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Koehler: Shirley Bradley and Lisa Fine. We're going to be interviewing Marjorie Koehler at her home. This is June 16, 1992. We're going to talk about Reo Memories.

IA: One of the first things that we do with one of these interviews is just to get some background information to find out where the people were from and the kind of educational background they're from and their families and things. So just to start off with, were you born in the Lansing area?

Koehler: Yes, I was born in Lansing.

IA: In the city or...

Koehler: In the city.

IA: Okay, and did your parents...

Koehler: They were from here, well, my mother was from Norway.

IB: Oh, isn't that interesting.

Koehler: She was from Norway.

IB: Why'd she happen to come here?

Koehler: Her mother left her family because her father was a seaman and he went to sea and he never came back when my mother was two years old and so she just picked her up and came to the United States.

IA: Your grandmother and your mom?

Koehler: Um, hum. She was five years old when they...

IB: My, that was a big step.

Koehler: Yeah, it was.

IB: She must of been frightened.

Koehler: And they ended up in Alpena and there's quite a few Swedish and Norwegian people in Alpena and so they lived there until she was a young girl and she came to Lansing and got a job working and that's where she met my dad was in a laundry, the American Laundry.

IB: Oh, really?

Koehler: Yes, and so that's how I came to be.

IA: And your dad was a Michigan person?

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Koehler: Yes, yes, he was.

IA: Oh, that's great. What was your mother's Norwegian name?

Koehler: Erickson.

IA: Erickson.

Koehler: You might know.

IA: Oh, that's a real common name.

Koehler: Yeah, it was Erickson.

IA: And what did your dad do?

Koehler: Well, at the time she met him he worked in the laundry but from there he went to Reo.

IA: Oh, he worked at Reo?

IB: Oh, your dad worked there?

Koehler: Yeah, and so did my grandfather.

IA: Your father's father?

Koehler: Um, hum. I've got a picture of him in...

IA: Oh, my goodness.

IB: Great.

IA: Do you know what they did in Reo?

Koehler: Both of them were foremen in the motor plant.

IA: Oh, my goodness.

Koehler: Yeah, they both worked in the motor plant.

IA: Your grandfather must of been there from the beginning.

Koehler: Well, he had to be because that was probably about 1906 or something like that.

IA: That's right 'cause it was started in 1904.

Koehler: Yeah, I think, I don't know which one, I can show you his picture. A lot of these pictures were big group pictures. This isn't the

one, if you ladies want to start looking at those, you know, you're welcome.

IB: I think I'll wait till you can tell me what I'm seeing.

Koehler: Okay, yeah. I do have one of my father also but that, I don't have that right here. Here's my grandfather.

IB: I'll come around over there.

Koehler: Right.

IA: Oh, my. What was his name?

Koehler: Tom Nelson.

IA: Tom Nelson. Isn't that wonderful. He was a foreman in the motor plant.

Koehler: Um, hum. Most of these pictures are of the men that worked there.

IA: This looks like it must of been in the teens.

Koehler: Well, it could of been, just judging from the dress and...

IB: Although it could of been in the early years, after the turn of the century because...

Koehler: Well, my father passed away in '25.

IB: And this is the old Reo back here.

Koehler: Ah, huh, right.

IB: Wasn't so old then.

Koehler: You know, the majority of these fellows were from the old country, a lot of 'em. The ones that my dad had under him couldn't even speak English.

IA: Where were they from, Germany?

Koehler: Oh, yes, and, oh, I think there were some from Italy and, you know.

IB: Was, isn't that interesting, interesting for him if people didn't speak English for him to communicate what he needed done.

Koehler: Yes, sometimes he used to come home and be a little bit disgusted.

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IB: Oh, did he?

Koehler: He couldn't get his message across, you know. I don't think I've got one of my dad. See, it just starts out and there's pictures of all the different departments, I imagine.

IA: That's the gear department in Reo in 1915.

IB: Oh, they're labeled.

Koehler: Well, that one is.

IB: This one is.

Koehler: Yeah, that one is.

IB: Oh, the gear department.

Koehler: But that's, I think that's the only one so. But look at the people they had. You know, that was a big plant at that time. They really...

IA: Yeah, here we go, department number two, 1915.

Koehler: And, of course, we don't know what two is.

IB: No, we don't.

Koehler: And this has something on it.

IA: Number five, 1915. There was of been a lot of publicity photos in '15.

IB: Must be, must be.

IA: How'd your grandfather, do you know how your grandfather got to the Reo?

Koehler: No, I don't. I really don't. They were from Ohio originally.

IB: Just like

Koehler: Right, yeah. He, I really don't, I don't, I tried to find some information on them. I looked for their marriage license in Clinton County because they were from Bath and my grandmother was from Bath so she, she was from Bath but my grandfather came from Ohio and I went over to St. Johns and went through all the records over there, tried to find their marriage certificate. I can find where they stood up with another couple but not anything for them so I thought maybe they might have been married in Ohio.

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IB: Doesn't sound like they were married in Clinton County, does it?

Koehler: Not really.

IB: Or there'd be records ...

Koehler: My daughter and I went over there and went through the records and it was a big job. It was all handwritten, you know, and the ink had started to fade.

IB: Oh, ladies here.

Koehler: Yeah, yeah, got some ladies.

IB: It looks like they're all dressed in white.

Koehler: They had a big, they had a big office force.

IB: Oh, look at those wonderful dresses.

IA: This is a wonderful photograph.

Koehler: Isn't that just super? I know you would enjoy seeing it and that's why I went and got it 'cause I just thought for this purpose, it's just...

IB: Oh, that was so nice of you. Oh, look at this.

IA: Is that the cafeteria?

Koehler: I think it was...

IA: Says, get your change ready.

Koehler: Yeah.

IB: I bet it was. I bet there aren't any more photographs like this left.

Koehler: Well, there was more. You, have you ever done anything on Loudenslager?

IB: On Clare Loudenslager?

Koehler: Um, hum.

IB: Not yet.

Koehler: Okay.

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IB: We're hoping to.

Koehler: He's the one that's responsible for this. He found these pictures some place and he had several copies made and gave to his friends and that's how come Mr. had one.

IB: How wonderful of him to do that.

IA: These look like they must of been the big management...

IB: The upper management.

Koehler: Oh, yes, the wheels.

IA: Big wheels.

IB: ivory So that would have been the

IA: Just all different departments.

Koehler: Yes.

IB: Oh, look.

Koehler: Now, here's some more office people.

IB: Look at this, isn't this wonderful. Maybe these are execs and their secretaries.

Koehler: Could very well be.

IA: They're in front of that building again.

Koehler: Yes.

IB: Don't you wonder what's become of 'em all and how their lives went?

Koehler: Oh, yes, yes.

IB: Oh, look at the touring car.

Koehler: Yeah, my dad had one like that.

IB: Did he?

Koehler: Um, hum.

IA: And the railroad's right there. That must be the loading dock.

IB: This looks like it might have been in '18 or in '19 or something.

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Koehler: His car was a 1914 Dodge.

IA: These are wonderful. I've never seen these before.

IB: The faces and the costumes. Oh, look at this.

Koehler: And there's some of the cars.

IA: That must of been 's office (all talking at once!!!)

IB: And the clubhouse was over here.

Koehler: Right.

IA: If it was 1915 though, the clubhouse wasn't even built yet. The clubhouse was built in 1917.

IB: Oh, was it. Maybe it was built on this plot of land.

Koehler: Probably it was not there.

IB: And there's the water tower up in the back there that I noticed in the other pictures that Mabel had.

IA: Now, what did your dad do at the plant?

Koehler: He was a foreman.

IA: He was a foreman, too?

Koehler: In the motor plant.

IB: In the motor plant.

Koehler: Same as my grandfather. We got a kick out of that and here's, well, maybe this one isn't but there are some of them that are peeking out of the windows.

IA: Peeking out of the windows. Oh, that's funny.

Koehler: And we thought that was kind of funny, you know.

IB: Not thinking maybe that they'd be...

IA: Isn't that a riot and that's your grandfather?

Koehler: Yes.

IB: He was a nice looking man.

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Koehler: Yes, he was.

IA: Very, very distinguished.

Koehler: He was very handsome. My father was a good looking man, too.

IB: Was he?

Koehler: Oh, a handsome man.

IB: Oh, look at this.

IA: I bet this is the welfare department 'cause look they're keeping track of the accidents.

Koehler: Um, hum, probably.

IB: What does it say?

IA: It says, transfer bulletin notice. I can't read though and here's some of the, well, these guys are hard at work.

IB: Smoke filled room.

IA: Yeah, right.

Koehler: And here's some of the machinery.

IB: Oh, it looks so clean.

Koehler: Well, that's

IA: a laboratory.

Koehler: It probably was quite new and that's probably some executive.

IA: Working at a beautiful desk.

Koehler: Oh, yes.

IA: A beautiful rolltop desk.

IB: Gosh, it looks...

IA: An old telephone.

IB: Oh, I love those, the candlestick phones. Your grandfather must of been there then in the early days when R.E. Olds was there.

Koehler: He must of been because, yeah...

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IA: wooden overpass.

IB: Oh, my gosh.

Koehler: Evidently after they built them they put them over at the building across the street.

IB: Yes, they went over there for final something or other. And these are the way they were shipped around.

Koehler: Imagine that was all wood.

IA: Oh, yeah.

Koehler: Isn't that something?

IB: Isn't that something?

Koehler: Yes.

IB: And someone probably had the job of driving them older. Oh, and they're making chaises obviously here.

IA: Chassis, chassis.

IB: And these are lathes. They're doing the beginnings of the chassis it looks like, the frame.

IA: These, these are beautiful.

IB: Oh, those are wonder.

Koehler: Yeah, I thought you'd enjoy 'em.

IA: That's wonderful.

Koehler: Well, we can get to that other one later.

IA: Okay. I don't even know where to begin now.

IB: It's almost like stepping back in time.

IA: I know, I know.

Koehler: I know, it's interesting, isn't it?

IB: Oh, yes.

IA: So your dad became the foreman in the motor plant?

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Koehler: Motor plant.

IA: And I'm sorry, what was his name again?

Koehler: Earl Nelson and my grandfather's name was Tom Nelson.

IA: Okay. Did your dad go into, I guess he went into Reo because your grandfather was there...

Koehler: Probably.

IA: and brought him in.

Koehler: Yes, I'm sure that probably happened.

IA: Okay, and how did your, how did your father go from the laundry, I mean, why was he at the laundry to begin with? Was he just, was it 'cause he was too young to go into the automobile plant or...

Koehler: I think, I think that was it. He took some kind of, a night course on management and I had those books for quite a long time but I gave 'em to one of my grandsons.

IB: Did he take it at the Reo?

Koehler: I don't really know that.

IB: Okay, 'cause I...

Koehler: I knew he had these great, big heavy books. It was on engineering and management and I'm sure that that's why he had them. He probably studied that and...

IA: He was studying, yeah, 'cause they had apprenticeship programs for management at Reo.

Koehler: It could of been through Reo.

IA: Did he work there all his life, your dad?

Koehler: Yes. He died when I was 11 so you see, I don't remember a whole lot about him. Some I do remember but, you know, lost him when I was quite young. So...

IA: I take it though, I mean, it would be hard to, since you were so little and you weren't really attuned to those things back then, but they, they, did they think the Reo was a good place to work?

Koehler: Oh, yes, oh, yes. Everybody in Lansing, that was their goal to get a job at the Reo.

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IA: At the Reo?

Koehler: Oh, yes. Yes, that was the best place in town, you know, for most Lansing people.

IB: 'Cause obviously they were treated right there and they were earning a decent wage.

Koehler: Right, right and the plant was really nice in the beginning, you know. It was...

IB: It looks, in that one picture it's so clean.

Koehler: Yes, it was. It was clean and nice, you know. It was well taken care of, so.

IA: Okay. You went to school in Lansing then, you grew up in Lansing?

Koehler: Yes, um, hum.

IA: And high school, did you go to high school there?

Koehler: Ah, huh.

IA: Did you take the secretarial kind of courses?

Koehler: No, no. I just took kind of a business course, you know...

IA: Okay, general business.

Koehler: Yes, but I picked up my skills, I guess, as I went along. We used to be able to do that, you know, and you can't do that anymore.

IB: That's true. We were talking to Mabel about that very thing. That's what she did.

Koehler: Yes, yes. Yeah, it, you couldn't do that today, you know, but I always figure if you can show your boss you can do the job, why...

IA: That should be enough...

Koehler: Yes, but see, it isn't like that. A lot of our graduates can't.

IB: Opportunities were there then, too.

Koehler: Oh, yes. It was a lot different.

IA: And when did you begin to work at the Reo?

Koehler: In 1947.

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IA: Okay. Obviously, you didn't go to work right after high school in the Reo?

Koehler: No, no. I worked part-time for the State and I worked in the auditor general's department on tax records. That was my first job and I ran comptometer if you know what that is.

IA: I sure do.

IB: As a matter of fact, I was asking Mabel about that and that's how, I thought they were the forerunners of IBM punch cards and she said no and then she explained it to me.

Koehler: Yeah, that's what I used to do.

IB: Did you learn that skill in high school in a class?

Koehler: No, no, I just picked it up on the job. I was very fortunate, a friend of my mothers got me into the State and they just taught me right there and I just picked it right up and, of course, like I say, you couldn't do that anymore but...

IA: No. And so you were at the State?

Koehler: Oh, probably about two years. I'll say two years, in that vicinity and then I got married in 1932 so...

IA: Right in the depths of the Depression.

Koehler: Yes, and my husband was working at Oldsmobile two days a week. Then we had a baby boy.

IB: And he couldn't of been earning much even, per day for those two days.

Koehler: Oh, we were really hurting, you know. It was, those were really hard times.

IA: Okay.

Koehler: And then we bought our house in Lansing and so I had to continue to work because, you know, his...

IA: Had to pay the mortgage.

Koehler: Well, his employment was so undecided all the time, you know, you just never new if he was gonna get two days a week or three days a week and they didn't get unemployment, you know, and so I went back to work.

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IA: First at the Reo or...

Koehler: No, well, yes, it was Reo.

IA: In '47?

Koehler: Now, wait just a minute. Before that, I went to work for the National Youth Program.

IA: Administration?

Koehler: Um, hum.

IA: Oh, oh, very interesting.

Koehler: Yes, yes, I did.

IA: What'd you do for them?

Koehler: Ah, same, comptometer work.

IA: Oh, I see, so administrative work...

Koehler: Right.

IA: They had an office in Lansing?

Koehler: Yes, over on Walnut Street. It was in a big, old house and we did payroll for the boys that were in that CCC...

IA: CCC.

Koehler: Yeah.

IB: Oh, is that what the National Youth Program was?

IA: Yeah, it oversaw all the youth programs.

IB: Oh, okay, I see.

IA: The CCC is just one of 'em.

Koehler: And I don't know if you heard, ever heard Jerry Burn's name, well, he was my boss there and then when I went to the Reo, he was personnel manager there so that worked out real handy for me, too. He was a good friend.

IA: Oh, boy, I'd love to write another book just about that, the NYA.

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Koehler: You know, yeah, right. That was an interesting thing, it was.

IA: Did they have, do any other programs besides the CCC through Lansing?

Koehler: No, just that.

IA: Just that, they didn't do any for girls?

Koehler: No, huh, ah.

IB: Was there a program for girls?

IA: There were some schools for girls, too, that they oversaw, too.

IB: Oh, I didn't know that. I've never known that. I always thought it was just the boys.

Koehler: I just, you know, I just think that's such a wonderful thing. It's just a shame they don't have something like that....

IA: Like that now?

Koehler: Yes. I think we would have a lot less trouble than we do...

IB: I do, too. They'd be doing something. They'd be learning something and be off the streets.

Koehler: Yes, well, and it would be helping the ecology, you know, I mean...

IA: Do good projects.

Koehler: Yes, it would. I just, that was really something. Then I worked part-time for the WPA in the old Reo Clubhouse, too.

IA: Oh, really?

IB: Oh, you did?

IA: In the clubhouse?

Koehler: Yes, in the clubhouse.

IA: Before you actually worked for the Reo?

Koehler; Yes, that's right.

IA: What'd you do for them?

Koehler: I was still in comptometer work and that was in the main ballroom.

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IB: Isn't that interesting, that they...

Koehler: And they had offices all set up in there.

IB: They did?

Koehler: Yes.

IA: So the company let the national government come in and...

Koehler: Right, right.

IA: work their programs through the clubhouse.

Koehler: Yeah, they did.

IA: I never heard that before.

IB: I didn't either. Isn't that interesting?

Koehler: Yeah, yeah, we had and it was a, you know, a big, 'course you probably don't remember seeing the clubhouse...

IB: I remember it.

IA: No, I don't.

Koehler: The ballroom was big and they just had that full of people working.

IA: On the WPA?

Koehler: Um, hum.

IA: They built roads and post offices and...

Koehler: Oh, yes, yes, and they just did a lot of good things, you know.

IB: Oh, all kinds of things. They went to some of the parks that we now enjoy and you can still see the stairways and the retaining, breakwater walls and all kinds of things that they did. They dug pits for latrines and, someone's got to do it.

Koehler: Well, sure.

IB: Oh, that's very interesting.

Koehler: So then after that, I went to...

IA: Okay, during the War?

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Koehler: No, I wasn't, my husband was working on, at Olds on military...

IA: He worked at military?

Koehler: Um, hum, so and my daughter was born shortly in that period so...

IA: You stayed home?

Koehler: Yeah.

IB: You were busy, huh, with two children?

Koehler: Yeah.

IA: Is that, you had two children?

Koehler: Two, yeah, a boy and a girl.

IA: A boy and a girl. Where was your house in Lansing that you bought?

Koehler: Over on the south end on Lyons Avenue. You know where Lyons Avenue School is?

IB: Oh, sure.

IA: Lyons?

Koehler: Um, hum.

IB: L Y N O S.

IA: Yeah, okay, great. Okay, and so we're finally at Reo in 1947, and what did you do there?

Koehler: And I worked on payroll again and I worked for a man called Carl Ogden. I don't know if you've heard that name before but he was personnel manager there at one time and then he was paymaster after that when I went to work for him. I worked for him for quite a while. Then I transferred into the accounting department. Worked there for, oh, probably a year. Then I was transferred into the salary payroll office so I had a lot of experience in the payroll. From there, I went up on the third floor.

IA: Right. We were told to ask you about the third floor.

Koehler: Yes, ah, huh.

IA: From, from Mabel.

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Koehler: Mabel, yeah, right, yeah. I was transferred up there and that's where I first worked with Mr. Cataline(?) and we were, we had a catalog department. We made our own catalogs there.

IB: Oh, really.

Koehler: Yes.

IB: Of parts and things?

Koehler: Of all the parts that go in the truck and believe you me, that was a lot of work when you stop to think that that was all hand done. You know, it isn't like it is today. Everything's on computer.

IA: And a truck has thousands of parts.

Koehler: That's right plus the fact that you no more than finish the catalog and it was obsolete.

IA: Had to have a new one.

IB: Oh, my.

Koehler: That just went on constantly. We had about 15 young boys working for us and they were, well, they'd draw patterns and, you know, all the schematics and all this for the parts and then I had to type a lot of the catalog pages and I'm really upset to think all these beautiful typewriters they have today where you don't have to do all the hard work like I did.

IA: That's right, like all the word processors.

Koehler: Oh, yes. I would have given my eye teeth for that.

IB: Mabel was mentioning at the end of the day, her fingers would be so sore.

Koehler: Oh, it it's just terrible.

IB: From the manuals so yours must of been twice as sore?

Koehler: And I had a stiff neck half the time, it seemed like. It was, we really earned our money. We didn't sit around like a lot of these kids do nowadays, I'll tell ya.

IB: How did you happen to go to Reo? Was there an add in the paper that you saw or...

Koehler: No, it was through a friend. She worked in the payroll office. Well, I had worked with her at the State and that's how come she

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told me about, you know, that she was working there at Reo and so she said, well, you need a job, come on and interview and maybe they'll hire you. Sure enough they did. So it worked out real well for me.

IA: And you already knew a lot about the company 'cause your family...

Koehler: Oh, yes, yes.

IB: You knew it was a good place to work.

Koehler: That's right so, and it was close to my home, too.

IB: Lyons Avenue isn't that far away.

Koehler: Yeah, it's in the south end, you know, so, and I had two children and I had to think about that. I did work a few weeks at Fisher Body and that was at, during the time when I was looking for work and I didn't stay there because I didn't have transportation. I had to go catch the bus, go downtown, change busses and then go to Fisher Body and if anything happened at home, you know...

IB: You were so far away.

Koehler: It was, I was so far away so I decided that Reo was located better for me. So that was really one of the reasons why I went there. And, of course, the children were going through the measles and chicken pox and all those things.

IB: All things that calls a mother back home.

Koehler: Yes, right.

IB: It kind of tears you in two places, doesn't it? You want to be near...

Koehler: Yeah, it certainly does.

IB: How, did you, you had someone that took care of the children while you worked?

Koehler: Yes. I generally had a lady that came in because I didn't go along with shipping 'em out every morning. I, you know, I guess the children get used to it but I didn't want 'em to have to leave their home so I most always had somebody come in and stay for the day, you know.

IB: Yeah, there weren't as many daycare facilities, nice ones...

Koehler: No, we didn't have anything like that. No, we didn't.

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IA: Maybe a few nursery schools but that's about it.

Koehler: Um, hum, I think they had that but mostly I had to hire someone.

IB: To come over and be there.

Koehler: And, of course, we didn't pay the kind of wages they do today.

IB: No, and you weren't earning the kind of wages...

Koehler: No, and I wasn't earning that kind of money, either.

IB: But you could buy more with it, it seemed like, didn't it?

Koehler: Oh, yes. I've always said that, that the...

IB: The buying power.

Koehler: When my husband was making \$35 a week and I wasn't working, it seemed like we got along fine, you know, because the dollar was worth a lot more. But that all changed.

IB: Cars didn't cost, you know...

Koehler: Oh, no.

IB: proportionately to your salary and houses or even rental.

Koehler: Right, oh, heavens yes.

IA: Well, and I always think you just didn't, from what I was, could gather from what my own family has said, you didn't need as many things, you know.

Koehler: No, it was a different lifestyle. It was different. It was simpler...

IA: In terms of just consumer things.

Koehler: Yes.

IB: Yes, well, Madison Avenue makes us want these things, 'course that keeps people working though.

Koehler: I guess so.

IA: A vicious circle. Did you husband always stay at Oldsmobile?

Koehler: Yes, he was there 43 years.

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IA: Forty-three years.

IB: Oh, my.

Koehler: He went right after he got out of high school.

IB: Oh, he did?

Koehler: Yeah, and he just worked in the shop. He had changed jobs a couple of times but he was there all that time.

IA: Do you think there was a difference between working in the shop at Olds and Reo? I know you never worked in the shop at Reo...

Koehler: Well, I can tell you what he said.

IA: Okay.

Koehler: Before the union, before the union came in...

IA: In '37?

Koehler: Yeah. He couldn't even get time to go to the bathroom hardly. He worked on the line and, you know, if he had to go to the bathroom, well, he had to get a man to replace him while he was gone and sometimes they'd have to wait, you know, a long time and then they worked 12 and 14 hours a day.

IA: So when you first married him in '32, that's what it was like?

Koehler: That's right.

IA: When he got work.

Koehler: Um, hum, that's what it was like and he used to put some sort of, oh, bolt or nut or something on, you know, with this chassis be going by. He'd come home and his fingers would be bleeding. You know, they were just, it was really rough and, you know, a lot of people talk against the union but he certainly appreciated what the union did for him. He didn't go along with some of their policies but he did have it a lot better after the union was in.

IB: There was some job security, too.

Koehler: Yes.

IB: That he might not have had before.

Koehler: Right, and they got a break and they...

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IA: They moderated some of the conditions.

Koehler: Yes, oh, yes. So, but it was kind of rough at first.

IA: And at the Reo, was it like that, too, do you think?

Koehler: I don't believe they had the production line that Olds had, you know. That production line at Olds was fast, you know. It was, there was just no let up. I think, they had a production line because you can see it right here on that cover...

IA: Yeah, right, they had an assembly line

Koehler: Ah, huh, that's in '48.

IB: But not zipping along with the amount per hour, you're saying?

Koehler: That's right. Right.

IA: So it might have been a little more humane?

Koehler: Oh, I hope so.

IB: Well, my father worked at Reo in those days and I don't think it was. From what you said it sounds very similar and they didn't get paid, while they were gone to the bathroom and back, that was deducted.

Koehler: I was just gonna say, they worked on piecework.

IA: That's right, until the late '40s.

Koehler: Yes, they did.

IB: We talked to someone recently that felt that Mr. Bowles...

IA: And then also Mr. Fuller, both of them complained about the switch from piece to...

IB: Day rate.

IA: They didn't like it.

Koehler: No, because they made more money when they worked piece work.

IA: That's right.

Koehler: 'Course that was incentive to work harder, you know.

IA: That's right.



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Koehler: So that's why but in the long run, of course, it was a lot better.

IB: And didn't they, Mr. Bowles mentioned that he didn't think things were as well produced. A lot of things went to salvage after they went to the hourly rate because they were just throwing 'em out then and before they were trying to do them correctly.

Koehler: They were doing the quality that they needed.

IA: How long did you stay at Reo after you, you...

Koehler: I left in '75.

IA: Oh, so you stayed till '75, too?

Koehler: Um, hum. They only gave me credit for 25 years because I was laid off in a slack period...

IB: After the War?

Koehler: For about three months and so when I went back to work, they wouldn't give me the time that I, you know, it was not a fair thing.

IB: You had to start kind of over again building your seniority?

Koehler: Well, as far as seniority was concerned, yes.

IB: That's what I mean.

Koehler: Yes, and we even, well, I even contacted the company's lawyer and he was going to see if he could do something about having that reinstated but it just never came to pass. So those things happen, too, you know.

IA: Did you stay up on the third floor in that catalog department for the rest of the time?

Koehler: I was on the third floor for, oh dear, let's see, how long was that? Quite a while and then about the last three years that I worked, we moved over on the corner of Baker and Washington, in the old lawn mower division plant and we had new offices built over there.

IB: Oh, you did?

Koehler: Yeah. It was the same old building but they put all new offices in and then that's where I ended up working for Mr. Cataline(?) at the end.

IA: Doing the same kind of thing?

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Koehler: Well, I was doing secretarial work for him.

IA: Oh, okay.

IB: Oh, you were. You weren't doing payroll then, anymore?

Koehler: No, no. I was out of payroll.

IB: Before you went to the

Koehler: When I went to the catalog department, then I was out of payroll.

IB: How did you move from place to place? Did they come and say, we like what you're doing. We'd like you to work here next or did you find an opening and apply for it or what?

Koehler: Well, when I left the factory payroll office, there was an opening in the salary payroll and then she was, a friend of mine was looking for somebody to replace somebody that was leaving and so she asked me if I'd be interested and so I worked there.

IB: Did you get pay increases from department to department?

Koehler: In that one, I did.

IB: You did?

Koehler: Yes, ah, huh. Not a whole lot but I...

IB: So that would be incentive, too.

Koehler: Yes, right and so I worked there, not too long, and then I went upstairs on the third floor and I was there quite a while and in the wintertime, it was about 85 degrees in there all the time.

IB: Oh, really.

Koehler: 'Cause they had old steam heat.

IA: And it will all rise up to the top.

Koehler: Oh, it was so hot in there.

IB: Oh, really?

Koehler: It was just terrible.

IB: Everybody on the first floor was freezing and you were up there, oh, that's interesting.

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Koehler: And then when I first worked at Reo in the factory payroll office, we were on Baker Street and they didn't have air conditioning. They had great big fans and my desk sat right next to the window and outside of that window was a tar paper roof and the sun just beat right down on that. Oh, it was, just...

IB: Just bounced right into your...

Koehler: Oh, it was just like an oven and we used to dress with, just a dress and a pair of panties on and paint our legs so it would look like we had hose on.

IB: Sure, with the liquid nylons that we could get.

Koehler: That's right. I think about that, you know, 'cause it was so hot, we could hardly stand it.

IA: That probably made you hotter 'cause it probably closed up your pores, you know.

Koehler: Yeah, it was just some funny times.

IB: Ah, huh, but the nylons were heavier, too, a few years back, rayons and then nylons and they probably were hotter to wear. And the garter belt and all that other stuff.

IA: Thank God I didn't have to...

IB: Oh, you're lucky you didn't through those.

Koehler: Yeah, I guess so.

IB: That must of been difficult to work and turn out, you know, be efficient when you were so uncomfortable.

Koehler: Oh, it was, yes, it was so warm and...

IA: Well, think about those ladies in that picture.

Koehler: Oh, I know. Look at all the...

IA: You know, dresses all the way down to the floor.

Koehler: Oh, I know, can you, it would be just big fans that they would have, you know. There was no air conditioning then.

IA: Couldn't expose your arms like this at work or...

IB: And I would imagine they worked long hours then, too, and they barely had time to get those, all the ironing and starching that

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must of gone into those outfits. They'd be, go home and hurry and iron and all that stuff to come back to work the next day.

Koehler: Oh, yes, that was kind of a...

IA: Did your mom work or did she stay home and take care of you?

Koehler: Yeah, she did. She was a seamstress and...

IA: After she left the laundry?

Koehler: Yes, ah, huh. She took in sewing in her home and then in later years, after I got married and left home, she got a job at Fisher Body working in the upholstery department.

IB: Oh, she did? Sewing the seat covers or something.

Koehler: Aw, huh, right.

IB: Or the panels on the doors?

Koehler: Yes, right.

IB: For goodness sakes.

Koehler: She was there quite a while.

IB: Was she?

Koehler: Um, hum.

IB: You sound like a family of workers and doers.

Koehler: We were busy people I guess you might say.

IA: Did you have brothers and sisters?

Koehler: No, I was an only child.

IA: You were an only child.

Koehler: I had a half-sister but I've lost all track of her. I don't know what ever happened to her.

IB: Well, that happens.

Koehler: My father was married before and he had a daughter.

IA: I have a lot of questions, I just don't know where to begin. That's why I'm pausing.

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IB: There's just so much going through my mind, too.

IA: It's hard to keep all the generations straight, you know, 'cause we're not just dealing with you as a Reo worker but your grandfather and your father.

Koehler: Yes, well, I always very proud of that to think that I ended up working there, you know. That made three generations of it.

IA: Yes, we've heard that so much about the family feeling, not only just because their families worked there but the family feel between just the workers.

Koehler: We've always said that. Mr. Cataline, after Reo closed, he went to Olds and worked so he could get a pension and he said that he never experienced the same feeling in his job there that he did at Reo.

IB: I think that's more than just the fact that it was a smaller factory with fewer people, too. I think there was more that fed into that.

Koehler: Yeah, we just had a real nice group of people, you know. It was like family really. We had some wonderful times.

IA: Did you go to the clubhouse as a child?

Koehler: Yes, they had shows there, you know, and then my dad was working, why we would go to the shows. I barely remember that but I do know I went and we were talking about, I asked some of the girls the other day if they remembered, we used to have a bowling alley in the....

IA: In the basement.

Koehler: Yeah. When I first went there, they still had it and I've got some pictures here of some of the ladies that were on the bowling team.

IB: Oh, have you?

Koehler: Yes. I don't know if I can find it right off but I thought, I do have another thing here about the style shows that we used to have.

IA: The girl's club?

Koehler: Yes, and I've got another one that has the fall fair. We used to have what they called a fall fair.

IB: What's that?

Koehler: Well, it was a fair where they had, I'll find it and show you. It is something I bet you didn't know about.

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IA: Well, we've already heard about the balls.

IB: We just heard about the charity ball.

Koehler: Oh, yeah, the charity ball.

IA: We already know about that.

IB: told us about that.

Koehler: Okay, here's the bowling team right there.

IA: Did you bowl?

Koehler: No, no, I never...

IA: Okay.

Koehler: I'll see if I can find...

IB: I didn't think about the women having a bowling team. I guess I always just tend to think of the men doing things there in the early days.

IA: No, they had some women's clubs, too.

Koehler: Yes, they did. They were quite active in that sort of thing.

IA: And here's the, looks like the style show.

Koehler: Yeah, that's the style show and here's some more.

IA: Very fashionable ladies.

Koehler: Oh, my yes, hats and gloves and...

IB: Oh, the way we used to dress.

Koehler: Oh, heavens yes.

IB: You didn't go without your hat and gloves.

Koehler: Here's a good example of it right there.

IB: I used to wear little dresses like that when I was a little girl.

Koehler: Yes.

IB: Oh, the new look. That came in when I was, just in high school.

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Koehler: Is that right?

IB: And the hems went down, half way down, 'cause everything we had before that was above our knee and so naturally we had to have all new clothes.

Koehler: Here's the one about the fair.

IA: Oh, okay. Oh, sure, I've heard about these.

IB: Oh, this is in the clubhouse.

IA: I think this is what the picnic turned into after the War because before World War II, they used to have the picnic when they would have, the ladies would bake the pies and they would have the men competing in games and events and things and I think...

Koehler: Um, hum, this is very similar.

IA: Right, I think it turned into this.

Koehler: But this was really a big affair, you know, the whole city of Lansing would come. It was, look here what it says, 15,000 came to the Reo Fair.

IA: Here's Steve Snelco who wouldn't talk to us.

IB: Oh, oh, for goodness sake.

Koehler: He comes to the, he comes to the meetings.

IA: I know. We called him. He wouldn't talk to us.

Koehler: Well, he's kind of strange. Well, I don't mean he's strange but he's just...

IB: He's just a little, maybe prefers his own privacy.

Koehler: Yeah, right.

IA: Well, we want to talk to everybody.

IB: Oh, look here. This looks like a big ride.

Koehler: Oh, out in back of the clubhouse, they had all these rides. They had everything.

IB: Don Bashore, my mother spoke of him a lot.

Koehler: Yeah, he's, he's passed away.

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IB: Has he?

Koehler: Ah, huh.

IA: So this was, every September they had this big fair?

Koehler: Ah, huh.

IB: Oh, that's Governor Williams.

Koehler: Yeah, he was there.

IB: Soapy Williams.

IA: It looks like a big country fair.

Koehler: Oh, it was, it was big.

IB: Look at all, look at the crowd.

Koehler: They even had a jail.

IA: A jail?

Koehler: Yes, and they would go along and if some of the bosses were there, there were two fellows dressed up like cops and would take 'em put 'em in jail and they had to pay money to get out.

IB: Oh, that's the kind of thing they do now, isn't it, for fund raisers and that's where the idea started, probably.

IA: Oh, here's my favorite thing, the babies.

Koehler: Yes, they had the babies and then they also had a booth with dolls. You were given a doll and you were to dress the doll. All the employees were suppose to dress the dolls and my mother, being the good seamstress, dressed my doll and it won first prize.

IA: Oh, my.

Koehler: And she was so proud of herself, you know.

IA: So this was a mock jail?

Koehler: Ah, huh, that's it right there.

IA: So who ended up in this jail?

Koehler: Oh, a lot of the bosses.

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IA: So the workers would put their bosses in jail, right?

Koehler: And loved every minute of it.

IA: And loved every minute of it. Oh, that's funny.

IB: Oh, these are wonderful pictures.

IA: Oh, I see, it was a fund raiser so you paid to put your boss in jail.

Koehler: Yeah, right.

IA: It sounds like a good idea.

Koehler: And one of the ladies...

IB: And keep in there, huh?

Koehler: Now, they had animals, too.

IA: Right, see, 'cause that's why I said it's like the old time picnic they used to have where they'd have judging on the different animals and the different produce like here.

Koehler: Right, right, it's just like a country fair.

IA: Yeah. That's wonderful.

Koehler: You know, it's just hard to believe when you think about it now that that ever existed.

IA: Yeah, it's a different world.

IB: Bill McQueen, that's not, related to...

Koehler: No, no.

IB: McQueen. I see so many names here that are familiar to me that I remember my mother mentioning or fathers of students that I went to school with.

IA: This was a whole feature devoted to the fall fair issue.

Koehler: Right, right.

IA: I see. Wow, this is wonderful. What did you do in particular for the fair?

Koehler: Just dress the doll.

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IA: You just dressed the doll?

Koehler: Well, I did work at some of the booths. I did work, you know, we all took turns working in the booths.

IA: And the girl's club was very, was active in organizing it and participating in it?

Koehler: Yes. One of the ladies was the chairman...

IB: Oh, my goodness, here's Edgar Guest.

Koehler: Yes, he came.

IB: Came to the Reo.

Koehler: Ah, huh.

IA: is this Ed Rankins?

Koehler: Yeah, you, have you talked to Ed?

IB: Sure, yes, we interviewed him.

Koehler: Have you talked to yet?

IA: No.

Koehler: Well, she was one of the secretaries in personnel and Barbara Brown and there's a picture of her and that's

IB: Oh, I know him.

IA: We met her, Fern at that Golden Gate.

Koehler: Yes, ah, huh. She's a very gracious lady and she always had a good job there and handled it very nicely.

IA: And they were the registrars for the fair, they organized the fair?

Koehler: Um, hum. You haven't interviewed Fern yet?

IA: No, we haven't. She didn't write her name on our list.

Koehler: Well, you ought to make a, you have to make an effort...

IA: We're gonna have to call her anyway.

Koehler: to get Fern 'cause she can tell you a lot, you know, being in personnel the way she was.

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IA: That's right, right.

Koehler: This one, this one is about some of the Army trucks, I think. Here is some of the...

IB: Did you notice they're bowling in skirts?

Koehler: Mother and daughter banquet that the girl's club put on.

IA: Oh, that's nice. There were so many ways that the company extended just beyond your work day.

Koehler: Oh, absolutely. It was, you know, everybody was interested and took a good, well, you know, work ethic, I think, you know, because of it. It made a lot of difference.

IA: And here, I was just looking at this. They, Shirley, they sold a Reo recipe book.

Koehler: I've got one of those.

IA: Oh, you do?

IB: Have you?

IA: Oh, I'd love to look at that.

Koehler: Want to look at it?

IA: Sure. Not right now, it's okay but at some point, which you could buy from Hilda Smith in the personnel department.

IB: Oh, from Hilda.

Koehler: Then you know Hilda?

IA: Sure, we went to visit Hilda.

Koehler: Isn't she a dear?

IB: Oh, she's a sweetie.

IA: And then here it says, this is what's interesting to me, that all Reo families, well, no, it said, the proceeds go to the Marian Eilick...

Koehler: Eilick...

IA: Eilick cancer so she...

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Koehler: She, she was a girl that worked in the factory payroll office and I replaced her. She died, well, she was ill for quite a long time before she passed away and so when I transferred in there, I took her job.

IA: Okay, and then they set up this fund?

Koehler: Um, hum.

IA: In her honor?

Koehler: Right. It was to help people that needed help, you know, with expenses and that sort of thing.

IA: For cancer?

Koehler: It'd pick out families that were needy, you know, and like Christmas time, they'd buy clothing and food, you know.

IB: What a nice way to honor her.

Koehler: Yes, right, it was great.

IA: So it wasn't just putting a recipe book together for the fun of it. There's was always a purpose.

Koehler: Oh, no, there was always a purpose, yes.

IA: Yes, to do some good for the people that were connected to the Reo.

IB: I notice a rifle club and a flying club. So much, gee, I almost wish we could roll the years back and I could go over there and work.

Koehler: Wouldn't that be great, though.

IB: It just seems like...

Koehler: There's a picture of...

IB: So much going on.

Koehler: Governor Williams, too.

IB: Soapy Williams.

IA: Look at, these little girls are cute with the saddle shoes. I even wore saddle shoes.

IB: Oh, I love saddle shoes.

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Koehler: My daughter did, too. Boy, she just thought they were super.

IA: Now, you were there for more than 25 years, really?

Koehler: Yes, really. I was there actually 28 years.

IA: 28 years. One of the questions that I always ask as a historian is interesting to me is what you thought were the big changes that took place while you were there.

Koehler: Well, some of 'em I didn't like.

IA: Well, I didn't ask you which ones you liked, just what you saw.

IB: We want to know those, too.

IA: Those are actually more interesting.

Koehler: The last two or three years I worked were not really the happy times because they were changing owners all the time and, you know, it just kept getting worse all the time, it seemed and it was hard for the employees that had been there for a long time to see this happening. You know, I mean, it was not the same and so I...

IB: A lot of tension?

Koehler: Yes. My first years were happier, you know, than the later years and so, and it was, you were uneasy because you didn't know from one day to the next what was going to happen. So, we had, you know, towards the end, it wasn't as comfortable as it had been.

IB: Towards the end, did a lot of the clubs and things kind of fall by the wayside?

Koehler: Yes, yes.

IA: The different activities that made the Reo a fun place to work.

Koehler: Right.

IB: We're speaking probably the last two or three years?

Koehler: Yes, that's when, I don't know if you heard his name or not but...

IA: Yeah, we heard Cappart's name.

Koehler: Cappart's name.

IB: Yeah, but we've heard Mildred's name.

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Koehler: Oh, yes, and Mildred. They were a pair.

IA: Before that period though, you know, the last few years before the beginning of the end, were there other kinds of things that were happening, changes in the people or the way the work was being done or the atmosphere of the place or...

Koehler: Yes. Mainly after White Motor took over, that's when it really started. I don't know if you were familiar with that.

IA: Sure.

Koehler: Yes, and that's when it really started and it was kind of difficult because we had to contact Cleveland all the time to get permission to do this or do that.

IB: That was the home office, then?

Koehler: Yes, ah huh.

IA: That was in the '60s, wasn't it, some time in the early '60s?

Koehler: Yes, ah huh. That's really when it started.

IB: So maybe the last 10 or 15, 10 years?

Koehler: Ten years I would say, maybe. Yeah, it wasn't the same.

IB: A lot of new people came in?

Koehler: Well, especially the last two or three years, it just seemed like they kept bringing in different department heads all the time and they didn't know anything about what they were doing, I mean, because they were...

IB: Oh, dear, from some place else?

Koehler: Yes, and they weren't familiar, you know, our work and it was, it was really hard on the department heads themselves, you know, the fellows that had been there for a long time. They had to take orders, you know, and even though they knew it was wrong, they still had to do it.

IB: Oh, gosh, that had to...

Koehler: So, yeah, it was, it was very difficult for some of the men that had been there a long time. It was really, not the best years.

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IA: Anything else about the change of this kind of atmosphere? I mean, did the fairs and the...

Koehler: We didn't have that anymore.

IA: Those kinds of things didn't...

Koehler: No. We did have the girl's club for quite a long time.

IA: Well, you could probably argue that the girl's club still meets, right?

Koehler: Ah, well, yes. You could say that because we do still meet.

IA: That's right.

IB: I think that's wonderful.

Koehler: Yes and I'm just proud of us because I think it's so nice, you know, that we can still get together and keep track of each other. Otherwise, you just lose contact with everyone and, you know, that's really nice and most of the people that are in it are very caring people, you know. Fern, especially is that kind of a person. She goes to visit some of the ladies that are in nursing homes, now, you know, and she's very good about it. So...

IB: Keeps that family feeling going and going, doesn't it?

Koehler: Yes, I always think it's just great, you know, that people take time to do that, in this busy age anyway.

IB: I suppose that the new people coming in with each succeeding change kind of frowned upon all these activities, maybe?

Koehler: Well, and they were so conscious, budget conscious.

IA: Oh, so they didn't see the worth in providing these things to the employees?

Koehler: No, no. They were very budget conscious and just, you know, it was entirely different.

IB: Did you stay on Lyons Avenue the whole time that you worked at the Reo?

Koehler: Lived on Lyons Avenue 50 years.

IB: You did? How far down from Mt. Hope, going south?

Koehler: Well, it's about the fourth block down.

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IB: Fourth block down.

Koehler: It's between Pacific and Edison, if you're familiar with that.

IB: Oh, yes, okay.

Koehler: And my daughter's living there now.

IB: Is that right, in the same house? Well, how wonderful.

Koehler: Yup, she's living there now and her daughter comes and visits with her baby so I guess you know it's still in the family.

IB: Golly, I think that's remarkable.

Koehler: Yeah. Well, it's kind a sad too because she just got a divorce last year and that part of it was unhappy but I was so thankful I still had the house and she had a place to go, you know, and she was happy, too.

IB: Oh, of course, she was and that was home, too, kind of.

Koehler: That's right.

IB: I'm trying to think what I need to ask. Up on the third floor, Mabel said that that was the floor with the military contracts and things were, were handled.

Koehler: Yes, yes, it was. Harry Elsenheimer used to be in charge of that. I don't know if you're familiar with his name.

IB: No, I'm not until just today.

Koehler: Well, Grace is his wife and she used to work with Mabel.

IB: Who is his wife?

Koehler: Grace.

IB: Oh, Grace, I'm sorry.

Koehler: Grace Elsenheimer and she used to work with Mabel in the accounting.

IB: Oh, okay.

Koehler: And she lives over in Stonegate Park. I don't know whether you would have any luck talking to her or not. She's kind of a busy lady.

IB: Well, it's just interesting even background.

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Koehler: Well, Harry was, handled that for a long time and different people worked on that. I think Ed Rankin worked on that part-time. He worked on export, too.

IA: Right, that's mostly what we talked to him about.

Koehler: But Ed was one of the good old standby people, too, you know, he was there for a long time. Very serious about his work. Very dedicated.

IB: It looks to me like everybody was at one time.

Koehler: Oh, yeah.

IB: Work, do the best you can and get ahead and they all seemed to be proud of the product and pride with being associated with Reo.

Koehler: Well, I, you know, I still feel bad every time I see an old Reo truck. I used to like to work through the plant and see them in operation.

IB: Oh, you had a chance to do that?

Koehler: Oh, I used to go, I used to go from the Washington Avenue office to the Baker Street office and I'd go through the plant and...

IB: Go through the plant. Did you have to have, any kind of a...

Koehler: You had to have, you had to have safety glasses.

IA: A pass?

IB: Safety glass but you didn't have to have a pass. You could just go through?

Koehler: Yeah, right.

IB: Just safety glasses. I noticed a thing in here, a little story about, would you, would you, and the first thing listed is would you wear your safety glasses if you knew it would save your sight.

Koehler: Yes, they were very strict about that. They were very strict about it.

IB: So they were conscious of...

Koehler: Oh, safety, oh yes.

IB: the employees' health and welfare.

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Koehler: Oh, yes, and I don't know if you've interviewed Ardith Pappen. She used to be our nurse at

IB: Not yet, we're hoping to.

Koehler: Well, she's a good one to talk to also.

IB: About the first aid end of it.

Koehler: Yeah, she knows a lot of things about everybody in the plant, you know. She was acquainted with a good share of the men in the factory.

IB: That came in with a problem. I noticed a thing in here, U.S.-Soviet prices in hours of work and it lists the Soviet Union and the United States, how the workers at Reo, what they compared and what they could buy with an hour of their work with what the people in the Soviet could. That's interesting.

IA: Did everybody read these when they came out?

Koehler: Yes. They used to, all the employees used to get 'em.

IA: Get one?

Koehler: Um, hum, but these...

IA: See, I've read the ones from the early period that were called the Reo Spirit.

Koehler: I thought probably you have seen those.

IA: Those I've seen. These, the Items I haven't read yet.

IB: I've never seen these either. Did these come out of the Reo Spirit, I mean, was that stopped and these...

Koehler: Oh, yes. This was after the Reo Spirit.

IB: After that. These are so interesting. I wonder if we've got any of these...

Koehler: Yes, well, you know, you could take them and if you wanted to make copies of something, you know...

IA: No, I'm gonna check down at the MSU Archives and see if they have them there first.

Koehler: They might.

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IA: And if they don't, I'll give you a call and come back and look at 'em again.

IB: We may have these at the Museum, too. I want to, I guess I'd better jot that down.

IA: Yeah, I should write it down on my..... too.

IB: I want to see what they've got. We have an archives at the Museum, too, which we're constantly adding to.

IA: But they may have a full run there so if we like want to read them all, they have 'em.

Koehler: That would be great if you had the whole thing 'cause it does tell you a lot.

IA: Yes, they're very interesting.

Koehler: Oh, I've got to pay my, can you turn that off, I have to pay my...

IA: Sure. I'm not sure there's anything else that I need to...

IB: Maybe we should look through here. Maybe we'll come across, maybe we'll come across some other things that we might want to ask about or talk about.

Koehler: Yeah, I was just gonna mention that want to see that and I think those are more interior pictures.

IA: Oh, this is the women sewing.

IB: Let come over, oh, really? Let me come around that way.

IA: These are the kind of pictures I just love. Now, who did you say had....

IB:

IA: Yeah, sure. Who did you say had these, the original...

Koehler: Clare Olmslater.

IA: Clare?

Koehler: Um, hum. He's gone. He passed away but he had a good job there at Reo. I don't, I think he, I was trying to think what his title was.

IA: He's the one that gave you these photographs?

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Koehler: He gave them to Mr. Cataline.

IB: Was he maybe the general manager or something like that?

Koehler: I was just gonna say, I think general manager. Yeah, he had a good job there and ah...

IB: Oh, look at this. Look how clean and neat that was.

IA: Well, this would have been way back. These are very old pictures, yes.

IB:

Koehler: The thing that's interesting to me about this is that my dad used to take material from this department and made side curtains for touring cars.

IB: Oh, really. heavy. It looks like that leather

IA: Do you know where the negatives of these pictures are?

Koehler: No.

IA: You don't?

Koehler: No, because Mr. Cataline and I were talking about it and he said that he didn't know where Mr. Olmsager found these pictures but he had quite a few copies made and gave them to different people, you know.

IA: If sometime in the future, I want to come back and take pictures of these. Would that be okay with you?

Koehler: Oh, yes, yes.

IB: just a very few.

Koehler: I was just really thrilled when I first saw it. I thought, I thought it was just fantastic, you know.

IB:

IA: Yeah, these are real special pictures.

Koehler: Because I had never seen anything like it.

IB: Oh, my goodness. There's the little

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IA: I think these were all done in 1915. I think they were all a set. Somebody just went through the whole plant and took 'em all at once. Now look at this. These are very interesting. The woman who is sewing but look who is putting the seat assemblies together, men.

IB: Yeah, it looks like the springs and things.

Koehler:

IA: Right, the men are putting the seat assemblies together and the women did the sewing.

IB: Maybe that was more physical to stretch stuff.

Koehler: Yes, it was. Oh, these are so.....

IA: You know, they may want a copy of these also at the Museum.

IB: Oh, I'm sure they would. We don't have anything like this.

IA: We've got a few, you know,

Koehler: I just thought this was a wonderful collection.

IA: Oh, it really is. I've never seen anything like this for the Reo.

IB: Oh, look, everything.

IA: That's the other thing about these is that they're beautiful photographs.

Koehler: Yes, they are.

IB: You can even see the grain in the floor. You can see the sawdust.

IA: They're beautiful photographs.

IB:

Koehler: I've got a picture of my dad, while you're looking at that.

IA: You know, we could do this