purchased from park equipment, good product, but 25 years old. So, they were always tied up on lift truck parts, again this Clare came in and he said, Art, he said, I've got a source in Chicago which builds lift truck parts, that's their specialty. So I want you to see it. So he had me flown down to Chicago, good operation, excellent operation. And I remember calling em, I used to call Clark Equipment, they always wanted the serial number and the model number and I said we need this particular part and we need it right away. And they'd laugh. So we discontinued that truck ten years ago. (laughter) And I got so ..... about it, because I knew it was true. So, Clare, so I looked the plant over and this was how conscientious Clare was. They can say everything they want about him, but he was really conscientious. He used to get in his personal car and drive to Chicago to get us lift truck parts.

IA: Is that right on his own expense.

Frahm: On his own expense, right. And he done this any number of times, and I was criticized for doing that. They got a new master mechanic come in from Ford. He says, that's not ethical. I said what do you want to do, do you want to let that equipment sit there?

IA: Yeah, right.

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IB: When it is needed on the floor.

Frahm: If you need it it is needed. Now we had one of those lift cranes, long arm cranes out in the export department which was used to lift those big wooden boxes onto railcars. And without that we were lost.

IA: Absolutely. You couldn't load your stuff on.

Frahm: No you couldn't load them. And when he became manufacturing manager, I'll have to say that, to me he was the only one I've ever had that new what the score was and what he was doing. He was rough, but he got the production out and it was good. And I still maintain that if they had seen their way clear and left him there to run that place, it would be going today.

IB: Hum, that's interesting.

Frahm: One example of what he done was we had one of the best surface operation lines in the United States, CATA(?) that was his baby.

IB: Oh wow.

Frahm: Right. He developed that, he designed it and became the manager when he left Reo.

IB: After Reo.

IA: Oh he did, that's where he went after Reo.

Frahm: We'll back up a minute too. I forget. When he became, ... plant on Reo payroll again, I'll tell him about Joe knew about this guy that was ..... with that Sears Furniture.

IB: Oh yeah.

IA: Oh yes.

Frahm: He said we are going to get rid of that guy, he is one of the first guys that is going to go. I remember, I know how it happened, but one of the fellows was standing in the lobby, Clare walked into this guy's office and he says to him, ... Clark Newell, N e w e l l. He said, get your things and get out of here, you are through. Just like that.

IB: Wow.

Frahm: Well then he advanced ... bang he was out.

IB: Did he get to take his crooked chair with him?



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Frahm: No.

IA: The next person ..... unfortunately.

Frahm: I think another thing that might be interesting is how this thing functioned after Cappaert bought it. Is this something you might want to know?

IA: Sure.

IB: Yeah, we've heard a lot about that from people too.

IA: Yes.

Frahm: Cappaert was an individual who was involved in the manufacture of mobile homes.

IA: Oh, I didn't know.

IB: I didn't know that.

Frahm: He'd had had no knowledge

IB: Down in Mississippi?

Frahm: Mississippi?

IA: Is that where he's from? Yeah.

Frahm: And he had no knowledge of truck manufacture at all and he had cat ideas. He brought with him Mildred Johnson.

IA: We've heard about her.

Frahm: She was vice president and she was his mistress.

IA: Oh she was.

Frahm: Yeah, he was married, but it was his mistress.

IA: I see.

Frahm: And she told him that she would reduce that payroll the first year by, I think the figure was \$900,000. Well, that affected us. So every day, she'd call one person into her office, same procedure, she'd ask you to sit down, she'd open her desk draw and hand you a slip. At the top of it said my resignation. The same procedure every day, one a day. I remember it because I was one of them, and I looked at it and I says, what for. She says we have our reasons. I

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said I want to know what they are. We ... not to tell you. I said I refuse to sign it. And again

IA: You are fired.

Frahm: you are fired. And I never get this Al Axle I knew was in personnel, he told her very bluntly you go to hell.

IA: Oh my.

IB: Couldn't the union intervene to help you?

Frahm: No, see we were all supervisors.

IA: Supervisors.

Frahm: See, if you were 50 years old or older

IA: Oh yes, that's right, of course, I wasn't thinking.

Frahm: If you had a supervisory position and a good salary and seniority, you were alive for the .....

IA: Yes, yes I see that.

Frahm: There was 37 of us that got it every day. And then the payoff was, .... caught the payroll, but she put in people who had absolutely no experience. So many of them were just graduates from Michigan State University. Young guys, good intentions, but no knowledge.

IA: But no experience.

Frahm: No experience or knowledge.

IA: They could pay probably a quarter.

Frahm: Oh yeah, they paid them just peanuts in comparison. I could keep, some guy you know, call me at home and tell me what was going on.

IA: Oh.

Frahm: And then the gall, I think what added more than anything with the thing was that these very people who replaced us some of them had the guts to call us at home and ask us how to do this. God.

IA: Oh my.

IB: And you, of course, would tell them.

Frahm: Yeah, that's right. You can imagine what the reply was.

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IB: Well and who could blame you.

Frahm: Pardon me?

IB: I say who could blame you.

Frahm: Yeah.

IB: Um, oh, I guess I'd like to go back to at the very beginning for just a second

Frahm: Sure.

IB: and just ask you what your background was before you came to the shop. Were you from, did you live in Lansing, did your family

Frahm: Yeah, I was born and raised in Lansing, I graduated from um, Eastern High School, took some courses at MSU.

IA: What kind of courses did you take?

Frahm: I never got my degree at MSU.

IB: In what engineering type things?

Frahm: Right, I took ah, I took ah, higher mathematics which included calculus and trig. and geometry and I took, I remember that, oh there were many courses, I don't recall them all, but when I got into purchasing at Diamond Reo, I took a course in purchasing at MSU.

IB: The business school by then.

Frahm: Pardon?

IB: By then it was the business school.

Frahm: Right, right, John Hoagland taught it.

IB: Yeah. Yeah.

IA: John?

Frahm: Hoagland

IA: Oh Holdman, okay.

Frahm: Yeah, H o a g l

IB: l a n d

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Frahm: Do you know him by chance?

IB: I've heard his name.

Frahm: Oh you have.

IB: Yeah. I've heard his name. Um, and you were doing this originally going to courses at MSU probably was in the Depression, right in the '30's.

Frahm: Right, it was see it would have been um, ..... I graduated from Eastern in '34, so that was right in the middle.

IB: That's right.

Frahm: ...

IB: So you might as well go to school because there is not much else to do. You might as well go to school because there is nothing else to do.

Frahm: Exactly. Exactly. In fact, I used to go to school and ..... library too, I learned how an airplane engine runs and things of this nature. I got a curiosity.

IB: Ah huh and that's how you were able to get your first job at Olds from kinds of courses that you got there?

Frahm: Right, right. I had about, now here is another thing. I think that you talk so much about about getting ahead in life. I think I was raised in a family where there was no, no affection. My father was an individual who didn't like work particular, he'd rather stay in bed and sleep.

IB: What did he do when he didn't work?

Frahm: Sleep.

IA: Oh he didn't have a regular

Frahm: I kept telling you this.

IB: Really, did your mom work? Did she support the family?

Frahm: No. It was just a and I remember going to school in my bare, you ... hang out you know, ..... it felt so from the time I was about 14 I went to work. .... come up with this.

IB: How did your family survive without him having a regular job?

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Frahm: Well at that particular time he'd work maybe a couple days and home a couple days. That is just enough to get by.

IB: Yeah.

Frahm: And the home that we lived in was one of my father's, my dad's parents had left him, so

IB: He ... okay.

IA: Oh so you didn't have house payments or

Frahm: No. ....

IB: Clothes.

Frahm: ...

IB: Shoes.

Frahm: That's right.

IB: Did you have lots of brothers and sisters, was this a large family?

Frahm: Pardon?

IB: Large family that your mother had to try to take care of?

Frahm: I only had one brother.

IB: Ah huh.

Frahm: We live on north Pennsylvania, it was an apartment also by the way now. And ah, I remember I went, I was in the sixth grade I remember going to school, Oak Park School and a kid came up this way he said, Art, he said something about some big event had happened, ..... so I went downtown and got some papers, so

IB: Oh oh.

IA: Oh, you could do that if ..... they put on extra, they'd take on extra help

Frahm: Right, right.

IA: How much money would you make from something like that? Two cents a copy maybe.

Frahm: I made \$6 that day.

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IA: Six dollars for selling papers all day.

Frahm: That was a lot of money at that time.

IB: That's good.

IA: Yeah, you worked on the streets in downtown Lansing shouting out that you had

Frahm: So from that point on I was a newsboy downtown. I sold papers downtown and I built myself a route with the stores and offices and departments downtown.

IA: Oh you did.

Frahm: I had 40 some customers. That was a private route, nothing to do with State Journal.

IA: Ah huh.

Frahm: That was a good thing too.

IA: How would you build a route? You'd go in to say Arbaus(?) and you'd say I'd like to come in here and sell papers?

Frahm: Right. But like in dress shops, you know, and candy stores and so forth, and those people were always nice to me.

IA: ... you were a kid.

Frahm: But it was .....

IA: Right.

IB: Well and it did a service for them, because they didn't have time to run out and ...

Frahm: Oh sure that's right.

IB: If it is cold or was there one edition a day then? Or did you do this like, was there a morning edition and an evening edition?

Frahm: No it was in the afternoon edition.

IB: After school?

Frahm: Yeah, after school. The paper came out at 3:00, I was there probably at 4:00. And I'd get home probably about 6:00 then. And I'd sell papers in between times and in the summertime, of course, it was full



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all every day. And there was a again some funny incidence because on a rainy day, you can't sell papers.

IB: Is that right.

Frahm: They just don't sell. No, now seriously. And I remember, I think I was about 10 papers ... sold them I'd go up and get 10 more. Walking down Michigan Avenue papers rainy day, oh what am I going to do with these papers? I looked on the cover full of water, there was a green piece of paper two \$1 bills.

IB: Oh my goodness.

Frahm: Put the papers in the wastebasket, in the trash can and went home.  
.....

IB: Oh my goodness.

Frahm: And these people who were my customers downtown, I had some wonderful people, customers. I remember some of the dress shops, Penn, there was one called, Penn, I'll never forget her, this woman, she says Art, she said, would you feel bad if I gave you an overcoat that my nephew had. I said no.

IB: No.

Frahm: Well the day before Christmas she has a box all nicely wrapped

IA: Oh that's nice.

Frahm: and it was a beautiful coat from Marshall Fields.

IA: Oh my.

Frahm: And I look and it had never been worn.

IA: Oh my.

Frahm: Another customer I had was a fellow that ran an appliance operation up on Capitol Avenue right now where that ah, it is on the corner of Capitol and ah, Washtenaw. Like there is a Michigan Accident Fund I think is that building. Anyway

IA: Oh yes.

Frahm: Mr. Crisp, I'll never forget. One day I was down in the summertime selling papers, he overhauls ..... really, and he says you had your lunch yet. I said no. He said how about have lunch with me. I said I'm not really ..... Ah he says come on they won't even see that. We



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went into ah Murry Stewart's it was really a top-notch restaurant.  
He had done this repeatedly too.

IB: Oh Murry Stewart?

Frahm: Yeah.

IB: Restaurant. That was right on Washington Avenue?

Frahm: No it was on Michigan, right down between Washington and Grand.

IB: Okay.

IA: And he'd let you order whatever you wanted?

Frahm: Yes. I'll never forget roast beef, there was more than I had at home  
for a family.

IA: Oh my goodness.

IB: And this was all during the '30's.

Frahm: Yeah. Now I graduated from that, I was selling papers, I had this  
customer that had the Upper House Cleaners which was hats and  
clothing and shoe shine parlor. And George said to me one day, how  
would you like to shine shoes? I said how much does it pay. Well  
more money than I could make on newspapers, so I said fine. So he  
taught me there and I worked for him all the way through part of  
junior high and high school. And ah, I got so I could shine shoes  
with white flannel ..... do that so good that you can do it  
blindfolded almost.

IB: Yeah, really.

Frahm: And then another nice thing about it was there were two Greeks,  
George Poulis and George Pascus, Big George and Little George.

IB: Oh yes.

Frahm: And they more or less adopted me. They knew I had a bad situation at  
home. I used to go to all the Greek weddings and baptisms and ...  
I'll never forget the first time we went to a wedding on Sunday in  
Jackson, a Greek wedding, bit affair, lots of food, wonderful time.

IB: Yeah.

Frahm: And I worked for them a long time.

IA: What did you do with the money you made?

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Frahm: Well really I used it to buy clothes.

IB: Clothes for yourself, so you . . . .

Frahm: Because I had to keep myself dressed. I didn't make that much anyway, but at least it helped. I banked a little bit too. They ah, even that kind of business you run into some strange incidents. One day a guy came in for a shoe shine and it was on Saturday morning, and his shoes were rather filthy, sawdust and a shine at that time were 10 cents. He got down and handed me a dollar and I went to get the change and he said forget it.

IB: Wow.

Frahm: That is something. So from that time on, I was just shoe shine boy. Every time I'd get done he'd give me a dollar. I come to find out he was the owner of Farmer Peets Packing.

IA: Oh that's interesting.

Frahm: Well he got a good shine from that time on.

IB: Oh, did you have a regular shoe shine stand in one of the buildings or?

Frahm: Pardon?

IB: Did you have a regular shoe shine stand in one of the buildings downtown?

Frahm: No it was they owned the building and had about five, ah five stands you might say in the building.

IB: And I guess I'd forgotten where that was.

Frahm: It was next to the Gladmer Theater when that was still open.

IB: Oh north Washington.

Frahm: Right. North Washington.

IB: Okay, and it was a cleaners.

Frahm: Yeah, Opera House Cleaners.

IB: Opera House Cleaners. Okay, thank you.

Frahm: I still keep in contact with their children.

IA: Oh really?

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IB: And you decided to go in to the plants because you thought it was a good opportunity for you?

Frahm: Yes the money was there, that's

IB: It was good money? Yeah.

Frahm: Right. Now I didn't have any other. I really didn't have any other experience or ah, knowledge, I probably could have in some other field, but

IA: We asked you about your .... , because lots of other people in the plant went in because their fathers went in, you now.

Frahm: Yes that's right.

IA: ... with your family.

Frahm: Ah huh.

IA: Brothers, your father, or sometimes even sisters.

Frahm: I went to work at Oldsmobile, that was a, when I first went that was a terrible job. Gees.

IB: Well what did you first do?

IA: Why was it terrible?

Frahm: I went to work, I remember I went to work it was on the midnight shift because the worst time, you can't sleep, you can't eat, and I was working running a drill press, drilling

IA: You were really on the line when you first started. You were really on the line.

Frahm: Oh god.

IB: Drill press is hard work.

IA: Yeah.

Frahm: Drill press, ... big as my hands would always be full of steel

IA: Oh yes.

Frahm: slivers. They get festered up and I ... to get out of that. I figured that is no place to make a living. What convinced me for sure was, right next to me was a little Polish guy and I got to

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admire him, but yeah, he'd been on that same job like 20 years. I thought god, I don't want to be like that.

IB: Yeah.

IA: Ah huh.

Frahm: Because he was an automat, a robot. So from that point on, I said I was going to get out of there. So, I looked through the roster at Oldsmobile. I thought well inspection is a good .... I had been around the plant, so I called, I went to the office of Ken Plasterer, that is P l a s t e r e r.

IA: Plasterer.

IB: Just like it sounds.

Frahm: Yeah. Right. And he was chief inspector for Oldsmobile. And I told, I asked his secretary if I could talk to him. She says what about, I said I'd like to go to work in the inspection department. Well she said well we just can't let you go in. I says okay, so I'll wait. So I went back in two weeks and I took her a box of candy and the same ..... and she says well I'll let you know.

IB: It depends if the candy is good.

Frahm: So, I went back a week later. Oh she said I'll call you. So I thought well I can wipe that one off. ... telephone call,

IB: Wow.

Frahm: She said this is so and so, Mr. Pasterer will see you at this particular time. It was a time when I wasn't working, I was nights, this was daytime.

IB: Ah huh.

Frahm: And so I talked to him and ah he was most discouraging. He said to me, of course, you know you are going to take a pay cut if you come to work for inspection. I said I don't care, I want to get off that production job. And he didn't give me much encouragement. But I kept bugging and one day I got a, one day I was at my job in production and the foreman came over and says, we got a slip for transfer. Oh that will ... day. And that was, and that was days all the time too. And the first inspection job wasn't the best, I'll say that. But I kept bugging there again too.

IB: Yeah.

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Frahm: Because it was a job where you checked the to make sure that the transmission and differential had oil in them. A dirty job. But it was a step away from .....

IB: Right.

IA: It was a start.

Frahm: And then I remember that I kept bugging this foreman to an opening somewhere else. That moved to receiving inspection which was wonderful. And then from there, it went to ah, detail car engineering.

IB: Your education probably helped a little bit.

Frahm: Yes, I think it did.

IB: Because you had high school and some college too.

Frahm: Right.

IB: Um, were you there during the strike in '37?

IA: Well he didn't start until '4...

Frahm: Yes I was.

IB: There was a strike at Olds too. Oldsmobile, wasn't there?

Frahm: I don't remember that strike.

IB: I think there was.

Frahm: That's funny.

IB: Maybe I'm wrong. Because I haven't done all the work on Oldsmobile that I've done on Reo. Reo had a big strike in '37.

Frahm: Oh yes they did have.

IB: Yeah. Maybe it wasn't that big a deal. They had a big Olds GM had a big strike in Flint too.

Frahm: Oh that's right, I remember that. Very destructive strike wasn't it?

IB: Right. That was very violent. Reo was not.

Frahm: Oh that's right.

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IB: Yeah. And then in '37 in June, they had the labor holiday, do you remember anything about that?

Frahm: What?

IB: Obviously not. There was a big labor holiday in June of 1937, remember when the city went closed down.

Frahm: Oh yes, yes I do.

IB: Do you remember that?

Frahm: Right, I do.

IB: What did you do?

Frahm: I don't remember.

IA: I wonder if the schools closed too on that day?

IB: No it was just the businesses. Because I read the newspapers.

IA: What about the State Journal must have been closed that day then. Maybe you didn't sell papers. Although they would stay open and report.

IB: Yeah they were open. Yeah, they were open. And they had the workers marched downtown and um, they marched to East Lansing, got into fights with the students.

Frahm: Oh I do remember that. Yes.

IB: The Battle of the Red Cedar it was called.

IA: Oh.

Frahm: A big riot in Flint too.

IB: That's right. Yeah. Did you belong to the union then when you were working at Olds?

Frahm: Yes, yes.

IB: But when you got higher up in the inspector jobs, obviously you had to

Frahm: No apparently it still was, because I think all hourly people were,

IB: Oh hourly people.



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Frahm: belonged to the union.

IB: Okay. So you just, by the time you started in Olds, there was already a union there.

Frahm: Yes, yes.

IB: Okay. Do you recall how much money you made say hourly at Olds and when you started at Reo, you were hourly too, weren't you?

Frahm: No, we were on salary.

IB: Oh you started in a salary at Reo.

Frahm: Right.

IB: I was just wondering how the pay scale was then.

Frahm: Right. Oh .... change over the years.

IB: Hasn't it though. This would have been after the war when you went to Reo.

Frahm: Right, it was after the war. I don't even recall when I started how much I made at that time.

IB: I know you said at the beginning though that you made less than when you had or it seemed like it was less than when you were at Olds before the war.

Frahm: Yes.

IB: You took a little bit of a cut.

Frahm: Right.

IB: I know my mother worked at Reo. She started during the war and she was there through the '50's and it seemed like everything taken out, she could bring home \$35 a week say

Frahm: Where did she work there?

IB: She worked in the receiving department, she worked on lawn mowers later. Ah, she wound the Army chairs .....

Frahm: Oh is that right?

IB: Um, yeah. I'm trying to think of what else she did there. I know she was on the receiving docks.



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Frahm: What year was this? What year was this?

IB: Um, when I was in high school '47, '48, '49

Frahm: Oh I just thought I might went there

IB: Oh ah huh.

Frahm: Right.

IB: And I think her take-home was,

Frahm: Pardon?

IB: Her take-home pay was during those years was about \$35 a week and I remember that because our apartment rented for \$35 a month and we thought that we had all the money in the world.

Frahm: Right.

IB: You know. But we didn't have a car or anything like that. So we didn't have those expenses, but that was considered good money.

Frahm: Oh that is unbelievable, inflation.

IB: Oh isn't it though?

Frahm: Pardon?

IB: Inflation.

Frahm: Right.

IB: Yeah. By the time you started at Reo, all the strikes were just about over too. The coal strike and the steel strike and the railroad strike and

IA: .. got back to the war.

IB: Yeah. And then the changeover to peacetime production and I know people had to wait on waiting list to get a car or after the war.

Frahm: Right. I remember that even after the so-called strike there were strikes periodically at different places and we went through one at Reo when I was there. I remember that.

IB: Do you? What kind of a strike was that?

IA: .....

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Frahm: Right, because I remember that they have a union got a which was illegal, I think, they went to jail for it too, they got one of those big layer(?) cars and cut the chains because we Reo had locked them out.

IA: Oh.

IB: Oh they locked the workers out?

Frahm: Right.

IB: What was the strike over?

Frahm: I don't remember.

IB: Maybe higher pay or better benefits.

Frahm: I think it was, I don't remember that thing, but that wasn't, you know, there is again a case where remember back there I was telling you about Al Axle, I'm good friends with .... today and I remember he was in personnel, he was a tough guy to deal with. But he was honest and fair. And I remember that at one time I was talking to him, I said, what do you, what do you have as far as grievances, are they all good ones? He says no, he says come over, I'm going to show you. He had a book there of grievances, some of the silliest damn things you could ever imagine. One of them I remember I read distinctly. There was a drinking fountain, let's say at the corner of this desk and they walked out because they wanted a drinking fountain over in that corner. That is a grievance. He says, he says some of them were legitimate. He says 90 percent of them were unreal.

IB: I've heard stories too before about, in fact, from some of the other people we've interviewed of the safety problem at the shop, at the Reo. Machines maybe that cut off fingers and that kind of thing, so maybe some of the grievances were for better working conditions.

Frahm: Well maybe that was true too. But because see when I was .. on production, I used to get in the plant, many, many times every day and I honestly think that some accidents just happen, maybe they are unavoidable. I think many times the people that work, don't' take the proper precautions either. And in the press plant, I remember that all had these wrist... that pull them back sometimes wouldn't put them on because they were uncomfortable.

IB: Ah huh, ah huh.

Frahm: Now there is an example.

IB: Yeah. Um, you said earlier about how the plant was like a family.

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Frahm: Yes.

IB: We've heard that from a lot of people.

Frahm: For example, they had an organization called the um, Steering Wheel.

IB: Oh the Steering Gear.

IA: Steering Gear

Frahm: Steering Gear Club, yeah.

IB: Did you go to that too?

Frahm: Yeah, in fact, the year I was went out, I was to president.

IB: Oh no.

IA: Oh no.

Frahm: (laughter)

IB: Oh dear. Well Louie Garcia was telling us that was one of the proudest moments of his life when he got to be president

Frahm: Oh yeah.

IB: of that, it was very proud of that.

Frahm: Very much so. And that was a step I was looking forward for a long time that when it became real, I was out.

IB: They used to meet at the clubhouse, didn't they?

Frahm: Yeah, the Reo Clubhouse. Always up on the third floor.

IB: Ah huh.

Frahm: The floor actually ah, nice club room. Had a big, .... a big ah, gear.

IB: Right, a chandelier.

Frahm? A covered chandelier.

IB: Right.

Frahm: It was beautiful.

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IB: Right, we heard about the drinks and the all sorts of fun things  
.....

IA: He was telling us also about the things that the ah, Reo was involved  
in as far as the community was concerned. He talked about the Boy  
Scout troops and he talked about Red Cross blood drives.

Frahm: Oh god, they were really involved in that sort of thing.

IA: Ah huh.

IB: And all the management that were in the club did those things too.

Frahm: Right, right.

IB: Yeah.

Frahm: ..... .. Hansen, ... Hansen who was president.

IB: We've heard his name also. ....

Frahm: In fact, he was there before ah, Cappaert bought the place. Yeah,  
and he was just a nice, just a nice guy. He was a kind of a guy that  
would go through the plant and say hi George and just, he was a how  
you doing. And he was interested in people, which I think is a good  
factor for any organization. And he was, he had strange things about  
him, he was from Chicago, he came there from Diamond T which became  
merged with

IB: Right.

Frahm: well, and one thing he saw me in the hallway, he said Art, we need  
some new folder charts for the clubhouse. He says I got this  
company, it was a name in Chicago ..... that much money, .. \$500,  
so I told him, I said check and see what you can do. And that was  
FOB Chicago, so I, Bill Dietrich who was a sales rep. that called on  
me for many years from George Worthington Company in Lansing,  
wholesale hardware house, they have, they had everything. I called  
Bill I said what can you give me on a lot of 500 folding chairs,  
metal. And I said, ah, I've got to have some information quick here,  
so I'll call you back within an hour. And ah, I got the price and it  
was under the price that he had. Plus it would deliver to our dock.  
so I took it in, he said that's amazing. Let's go and get em.

IB: He was general manager,

Frahm: Yeah, he was a nice guy.

IB: before Cappaert, was he.

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Frahm: He was a fellow that was very, very ah, supportive and active in the Scouts.

IB: Oh he was.

Frahm: Boy Scouts.

IA: I see.

IB: Now Mr. Cappaert apparently was not a person who would come in and get to know anybody or wanted to do anything specific minded or

Frahm: Right, he was very distant.

IA: He wasn't from the area either.

IB: No, according to what we've heard so far had no interest really in having Reo continue on.

Frahm: No, no, no, his, his prime interest was to just to liquidate the place.

IB: Tax write-offs.

Frahm: And the thing that upsets, I think so many of us is the fact that he was very critical of what we had done in the past. Yet he had no, no better method to show us or a better way to do it or an alternate.

IA: Right.

IB: He just wanted to

Frahm: Yeah, that's right.

IB: do away with it.

IA: Yeah.

IB: But you all had the feel there in the early '70's that the place wasn't going to stay maybe, that you kind of think that it was shakey?

Frahm: Well I think it was, well it was to a, yeah it was to a degree and particularly I think when the rumors and actual selling, selling of the company. Then then then, ..... then it became a whirl of what's happening.

IB: I see.

Frahm: And we were all .... what was happening too, of course.

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IB: Sure, you were going to lose your jobs and your benefits that you've all worked so hard for.

Frahm: Yeah. In fact, I never get the girl that was secretary, Betty Gordon, she was just a prince of a gal and she retired, she has passed away but she retired and before the closing, you might say, so she drew her pension. At the end they cut her pension right in half.

IB: Even after she'd retired?

Frahm: Right. Now that happened to the other guys too, other people there.

IB: So they had no loyalty, they had no ah,

Frahm: No, in fact, this is not publicized, but I've often wondering how this could happen, but Cappaert is a known fact that he got \$4 million out of the pension fund from the Bank of Lansing and is not accounted for.

IB: He just took it and

Frahm: Took it, that's it. You know, I want to believe that you always get

Side B

Frahm: Louie, Louie Garcia .....

IB: Yeah, we heard all about it.

Frahm: Now imagine ...

IB: Yeah, Louie was telling us about this man who lives like a king and

Frahm: Yeah.

IB: um, and I kept thinking what you just said that some day there has got to be, um, we also had heard that a lot of people, when the end came, and lost their pensions and lost their jobs, a lot of them, some of them committed suicide.

Frahm: Oh yeah. In fact, this may be interesting another point too. .... all this time, there was a fellow upstairs, Bob Block who headed up the accounts receivable department and he had I think like the retirement ah, requirement was to retire was 30 years .... full pension, 29 years he was let off.

IB: Oh.

IA: Oh.



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Frahm: And he went home and he actually ah, didn't commit suicide, but he literally did, because he went home and he just cut out living. He had a wife at home

IB: Just withdrew from

Frahm: Yeah, in fact, I used to call him and I'd say Bob, it was a nice day, I got a couple tickets for Michigan State football, I knew he liked football, I said let's go out and see the game. No I can't go out, the phone might ring.

IB: So ....

Frahm: Yeah, he was

IA: They might call him back.

Frahm: Yeah. And I think, in fact, his sister I remember wrote in the Journal what a foul thing happened that actually caused this man's death. And I think others in which we don't know about, I'm sure this happened many times.

IA: So she wrote to the State Journal, a letter to the editor or something you are saying.

Frahm: Right. I remember the letter in the State Journal.

IA: Oh is that right?

Frahm: Yeah.

IA: Ah Bob what, B o c k.

Frahm: Yes.

IA: Okay. So there were all kinds of

Frahm: And so

IA: things that this man caused. All these lives that he

Frahm: Right.

IA: touch in the same way.

Frahm: See the thing I think ..... at the very last ah, Clare Loudenslager tried to raise money in the area to bring the plant back into operation.

IA: Oh he did.

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Frahm: And just by, there wasn't enough funding available to salvage it.

IA: They would have, hopefully, been able to buy it from Cappaert and keep it going.

Frahm: Right, right, right.

IB: Yeah, there has been a lot of efforts in the last 20 years of the workers trying to buy the plant.

Frahm: Right, well some of the employees

IB: Employers, yeah.

Frahm: right, you know they are over at Charlotte

IB: Right.

Frahm: at Spartan.

IB: That's right. Oh that's right, Louie told us that too.

Frahm: Yeah, ..... operations. And Louie told us ..... .. several years ago, the president of that firm invited us over there for a plant tour luncheon.

IB: Oh how nice.

IA: Great.

Frahm: That was nice, the whole group, we went over there.

IA: Great, great.

Frahm: We had a good time. Of course,

IA: I think it is nice the way Lisa mentioned the family. I think it is so unique the way all of you folks still stay together and Ed Rankin, we talked with him last week and he gave me um, rosters, picnic rosters all through the years where people in Florida that were real retirees, all of it together, they get together a lot ... in Lansing, and I can't think of anyplace else in Lansing, where that happens.

Frahm: No I don't think there is anything like that.

IA: Especially a big place. A shop.

Frahm: Right. At one time, I don't remember the number, but I know that there were over 2,000 people ..... 4,000

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IB: During the war, yeah.

Frahm: Right.

IB: In the '20's they had over 5,000 every year.

Frahm: That's right.

IB: That was the heyday when they were making cars and everything.

Frahm: Right. You know, you know that um, that automobile they built, it is a strange thing how you can reminisce and think about this. When I got my first car it was a used car and ... it was a Pontiac and it was a junker. And this one friend of mine was a sort of an amateur mechanic and we took and overhauled the engine. Why we got one of the rod caps on backwards and we couldn't break it loose, so his father, my father had a Diamond and had a Reo Royal

IA: Oh he had a Reo Royal. One of the big classics.

Frahm: Great big car and felt like a truck and powerful as a truck. He says let's he asked a guy to borrow the car and he hooked a chain on the front of mine on the back of his and tried to break that thing. You know, have it out of gear and then put it in gear and see if it break. We couldn't break loose. I'll never forget looking out the back side window and see my ... smoking, and the wheels were standing still and he was still going.

IB: We've got a Reo Royal out here on the floor.

Frahm: I know you have. I know you have.

IB: You've seen it.

Frahm: A beautiful car.

IB: It is beautiful.

IA: Yes.

IB: It looks like it is right out of a gangster movie.

Frahm: Right.

IB: Huge. My dad called it

Frahm: Al Capone and his boys.

IB: Yeah, there you go. My dad called them Royals. I guess we call this one a Royale, the same car, but he, he talked about ah, a problem

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with the car if you went around the corner the door might fly open or something. He said they weren't

Frahm: Yeah, the doors were hung the wrong, the other way. The back door as.

IB: Yeah, but he said something about I'm trying to remember. Something about the car not really being stable or something. Ah, because of maybe too big for the frame or something.

Frahm: I remember that was one of the first ones to put the automatic transmission on, too.

IB: That's right.

Frahm: I remember my father-in-law had one and and ah, he tried to work on it, he wasn't a mechanic.

IB: We've got one of the last Flying Clouds out here too, the 1936 and that was the last year that they made cars there.

Frahm: What year was that?

IB: 1936.

IA: '36.

Frahm: '36.

IB: Ah huh.

IA: Yeah, they had never really come back form the Depression as far as car sales were concerned. And they just got further and further in the hole, so they finally stopped building cars and went to trucks.

Frahm: Yeah, the other cars were really coming up then too, weren't they?

IB: But a lot of the books I've read about it said that building the Royale was a stupid move in the '30's, .... a cheap

Frahm: Yeah cheap.

IA: Transportation.

IB: People didn't have money for

IA: Not these big you know

(mass talking)

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Frahm: Luxury automobiles.

IB: The other direction and made something more inexpensive and smaller and more ....

IA: Well they did strip down there the ah, the '34, '35 and '36 I think the cars were more of a strip down version, they didn't have as much chrome on and they were trying to make them more cost effective, I think.

IB: Yeah, it may have been too little too late.

IA: Oh I think it was, because by then they were already you know, money in the hole. I remember neighbors of ours bought a car and cars when I was a little kid I remember being either black or cream colored. I'm sure there were others, in fact, I know there were, but that's what you saw the most of and they bought a cream colored um, Oldsmobile. And it was a 1936. And it cost \$600. And my dad could not get over that and most people didn't have cars in the '30's because of the Depression. Very few people had jobs. My dad finally got a job at the Reo later, but he had to walk from Holt to Lansing every day for his job. And maybe they worked a few hours a day and send them home. But anyway, all the neighbors came for like a mile or two and walked over to this house to see this car and my dad just kept, and nobody would touch it, they just kept walking around it. You know, it was such a jewel ..... \$600, oh \$600. He couldn't get over that.

IB: You can't even buy a used car for that anymore.

IA: Oh no, you can't buy anything for that anymore.

Frahm: I think about them ... when I go out to Frandor, on the left side is the Williams VW, I see a sign there VWs \$11,000. That is hard to believe really.

IB: Yeah, it is incredible isn't it.

Frahm: Incredible.

IA: Automotive industry has come from nowhere to its infancy to a giant and now we don't know what is going to happen to this generation.

Frahm: That's right. I wonder.

IA: Um, you earlier on you said you had sort of expressed regret, you know, if you had been with Olds.

Frahm: Yes.



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IA: Olds retirement and stuff wouldn't have been in a big problem and you would have had continuous employment and seniority and all that. Was there any benefits for being at the Reo though. I mean as a place to work that you think maybe would have been different if you had stayed at Olds. Because it was a smaller place.

Frahm: Well I think again the family factor.

IA: Okay.

Frahm: That's one of the prime things.

IA: Right, the fact that you guys were all very friendly and belonged to the club and

Frahm: Done things together and

IA: Yeah, you don't think you would have had that kind of a thing if you had stayed over at Olds.

Frahm: No, no, that's true, very true. And ah, I think at the time the pay scale was comparable to

IA: It was about the same.

Frahm: Right.

IB: Oh were they. I wondered about that.

IA: I don't know if it would be if the two were still on the line, but perhaps maybe for, you know, supervisory people the model is pretty competitive.

Frahm: I don't know, like I say, that is something that you can't back....

IA: No.

IB: No.

Frahm: Ah just for contrast, I have a son who is 41 years old. When he was in high school he was a real problem, gees. My wife and I thought he'd be down in Jackson Prison..... We were just terrified.

IB: Did he go to high school here in Lansing?

Frahm: Yeah, he went to Sexton.

IB: Sexton, yeah.



Frahm: And he, every day, every other day he'd fight with someone. So we had to put him in a ..... but he told me at the time, he said dad, he said if I'm again I don't want to be discrimination, he says if a white guy stuck together there, we could have licked our problem at Sexton. But, he said if the white guy would go out at recess time and three or four blacks would nail him. He said and he says I just couldn't put up with that. I'd fight back.

IB: A lot of racial discrimination you are saying.

Frahm: Right. And I was just going to say that ah, the funniest thing, when I got out of Diamond, when I let out of Diamond Reo, I was really at my wits end as you can imagine, I couldn't sleep, I couldn't eat, I walked the floor at night and one day I told my wife, I says I'm going to get out of here. I just got up and .... crazy, so I took, I went to the bank, got some money and drove to Florida. I spent three weeks in Florida. I walked the beaches every day and part of the night too and come back I got my son back .... straight. The time my son I think that time got out of high school, he wanted to go to college and wasn't sure he wanted to go. But, so he went into business ah, ..... and we were, he had some experience working with some fellows out there in East Lansing, so we were doing primarily porches and decks and ah, ah, we got to be experts on hanging doors. We do bathrooms over, ah, recreational rooms. We got some good jobs.

IB: It was a lot of building going on then.

Frahm: Oh yes there was. But then we learned after, shortly thereafter, when Diamond Reo shut down completely, all those same people went into the same kind of business. God we had so much competition we couldn't believe it.

IB: Oh in the construction business?

Frahm: Oh god.

IB: Is that right?

Frahm: People, people, guys would bid less than our material costs and you can't make, you can't win.

IA: No.

Frahm: And we were put on the bid list, Social Services Department of the State of Michigan, we'd get I put 30 some thousand miles on my car one year just running bids, running down bids. Finally I called the head of the Social, I said take my name off the list. He says why, I says I got a file here that would choke an ox, bids we've made, never got any business. He says we'll see about this. Well we started

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getting a little business from him. But it still wasn't enough. And it kept going less and less every year, so he finally got discouraged and left, went to Florida. Well he is a very aggressive individual I got to say that. He got a job with an outfit called ah, MaCony Builders, with Marcony, but McCony Builders and they were building homes in the Whitehills price range.

IB: In Florida?

Frahm: Right, in Florida, it was around the area where Tarpon Springs in that vicinity. And they were building homes in the area of modern safety, \$200,000. So I went to Florida that one year and to specifically to see him and he showed me the houses and boy they were custom made, beautiful, beautiful homes. One year with them and they made him construction superintendent. And the funny thing was how things fall in place. They were building a home for an executive of Levi Strauss in that area, and my son became acquainted with him and played golf with him. The guy was married and had a couple children and they got to be friends. And one day this fellow asked him, did you ever think of going into sales? (laughter) Well, he thought about it and he said well maybe so. So, he called me at home, he says what do you think about it. I said well, why don't you keep ..... and he did and I never forget Thanksgiving came and he got a call to go to New York City, Levi headquarters and he had three interviews that day and my wife and I went there and my daughter came down from Cornell, so we had a week there in New York. Well, the typical thing and I said how did it go, he says boy it was rough. I said what you should do now is sit down and write letters to all three of those individuals. He says that's a good idea. So my daughter got a typewriter from down the hotel, typed the three letters and mailed them. And of course, ..... interviews they told him we'll call you.

IB: Don't call us, we'll call you.

Frahm: Right. Anyway, this was Thanksgiving time, so it was ... December and he kept because I said don't get anxious, something is going to happen. He said maybe I should call..... he did, they didn't give any encouragement. But, it was the first week in January he got a call to report to Atlanta, Georgia for sales training.

IB: Wow.

Frahm: And ah, I don't remember, yeah, that's right, he was there for two weeks and then they assigned to ah, North Carolina and he was there for some time, they moved to South Carolina and then they moved him to Springfield, Missouri. He was there five years and god he makes five or six times what I used to make.

IB: Yeah.

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Frahm: God and my top money and ah now he's been transferred to Nashville, Tennessee and got a promotion and is doing real fine.

IB: I guess he didn't end up in Jackson Prison.

Frahm: Pardon?

IB: I guess he didn't end up in Jackson Prison.

Frahm: Well I can't believe that, that ah they have Levi Strauss treats their people real well. Now he's been with them 10 years and ah, he has got an investment fund that is worth half a million dollars.

IB: Wow.

Frahm: And they have more activities going on, sales meetings in San Francisco, New Orleans, New York City, you name it, god it seems like .... you have more damn vacation than work.

IB: You mentioned something that made me kind of think of somebody else, I wanted to ask you, we were talking about racism. Do you remember when you worked at the Reo, were there any, did you have mixed ethnic groups working there and did you have any problems?

Frahm: No not at all. In fact, in fact ah, we didn't have an awful lot of black people. We had some Hispanics. I remember I became acquainted with two black guys. One of them was he worked for mix department, he was a cement mason and then another guy was the sweeper, they were just both great guys, funny, always good stories.

IB: And they were treated well there?

Frahm: Oh treated well ....

IA: They were old-timers, had they been there for a while?

Frahm: Yes they had been. In fact, that fellow that was the cement mason, god I think he had been there like 25 years.

IB: Oh.

Frahm: So they'd been there a long, long time. Very, very ah, good workers.

IB: Well we asked Louie this question and he said oh no problems. If anybody had a problem, it was their problem, not my problem.

Frahm: That's right. That's right. That's right. Well one thing about Louie though, everybody liked him. He was just a nice guy.

IA: Yeah, he has quite a personality.

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Frahm: Yeah, a real personality. I used to kid him a lot. He was always come back with a good reply.

IA: Yeah, but I see a common thread running through you fellows from supervisors. You all are aggressive and you are assertive and you are smart and you know how to, and you don't mind working. And I think that is maybe what lifted you guys form the production line because you wanted to get ahead. And it used to be able to go into a shop or a place of work and get ahead, didn't it?

Frahm: You remember that .... time when the quota thing came up on blacks

IA: Oh Affirmative Action, yeah.

IB: Yeah, Affirmative Action.

Frahm: I was, I remember I had my office on the main floor ..... two white gals and two follow up men working for me and I had another gal, so I sent a requisition in for help, my boss approved it, went to personnel low and behold I got a black gal. Gees that was a mistake.

IB: Was this because of the government contracts you had to have Affirmative Action?

Frahm: Yes, yes. Yes. Gees what a, what a situation I went in to. She was single mother

IA: Oh, a single parent, yeah.

Frahm: As a rule Monday morning the phone would ring, can't come in, baby-sitter isn't here or .... the baby is sick or she'd go home on Fridays early. God there was more absenteeism than there was work time. And then I learned, I hired her as a file clerk, she could not file alphabetically or numerically. God, I kept ..... I said we got to get rid of that gal. I says I'd rather have nobody than have her. Because she fouls things up so bad. And we had an awful. He said you are going to have a problem, I said I don't give a damn. I don't want her anymore. She causes us troubles.

IA: But that, the clerical staff wasn't union were they? Was the clerical staff union?

Frahm: I don't think so.

IA: I don't think so no.

Frahm: I don't think so either.

IA: No, but you just had the personnel department had some in

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Frahm: Right.

IA: because of the government, yeah.

Frahm: But finally we got rid of her. Another incident that brings back bad ..... was that we hired a fellow from the department that had worked at one of them accounts payable as an auditor and he was a minister too. And the sexual harassment thing came up. And I know these girls well enough they wouldn't be telling stories. He said the girls told me that we had a file room at the back, way to the back, ..... invoice and purchase order records, accounts payable did and .....by herself.....

IA: Oh no.

Frahm: Or she did go, he'd follow her in there.

IA: Oh.

Frahm: And then this Ed Bronk had like a hard time getting rid of him too? The same reason.

IA: So she had recourse, she had a place to go when this was happening. She had someone she could talk tell this to and some action would be taken.

Frahm: Well I should talk to her supervisor, of course.

IA: Ah huh.

Frahm: And, but that was about as far as it went.

IA: Yeah.

Frahm: He in turn complained to the Personnel Department, but they just got the same story, you are going to have troubles. Well god if this is what's happening, we don't want that kind of people.

IA: Yeah. That was pretty recent though, that was already,

Frahm: Yeah.

IA: the company wasn't going to last much longer beyond .....

Frahm: Right, exactly it was on the tail end of it.

IA: .. in the '70's already.



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IB: I suppose the people at the very top didn't care all that much because you know, about solving problems, because they knew they weren't going to be there.

Frahm: That's right. The end was nearer.

IB: Yeah, yeah. And so they fired you. Mildred gave you your papers?

Frahm: Yes. God, that was a really shocker.

IB: It is horrible. It is a horrible thing.

Frahm: And you know the thing I think was most embarrassing was the fact that of being in a capacity where I was, I had a parking place back of the office building down below. Not in the garage, but I at last had a parking place. I'll never forget, we had to take our personal things from the box and then we had plant protection go through and see that you weren't stealing anything.

IA: Oh.

Frahm: And that really rubbed me.

IB: After so many years.

IA: So demeaning.

Frahm: Who would want anything that wasn't

IB: That was just another way to humiliate you almost, it seems to me.

Frahm: Yeah, that's exactly right. We had a black fellow there that oh he was more or less the messenger. He was, he washed cars, he done errands for the brass and talk about a real nice guy, .... we all liked him. ....

IA: Ottis what?

Frahm: Ottis Dumas, I'll never forget him.

IA: Ottis what?

Frahm: Ottis Dumas, D u m a s.

IA: Oh okay. Did he come to give you your message then?

Frahm: No, no, as I said when I got my slips I was told just to leave.

IB: Yeah.



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IA: So right then, right now.

Frahm: Right then, right now, yeah. In fact, did Louie mention anything about um, I can't remember the clubhouse?

IB: Yeah he did.

IA: He did, the manager of the clubhouse? I remember that.

Frahm: Vern Haig.

IA: Oh I think so. H a i g. I think so.

Frahm: Vern Haig, I'll never forget that. He was down, he was in the garage at that time, I guess he was getting Hansen's car ready to go someplace. And he saw me come in. He said what happened? I told him. He had tears in his eyes, I'll never forget that. Well that shouldn't be.

IA: No, no.

IB: Must be a lot of you supervisors were let go.

Frahm: Oh yeah, see there was 37 of us in this group that filed class action suit against Diamond Reo.

IB: Oh you did after you were fired?

Frahm: Right. And then we filed and then we in turn when Diamond Reo went bankrupt we transferred the suit to White Motors and they went bankrupt. And we were suing for severance pay, payment of our hospitalization, sickness insurance and pension for us.

IB: Right.

Frahm: And ah, we had a Bill McKay was the attorney and we met with him regularly and ah, I'll never forget the last time we met with him he said fellows, it is all done.

IB: Oh.

Frahm: He took on a contingency basis. So he didn't get anything out of ...

IB: He told unless you guys won.

Frahm: That's right.

IA: But you never got anything from it.

Frahm: No.

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IA: Never.

Frahm: In fact, one of the, some of the, one of the .... Dan .... he had like \$100,000 and some coming. No way.

IA: We had a volunteer here at the museum for a time and her husband was one of the people, he wasn't supervisory, he was production I think, I don't recall, but um, he was never able to do anything in his life again after with the breakup, it just absolutely disintegrated him as a person, he just sat.

Frahm: The thing I think is puzzling is this. That she selected people which ..... would destroy an organization. You know, the head of the engineering, head of the ah, paint department, head of the assembly department, head of master mechanics department, just all, all those categories.

IA: You can see the plan, can't you.

IB: Yeah, well they are trying to

IA: Yeah, ..... see how this is happening.

IB: Yeah.

Frahm: Right.

IB: But my goodness. It is a wonder she got out of Lansing alive. Did she go to Mississippi too do you think?

Frahm: I don't know. I don't know, I don't know.

IB: It is just a wonder someone ...

IA: Yeah.

IB: Run into her car or something. There must have been some threats against her.

Frahm: I don't know, probably Louie told you this, but um, Cappaert really feared for his life because

IA: Oh is that right?

Frahm: Yeah, because ah, it had been said that some of the hourly people were determined to get him.

IA: Um, so did he have bodyguards or

Frahm: I think so. It was a, really because you can imagine this some of these, you know, ... of these hourly employees got, hell some of them got 40 years in there they were let go.

IB: Yeah.

IA: I think this is the husband's that I was just telling you about, I think that was his situation and he got a tiny percentage eventually of his pension. I don't know, 2 percent or something.

Frahm: Well see ah, the Pension Benefit Guarantee Association gives us a little money each month. It is very, that's probably what he is getting. It is very insignificant. I think that most of the people that were let go that particular time and that's 37 or more whatever it was, they were all in the category of where they would be drawing \$700 plus retirement for a month. So that was quite a blow to find out that one day you are going to have it and the next thing you are going to have nothing.

IA: And it is too late in life to get another job anywhere else and you .... unless you build another

Frahm: See the thing is and to be let out of a job at 50 years old or older, it is pretty difficult to get a job anymore because the people up there think about hiring you, they think about I got to pay this fellow a pension eventually, so that is 15 years, so that wasn't

IA: I wonder if Mildred Johnson had fears for her safety too and if she had a bodyguard.

Frahm: I wonder about that too.

IA: Because if she's the one that he the hatchet for ... she could be the focus of the heat, wouldn't she?

IB: Yeah.

Frahm: Right.

IA: And though this woman that I was speaking of said her husband was, and she both to this day, very bitter, very bitter and he died. She said and most of what you said earlier about a person almost dying, almost you could say were murdered because of it.

Frahm: Yeah, that shattered your life.

IA: And huh and he was never able to pull himself together and he died and she said she knows that he would be alive today if it hadn't put the stress on his body, because

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Frahm: Right. That is unfortunate, truly unfortunate.

IA: It is a sad ending for a place that had such promise and such family and such

Frahm: Oh yes, that's right.

IA: Capability of production.

Frahm: That's right.

IB: Yeah, because Glen was the one who talked about how he he .. the quality of the things produced that were so superior.

Frahm: Oh god they were. Who was this you say.

IB: Glen Green

IA: Glen Green

Frahm: Oh Glen Green oh yeah.

IB: Yeah, he went on and on about that.

Frahm: Oh yes, super quality.

IB: And how the plant would make things to order for people, special orders

Frahm: Right.

IB: for specific,

Frahm: Custom made.

IB: custom made, right.

Frahm: Right.

IB: Which is very rare.

Frahm: Very conscientious.

IB: Yeah. Even at that time very rare to find something like that. I just have a couple more questions about your own um, you know, personal situation. You said you, when you mentioned only once when you were talking about being drafted into the Army, you were already were married and you had a child.

Frahm: Yeah a child, right.

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IB: Germany.

Frahm: Right. My father

IB: Did they come here before World War I?

Frahm: Now let's see.

IB: You were born in 1915.

Frahm: They must have.

IB: Right.

IA: Oh yes, because

Frahm: Right.

IB: She must have been very young when she came.

Frahm: She must have been. My dad had a, I'm just trying to remember. I think my dad had a yes, my father had two sisters who came over later. So I got to know them. I knew them.

IB: There was a lot of discrimination against German people during World War I, it was terrible.

IA: There was in World War II too.

IB: Yeah, it was almost even worse than in World War I

Frahm: In fact, that is an interesting point too. I remember when I went in the Service that there was a thought of ah, oh .... they had suggested ..... told me about it later that I would be maybe going to CIA, but

IB: .....

Frahm: But I was German and they were afraid that I would have other

IB: Oh you'd have relatives .....

IA: Oh sure.

Frahm: Just kind of remote you know, and

IB: And yet they would take ... ah, people like that that had relatives in Germany and make put them in G2 Intelligence because they would be able then to have contact to consult these people.

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IA: Yeah.

IB: So it can go both ways, can't it.

IA: Did your parents speak German at home?

Frahm: Right.

IA: And you learned German too?

Frahm: Right, I can speak some, I've forgotten a great deal, but this was helpful to me in World War II because ah, I was what they called spare parts clerk for an ... maintenance company and ah, I was always there for interpretation.

IA: Oh.

IB: Yeah.

Frahm: Great. I'll never forget ah, several times it wasn't too pleasant thing to have to do. But ah, I remember a couple of incidents, over at Nuremberg and the little town of .... (can't hear) said we have to go downtown. I need you to interpret, so we went of all things to a brewery and he wanted me to make arrangements to have beer shipped to our area every week.

IA: My dad has stories like this too.

Frahm: What?

IA: My dad was over there too, he has stories. His stories are about schnapps, not beer.

Frahm: Yeah, schnapp, anyway, so we went there and of course, they gave us a treat and told them what we wanted and fine and made arrangements financially for it and then we went to an icehouse and then arranged for ice at the same time. And we got almost a big horse watering tanks and put the beer in there

IA: A trough.

Frahm: And put the beer and the ice in there.

IB: Amazing there was a horse trough left in Germany after the war. Um, we have a volunteer from here who was in Germany at the end of the war and just after and he talked about the total destruction and trying to find anything that was in one piece to do something with, so



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Frahm: You know there were times too when, when we didn't do this intentionally, I don't think, but one day I remember that we were sleeping out in the woods and it was like November, oh god it was cold in Belgium. And we had all the, we would sleep with our cloths on and blankets and whatever, but we still were freezing. And the commanding officer came back and called a formation and said, this is the last time I'm going to sleep in the woods. We wondered why and he said I just came from Army headquarters and those birds are all living in Germany residences. He said we are going to do it from now on. And I remember get, I was always the .... then, they'd take me along and I never forget I went to this big beautiful home in Lonslip(?) Germany, that was... on the property was a an electrical parts manufacturing plant, a big plant.

IB: Oh my.

Frahm: Garages and everything else under the sun, and our commanding officer said I want you and I are going to go in that office and talk to these people. He said I want you to tell him that he has four hours to get his stuff out of that house, we are moving in.

IB: Oh wow.

Frahm: You know, the guys head just turned red, brilliant red.

IA: ... Army is all about.

Frahm: Right. And ah, he said something to me in German which I understood and objected, of course, very vigorously and he wasn't very nice about it either. He could have used a little bit of better judgment too. But I told him ... he said he just, he just spoiled it, he's got one hour to get out now.

IA: Oh my lord. Did you know where your parents came from in Germany?

Frahm: Well my father came from the eastern ..... My mother I do not know.

IA: You don't know. Because I was just wondering when you were back there, you wanted to see

Frahm: I wanted to go, but it just wasn't possible.

IA: .....

IB: You mentioned you were in Belgium, were you there

Frahm: Yeah, we were in France, we were England and France and then Belgium and then Germany and then back to France and then back to the Pacific.

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IA: My goodness, you really and you went to the Pacific?

Frahm: Yeah.

IB: Oh you really saw a lot, didn't you?

Frahm: ... we went, oh boy that was talking about a sickening bunch of low moral people.

IB: To know that you couldn't go home and you had to go on to

Frahm: Yeah, we went from, we went from Germany to Marseilles, France up on the mountains for redeployment, retooling for Pacific. See we had 185 men and six officers and a lot of mobile equipment because we were engineering company, shop trucks and ah, repair outfits, wreckers and so forth. So we were up in the mountains there and getting ready to ship to the Philippines. Boy that was sad because the day I went on board ship, everybody went on board ship and we went through the Panama Canal, so close to home, yet so far. We went to the Philippines Islands. We weren't there too long, but there were just still, we were there from let's see I got, some of us I had enough points in December to get out of there in July. So that was fine..... That was the longest, I keep telling that we have as much sea time as a lot of sailors did, we were 37 days on board that ship. And it was 17,000 some miles.

IB: Miles. That's a long trip. I guess I was thinking when you said Belgium, I was thinking the Battle of the Bulge.... and all of that.

Frahm: With along the way we made friends, of course, to the people. And in England, ah, another fellow and I became real close friends of a family called Victor and Ethel Cordoray, who owned the Jolly Waterman Pub. Real nice family. They had, I think, one daughter, yeah one daughter and a son. And ah, that used to invite us

IB: We are keeping you.

IA: No I want to hear this.

Frahm: And they used to invite us for dinner, go to church with them and he'd always do little special things for us. And we kept in contact with them for years. Twenty-five years later to the date almost, my wife and I and one daughter went to Europe.

IB: Oh wonderful.

IA: Great.

Frahm: And we went to England and ah, we went to their home and we went to the tavern and it was

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IA: Still there?

Frahm: Pardon?

IA: The tavern was still there?

Frahm: Oh yeah, it was still there and I said where is your wife, where is Ethel. She is working downtown at this department store. He says she is in the book, sell books, so we went down to this department store and she didn't recognize me. And I says to her, I said we are looking for some Mickey Mouse comics. She kind of looked at me you know, (laughter) I said you don't know who this is do you? Art Frahm, oh my god, .....

IA: Oh what a reunion.

Frahm: Yeah, what a reunion. And then from there we went to ah, Belgium which I had ah, this is not the kind of an incident to back when we were in the Service we ..... and .... opened trucks, you know the canvas, ..... and we stopped at this little town for ah, like a lunch break and when we were out of the truck, we was by this one building and this man said, would you like to come in where it is warm. So another fellow and I went inside and his mother was there and she made a great big bowl of homemade soup. We had homemade soup and nice homemade bread.

IA: Oh my gosh.

Frahm: And it was a Dr. Martin. And he was a veterinarian. And they had three children about the same ages as ours. And I remember this kid, he went back into the way in the back someplace and he come out with a dusty bottom of Cognac and give us each a drink of Cognac. He hide it from the Germans.

IA: Oh my.

Frahm: And ah, years later when we were on this rerun, ah, we went to his home or ..... big beautiful brick home, we stayed with them, I think, for two or three days. And he couldn't speak much English and I couldn't speak any French, so and in that town there is a monastery that was founded in the year 900 AD and they got a couple of priests, one from London and one from Boston.

IA: Oh so they could translate. Yeah.

Frahm: Yeah and they came over and translate. And, in fact, the priest invited us back and we toured that monastery. It was quite an experience.

IA: Yeah.

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IB: Oh it must have been.

Frahm: And then back again later we were in Lansing, got a phone ring and said this is Father Gerard. Oh I said it is the priest from Boston. He said I'm in Lansing, I'm at the Greyhound Bus Station, I'd like to see you. He said I got a schedule tomorrow to preach at the St. Gerard Church.

IA: Oh yes, oh yes, ah huh.

Frahm: So we picked him up and brought him to our house and ah, we went to church service Sunday too, of course, that was interesting renewal.

IA: Reunion.

Frahm: Reunion again.

IB: How wonderful.

IA: ... my dad did the same thing with our family too.

IB: Really?

IA: He took us back to all the places.

Frahm: And then

IB: Oh you've been able to... oh. I would die to do that.

Frahm: In Belgium, in Belgium we were there in the snowtime, just like real deep snow, cold and we were .... in private homes there, because there was no place for setup or anything else. And people were real gracious about it too.

IB: Were they and they probably didn't have much.

Frahm: No, Belfontaine was the place and it probably was about the size of Holt.

IB: Small town.

Frahm: Small, small village and um, mama, we called them mama and papa Laserone, he could speak German and French, so I could talk to him in German and he could interpret to his wife in French. And, you know, they were just wonderful people. Because they

IB: They were happy to see you too?

Frahm: Oh yeah.

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IB: To see the Americans.

IA: I would think.

IB: Yeah.

Frahm: ... said to us, when you get your food at night or whatever, bring it back to the house and eat it where it is warm. At least stand out in the hallway like and and we'd always bring extra bread because we had good bread.

IB: And you could share that with them.

Frahm: Yeah, and, and, one day, ah, I met the baker, we met some other people in the town too and one day she says to me, ah, tomorrow I am going to have something special. Okay. We brought our meal back there and she had made French fried potatoes, baked rabbit

IB: Oh my.

Frahm: God, what a delicacy.

IB: We are not talking C-rations here are we.

Frahm: And I don't know how it happened, but one day I was talking to him, I said what would it take to have the baker bake an apple pie. So he went over and saw him. And ah, he said well he said if you get us some shortening and some apples, go ahead. God, he baked the pie. We shared it, of course, with the guys too, but when we came back to that reunion, when we got, you know, it is funny 25 years had elapsed. I had a car, I rented a car and I'm trying to ... I know exactly where to turn it hadn't changed that much and we got down the street and they knew we were coming there, of course. We had written beforehand, but didn't know exactly when. And we could see the doors opening up, the Murphies are here.

IB: Oh great, isn't that wonderful.

Frahm: And we got in the house and the phone rang and it was the baker.

IA: He was going to bake you another pie.

Frahm: Right.

IB: How wonderful.

Frahm: Every place you went, they wanted to give you something to eat, something to drink too.

IB: Oh they remembered that is the way it was.



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Frahm: Oh yeah.

IA: Had they been occupied by the Germans before you guys came?

Frahm: Oh yeah.

IB: Oh yeah.

Frahm: Oh yeah.

IA: In that little village.

Frahm: Yeah.

IA: My gosh.

IB: My dad was in the Battle of the Bulge.

IA: Was he, I want to talk to you about that sometime.

IB: He was, well he was much younger than you, he was 19.

Frahm: Oh he was.

IB: Yeah when he went over.