

**Sandra Dragoo discusses her career at Diamond REO Trucks, Inc. 5/27/2004**

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Shirley Bradley: This is May 28. This is Shirley Bradley and Sandy Dragoo, and we're at the CATA offices, and we're just gonna chat about her memories of REO and maybe some of the folks that worked there. [0:14] And I'm just gonna start out by asking you just very quickly, uh, how you came to hire into REO, what you were doing before that?

Sandra Dragoo: I had stayed, had been staying home for about 10 years raising children, and we moved to Perry, and my husband was a minister, and so that was a new church that we had, and we had 2 churches out there, Perry and Shaftsburg. And I was itching to get back to work for a little bit, and I had bought a new piano, and so I decided if I worked about 3 or 4 days out of the month, I could pay the cost of my new piano. So we moved in just 2 months, and I went in to Lansing to go to Manpower to, to take a test to see, you know, I had been a trained secretary – and they said oh, gee, I mean you, you qualify for an executive secretary job, and we've got one this week that starts at Diamond REO. And I can sorta remember the lady saying to me but now this is an executive secretary one and you might not get – the next time you get called, you might not get paid as much as what this one is, so do you want it or do you want to not take a higher paid and, eh, now isn't that crazy? Why would I turn down the higher one? But I went through it and said no, I'll take it.

And so I was to go and work, uh, for 2 weeks for a, a secretary by the name of, uh, Velma Hildabridle, and she was 1 of the 9 executive secretaries and you're an executive secretary – well at that time, there would have been 8, and you were an executive secretary at Diamond REO if you worked directly as the secretary to one of the vice presidents. And we were the only nonunion women that worked there, and all the rest of the secretaries or clerks or women were in union, and so there was this little band of, of, uh, the few of us, and, and we were the confidential secretaries and all of that. So I had gone in to work in Velma's job, and she was – she – her job was as the secretary to the Vice President of Finance. His last name was Reid – R-E-I-D. Um, and so I was there for 2 weeks and – no it wasn't either. It wasn't, it wasn't the finance one. It was the, um, operations man, Operations Vice President. I can't even remember what his name is now. But I had gone, and I had been there 2 weeks, and about 2 or 3 days before my 2 weeks were up, they had come and said another one of the vice presidents is going on vacation, would you, would you go and work for that secretary, so I said sure.

So I was there a month, and I then got done with those 2 and then was home, and on the second day of being home I had come home from some place, and my husband said, "Diamond REO has called and wants you to come back. They've hired a new vice president, and they want you to work temporarily for him until they can hire a, a secretary." And this man's name was Bob

1 Long, L-O-N-G, and he had come from Bendix Corporation, and he was –  
2 they had, at that point – and this would have been, um, about in September of  
3 1971, and they were bringing him in to try to get the bid so that Diamond  
4 REO could make military trucks, so he was the Vice President of Military  
5 Trucks. And he came in, and he and I instantly fell in love with each other...  
6  
7 Shirley Bradley: [laughter]  
8  
9 ...and, um, he, he and his wife and his family are still such dear friends of  
10 mine. Uh, Bob is, is now close to 80, but still the same wonderful man that he  
11 was, and, um, and he and I really clicked, and so then it became time that he  
12 was to hire somebody, and he kept saying, “Sandy, you gotta...” He always  
13 called me San.  
14  
15 Shirley Bradley: [chuckle]  
16  
17 And he said, “San, you gotta stay with me,” and I said, “Oh, Bob, you know, I  
18 got 3 kids. I got 2 churches. I can’t. I can only...” Well, he kept at me, and I  
19 had said, “O-, okay.” We made the decision that I would. And so then they  
20 tried to hire me, and personnel would not hire me because when they sent me  
21 for a physical, uh, the doctor had said, “Do you have any back problems?”  
22 And I said, “Well, yeah, a little” and, uh, learned one of those times when you  
23 should kept your mouth shut.  
24  
25 Shirley Bradley: Hm.  
26  
27 Sandra Dragoo: So then they said, “Well, you’ll have to, you’ll have to have a back x-ray,” and  
28 so they took a back x-ray and said, “No. She can’t be hired.” So Bob kept  
29 saying, “Well then, hire her as a handicapper. Nope. They wouldn’t hire me as  
30 a handicapper. They just kept saying, “You’re gonna have to go find another  
31 one.” And Bob was determined that I was gonna stay, and so it – this went on  
32 for – well, hard to remember now but probably a couple of weeks or so, and  
33 all of the sudden it came through, you’re hired.  
34  
35 Shirley Bradley: [chuckle]  
36  
37 I said, “Oh. Well, okay.” Cause I knew Bob had been pestering ‘em. And, um,  
38 so then I worked for Bob, and we’re up – was upstairs. Our offices were  
39 upstairs in the Diamond REO plant.  
40  
41 Shirley Bradley: [5:51] In the plant? Not in the, uh, administration building?  
42  
43 Sandra Dragoo: No. In the administrative offices.  
44  
45 Shirley Bradley: Oh, okay.  
46

1 Sandra Dragoo: Yeah.  
2  
3 Shirley Bradley: Okay.  
4  
5 Sandra Dragoo: You always had to walk through around all of the buildings to get out to the  
6 plant. I never went to the plant that much. I mean, some people talk about  
7 well, the – that’s where their area was or their job got’m out there a lot.  
8  
9 Shirley Bradley: Mm-hm.  
10  
11 Sandra Dragoo: When we did win the military truck bid, um, I can remember on doing the  
12 military truck bid, uh, and this was something that Bob was very used to  
13 because of Bendix and Bendix having all this background, and that’s what  
14 they wanted Bob’s background for. And so Bob would always take 1 copy of  
15 the bid, and when I had to type up the bid, it was just so confidential, and the,  
16 the, uh, there was a period of time, uh, where there was a weekend, and they  
17 had rented several rooms at the Harley, which I’m not sure what the Harley  
18 was called, the, the hotel over here at Jolly and Dunckel, and, um, and they  
19 had these guys and they worked the entire weekend. They were people from  
20 Bendix that Bob had known, and they were putting together all the costs of  
21 what it would be for REO to go back into the military truck business, and so it  
22 was – Bob would say it’s the same theory as what you do anything, and so  
23 they had wanted me to come in to type up some of these things as they were  
24 working on the weekend. For me with this farm background of, you know, not  
25 going to this beautiful hotel, you know, I look at the hotel now and I think I  
26 thought that was so beautiful...  
27  
28 Shirley Bradley: [laughter]  
29  
30 ...in 1972 and, uh, and was there and, and I can remember that Bob had said,  
31 “Well, call Dave and your kids.” And they came in and swam in the pool, and  
32 they were so excited that they got to come to this pool. But then when I typed  
33 the actual bid, the day that it was supposed to be in and it had to be opened in  
34 Detroit, Bob took one of the bids, uh, and, and they took the, the, um, ribbon  
35 out of my typewriter so that no one could go back. I mean everything that we  
36 did was just so precise and that they took the ribbon out so that nobody could  
37 take the ribbon and find out what the, what the bid was, and so Bob knew all  
38 of these precautions that had to be taken. And then he took 1 copy and drove  
39 in a car to do it, and then somebody else had left like 3 hours earlier to take  
40 another copy so that if somebody stopped you or did all of these, uh, sabotage  
41 things, the bid would actually get to where, where it was. And so it was, again,  
42 such a new experience for me with all these little cloak-and-daggers kinda  
43 thing. And, uh, so they did win the bid, and that was the beginning then of, of  
44 Diamond REO making the military trucks.  
45  
46 Shirley Bradley: [8:35 ] And what – and this would have been what year?

1  
2 Sandra Dragoo: Oh, this would have been, um, it would have been the fall of '71 that I went to  
3 work when they brought Bob in, and it was – so it was a few months a-, but  
4 not, not too long. I would say the spring of '72...  
5  
6 Shirley Bradley: Hm. Okay.  
7  
8 Sandra Dragoo: ...would probably have been about it because, I mean, he – it was such a rush  
9 to get him in to get that bid done to see whether they could get that piece of  
10 business. So then they were making military trucks again, and it made a big  
11 shot in the arm then for REO.  
12  
13 Shirley Bradley: Oh, yes.  
14  
15 Sandra Dragoo: And, uh, and at the same time that, that Bob was there, um, there was the  
16 gentleman that was the head of manufacturing by the name of Clare  
17 Loudenslager, and Clare's whole theme forever had been the – the bottom line  
18 was get the truck off the line. The truck, any truck had to be, had to be off the  
19 line in order to get it to the dealer, in order to get it to the customer, in order to  
20 get the money back in so you could make another truck. So it was – Clare  
21 was, um, a no nonsense get the truck off the line, and if not, you're gonna  
22 answer to me, Clare Loudenslager, very rough and tough, a very different,  
23 different kind of, of person than Bob Long was.  
24  
25 Shirley Bradley: Hm.  
26  
27 Sandra Dragoo: Bob was very gentle, um, just [stuttering] – Bob was like my father, like what  
28 I'd grown up with, and then Clare was this one that was so rough, and, and I  
29 can remember only seeing him once at REO, and, and I sorta – you, you  
30 learned that you move over to the side of the hall. You didn't want him to see  
31 you doing something that maybe you weren't supposed to be there or  
32 whatever. I mean, it was just fear of Clare. And that's all I really knew of  
33 Clare there. It was, it was, uh – he was the boss of one of the other executive  
34 secretaries. Um, and so Carolyn and I were friends, but we, we never really  
35 talked about Clare or anything else. I mean, what, what reputation, if anyone  
36 at REO and in any of your other stories you will hear the name of Clare more  
37 than any other names that there was.  
38  
39 Shirley Bradley: [Okay 10:54 ].  
40  
41 Sandra Dragoo: He had been there so many years, and all of the plant people then indirectly or  
42 directly reported up through to Clare. And so it was the thing of get the truck  
43 off the line, and, um, there's a, there's a story that, that always that I chuckle  
44 about with Clare, um, because and then I'll tell you how I got to being with  
45 Clare and knowing him probably as well as anybody in this world, and, um, a,  
46 friend of mine who still have conne-, who I still have connections with, and

1 she was an expeditor, and an expeditor at, at REO was the one who was  
2 supposed to do all the things to get the truck off the line. They were to keep all  
3 this contact with customer and, and expedite, and if something got slowed  
4 down or stopped, the expeditor was to go in and get that truck moving again.  
5  
6 Shirley Bradley: Mm-hm.  
7  
8 Sandra Dragoo: And she was fairly new in the job, and she had been told there was this  
9 problem on a truck, and so she had called one of the guys out in the plant and  
10 said, you know, "Where is this truck? What's happened with this truck?" And  
11 they guy had said, "It's stuck in an elevator". She was very new, so she said  
12 okay. So she talked to the customer, and she said, "Well, I'll keep working on  
13 it, but the truck is stuck in an elevator." Well, the customer called Clare, and  
14 to Clare it was like who is this stupid person? Who would ever tell the  
15 customer that the – there was no elevator. I mean, it was like where did this  
16 thing come from. So he stormed out, found what the problem was with the  
17 truck and everything and then called this friend of mine into the thing. Her  
18 name is [Marti Toomey 12:42], and, um, and he called her into his office, and  
19 it was just reaming her out for this, and it made her mad to think that this is  
20 what had happened and that she was being truthful; she thought that the guy  
21 was telling her, you know, it's my job to be the expeditor, and I asked the  
22 question, and that's what he told me, and I told the customer. I did it, what I  
23 was supposed to do...  
24  
25 Shirley Bradley: Sure.  
26  
27 Sandra Dragoo: ...and I don't appreciate getting' chewed out, and I guess Clare looked at her  
28 and said, "You are right," and he called the guy up and chewed him within an  
29 inch of his life, and that story just went...  
30  
31 Shirley Bradley: Oh, [inaudible 13:27].  
32  
33 Sandra Dragoo: ...on. Yeah. Because this was Clare. One of the other stories of Clare, um, we  
34 had a guy named Jim Cox who Jim Cox's dad and Clare had been friends for  
35 30 years, and so there were these boys, Cox boys, and, uh, 2 of 'em had came  
36 to work here at CATA in the garage.  
37  
38 Shirley Bradley: Hm.  
39  
40 Sandra Dragoo: And Jim had told this story, and, and I still use it. I still use it to this day. One  
41 of these were you kind of go this is who Clare was and this is how CATA got  
42 the [bearing 14:02] and how CATA got to be who we are in this town, was  
43 this drive [slapping] of Clare's that said you will, you will do what you're  
44 supposed to do or I'll kick you harder if you don't do it. It was fear  
45 motivation. It's how Clare did. But he then had this soft side, but he'd never  
46 let outsiders see the soft side.

1  
2Shirley Bradley: Hm.  
3  
4Sandra Dragoo: But there was a soft side to Clare.  
5  
6Shirley Bradley: [14:23] Really?  
7  
8Sandra Dragoo: And so then I got to, to – I was one of the fortunate ones that saw both sides. I  
9 mean, I – but anyway, uh, Jim tells this story about the, the – he was a  
10 supervisor at REO at the time, and they were to come in on Saturday, and  
11 what men had to do if they worked for Clare is that they had to wear shirt and  
12 a tie. If they were in management, you wore a shirt and a tie. I never saw  
13 Clare in my 11 years of working for Clare, I never saw Clare in a short-  
14 sleeved shirt other than if he was going to the golf court. Every other time he  
15 would walk in and it was always a long-sleeved, cuffed shirt and a suit. Never  
16 saw him in a sport coat. That was just the way business people were to dress.  
17 Clearly, how I have done that very same thing here. I mean, it was, it was my,  
18 um, it was a value of mine too, but from the man’s side, that was Clare.  
19  
20Shirley Bradley: Hm.  
21  
22Sandra Dragoo: And so they would always have shirts and ties. Well, Jim hated – Jim has like  
23 a 19-20 sized neck and...  
24  
25Shirley Bradley: [chuckle]  
26  
27Sandra Dragoo: ...he hates wearing ties and all this, so he thought man, they – they always  
28 called Clare the old man, and it was not done as a negative term. It was like  
29 the old man will get ya for that or don’t let the old man see you or whatever.  
30  
31Shirley Bradley: Sure.  
32  
33Sandra Dragoo: And, so, Jim had not worn a tie that day. The old man walked in because the  
34 old man was known to do that. I mean, you never knew when he was gonna be  
35 anywhere and, so, Clare walked over to him and went like this and said, “Do  
36 you work for me?” And Jim said, “Yes, sir,” and he said, “Well, without a tie  
37 on, you don’t work for me today,” so he said, “You’re giving up your wages  
38 for the day. Next time you’ll put a tie on won’t ya?” And Jim said, “Man,  
39 alive.” That’s all it took, but he said, “I worked for nothing that whole day.”  
40 He said, “Clare went took and the day’s pay away from me,” and said, “and it  
41 was time and a half pay.” And he said, “I had 4 kids, but it was time and a half  
42 pay.” But he said, “Clare said,” and he said, “I knew I was supposed to have a  
43 tie on.” Those kinds of things would happen, and the guys would never gripe  
44 about it because it was the old man had made it very clear you do it. If you  
45 don’t do it, there are consequences. And Clare always followed through on the  
46 consequences. He’d never say, “Well, okay,” you know and have a little

1 touchy feely. It was like [slapping] you didn't do it; here it is; don't you ever  
2 do it again. And then it was done. Part of the same philosophy that I do today.  
3 I mean, just – there's a bottom line. I do all the hugs in the meantime that  
4 Clare never did.  
5  
6 Shirley Bradley: [chuckle]  
7  
8 Sandra Dragoo: But, um, but anyway, I have that. So, oh boy, talk about rambling. Um...  
9  
10 Shirley Bradley: [17:11] Do you know – could I ask you Jim's last name?  
11  
12 Sandra Dragoo: [coughing] Cox, C-O-X.  
13  
14 Shirley Bradley: Oh, got it. Okay. And, yes, you did...  
15  
16 Sandra Dragoo: Yep.  
17  
18 Shirley Bradley: ...say that earlier.  
19  
20 Sandra Dragoo: Yep.  
21  
22 Shirley Bradley: Thank you.  
23  
24 Sandra Dragoo: And, uh, I could give you a phone number for Jim, and Jim, Jim would have  
25 so many stories of REO because he was...  
26  
27 Shirley Bradley: Oh, okay.  
28  
29 Sandra Dragoo: ...a supervisor. He would, he would have been a personal friend of Clare. He,  
30 um, he – Jim then married Clare's secretary...  
31  
32 Shirley Bradley: Oh.  
33  
34 Sandra Dragoo: ...and they live in Portland now but come in to town all the time. And, uh, so  
35 Jim and Sue would be great ones because they – Sue would have all of the  
36 secretary stories...  
37  
38 Shirley Bradley: Sure.  
39  
40 Sandra Dragoo: ...of Clare at REO, and Jim would have the stories they – they have their –  
41 their son is named Robert Clare...  
42  
43 Shirley Bradley: Hm.  
44  
45 Sandra Dragoo: ...spelled C-L-A-R-E for Clare. So there's a strong connection between the  
46 Cox's and the Loudenslager's.

1  
2Shirley Bradley: It sounds like it. [18:08] It sounds like he was the general that everybody  
3 loved but...  
4  
5Sandra Dragoo: Oh, absolutely.  
6  
7Shirley Bradley: ...did [inaudible 18:13]...  
8  
9Sandra Dragoo: The same [inaudible 18:14].  
10  
11Shirley Bradley: ...because they knew he was right.  
12  
13Sandra Dragoo: The same as what you'd get with our very high seniority people that would  
14 remember Clare.  
15  
16Shirley Bradley: Hm.  
17  
18Sandra Dragoo: I mean, we sit around and laugh and tell all the old Clare stories, and then I'll  
19 go so that's the other side to that story. I had known this side all this time, you  
20 know?  
21  
22Shirley Bradley: [laughter]  
23  
24Sandra Dragoo: And, um, they would love to get him playing cards or telling something that  
25 they knew he wouldn't like, and then Clare would come storming back. Now,  
26 Sandy, you go take care of that! And then I'd say, "Clare, no, you, eh, you  
27 can't take care of it." You know, I was – it would be an extra board rotation  
28 issue, and if you were the next one up to get a piece of work, then you might  
29 get an 8-hour piece of work. Well, Clare might not want Joe Blow to get an  
30 extra 8 hours. He wanted Jimmy Smith over here to get – well, Clare, it  
31 doesn't matter. I mean, we got a union contract and first up, first out. I don't  
32 want to hear how the board works! I want you to go fix it! Clare, I cannot go  
33 fix that. And then I'd go down the hall, and then the, the, the guys down there  
34 would be laughing, and they'd say, "I betcha Clare came and said you were  
35 supposed to change the board, weren't ya?" And I'd say, "You guys, I'm  
36 gonna kill ya all."  
37  
38Shirley Bradley: [laughter]  
39  
40Sandra Dragoo: So to this day, we have lots of those stor-...  
41  
42Shirley Bradley: Oh.  
43  
44Sandra Dragoo: Remember when Clare did this or re-...  
45  
46Shirley Bradley: Oh, you must have fun.



1  
2 Sandra Dragoo: ...remember when Clare did that?  
3  
4 Shirley Bradley: [laughter]  
5  
6 Sandra Dragoo: I can never get together with the retirees and, uh, and not have that. We had  
7 Clare's son-in-law. Uh, we had 2 of Clare's son-in-laws that worked here and  
8 a daughter that worked here.  
9  
10 Shirley Bradley: [19:45] Here at CATA?  
11  
12 Sandra Dragoo: Here at CATA. Yeah. Because we picked, we picked the people as Diamond  
13 REO was closing.  
14  
15 Shirley Bradley: Oh.  
16  
17 Sandra Dragoo: We picked the people...  
18  
19 Shirley Bradley: That's what I wanted to know.  
20  
21 Sandra Dragoo: ...that were the best workers, and between who Clare knew, between who  
22 Stan Wright who had worked at REO for 35 years and Clare had come to  
23 work for, for Clare maybe a month before I did, and so Stan and I were  
24 buddies, uh, buddies forever. I mean, Stan was older than my father, so he was  
25 another one of these fa-, father figures.  
26  
27 Shirley Bradley: Mm-hm.  
28  
29 Sandra Dragoo: And so sometimes between Stan and Clare, they'd get something going of –  
30 something that they didn't like, and then it was like Sandy, go fix that.  
31  
32 Shirley Bradley: [chuckle]  
33  
34 Sandra Dragoo: I'd say, "You guys can't do it." But, um...  
35  
36 Shirley Bradley: [20:36] [Inaudible 20:36] what an executive secretary is supposed to do, huh?  
37  
38 Sandra Dragoo: Right. Well, the executive secretary was something that – in Clare's mind,  
39 titles didn't mean a thing to Clare. He didn't care what anybody was called. It  
40 was a matter of you did what there was to do, and you became a master of all  
41 things, and the more you did, the more he gave you and the more power he  
42 would give you...  
43  
44 Shirley Bradley: Yeah.  
45

1 Sandra Dragoo: ...but first you had to earn the trust, and you j-, if, if – all of us would say if  
2 you, if you had Clare’s trust and you misused it, then you could never get it  
3 back...  
4

5 Shirley Bradley: Oh.  
6

7 Sandra Dragoo: ...and it was very true. There was then always that hold back, and Clare  
8 would hold it back, and you never could regain it, and you knew that, and  
9 there were only a favored few of us that ever were able to, to, uh, to be able to  
10 be in that circle. Now, you had to take an awful lot in order to remain in that  
11 circle.  
12

13 Shirley Bradley: [21:47] [Mm-hm 21:47].  
14

15 Sandra Dragoo: You didn’t – you never got to let your guard down, and you never got to feel  
16 that you had earned it. You were always re-earning it.  
17

18 Shirley Bradley: Hm.  
19

20 Sandra Dragoo: You were always working hard because that’s what you had to do, and people  
21 would say to me, “Why do you do that?” Oh, because, you know, it’s like this  
22 is, this is what I’m – he’s not gonna wear me down. He’s not gonna do that.  
23 And I worked for him for the 11 years here. Um...  
24

25 Shirley Bradley: [22:16] You, you were there at REO for 11 years?  
26

27 Sandra Dragoo: No. I was at REO just for 2-1/2 but then worked for Clare here...  
28

29 Shirley Bradley: Oh.  
30

31 Sandra Dragoo: ...for 11 years.  
32

33 Shirley Bradley: [22:22] And when REO closed, he came here or shortly...  
34

35 Sandra Dragoo: Uh, no. He was let go from REO before they closed.  
36

37 Shirley Bradley: Oh, I see.  
38

39 Sandra Dragoo: He had been let go, I think 3 different times [inaudible 22:32].  
40

41 Shirley Bradley: [22:32] Really?  
42

43 Sandra Dragoo: And then, and then they hired him back. Uh, they’d bring somebody else in,  
44 and they never could get the truck off the line, and so then they’d rehire Clare  
45 back again under Clare’s terms...  
46

1 Shirley Bradley: Hm.  
2  
3 Sandra Dragoo: ...and then some new president or something would come in, not like the way  
4 Clare got it done, and then it would be – and I think it was 3 times. Now, that  
5 was before I was around. So that's a, that's a story that I'm not sure how many  
6 times, but I think that's accurate.  
7  
8 Shirley Bradley: [23:02] He musta got so he could clean his desk out in a hurry? [chuckle]  
9  
10 Sandra Dragoo: Well, it was he knew how to do his job...  
11  
12 Shirley Bradley: Mm-hm.  
13  
14 Sandra Dragoo: ...but with Clare, you also had to let him do his job in his way. Nobody could  
15 come in and make him be molded into any other thing other than who he was,  
16 and if you didn't like it, then either you had to go or he would leave the whole  
17 thing because he wasn't – he was, uh, he, he just wasn't gonna be molded for  
18 any reason.  
19  
20 Shirley Bradley: He sounds to me like the kind of person that every executive or every owner  
21 of a business would want...  
22  
23 Sandra Dragoo: Yes.  
24  
25 Shirley Bradley: ...because he's getting results.  
26  
27 Sandra Dragoo: If you – yes. If you could allow him to do things like the pulling on Jim Cox  
28 with no tie, now you get a, a president in who is a very soft kind of [inaudible  
29 24:00] and wants everybody to be happy and everybody to feel so good about  
30 their jobs and this is a real love [in 24:08], then you take Clare's style of  
31 management, and you couldn't tolerate it because then you'd hear, "What do  
32 you mean you went and told that guy. You can't let him work and not get his  
33 pay...  
34  
35 Shirley Bradley: Mm-hm.  
36  
37 Sandra Dragoo: ...why that's gonna be against some law way out here." Clare would say,  
38 "The hell with it. I don't care. I told they guy he's not getting' paid. That guy  
39 will not get paid." And Clare would have laid down for the thing saying, "You  
40 will not undercut me." And Clare would never allow anybody to then make it  
41 softer. It's you do it or else, and there were always or elses. And it, it was  
42 Clare. It's how he got the truck off the line. Customers could get to him. Um,  
43 the, the...  
44  
45 Shirley Bradley: [24:57] He was approachable?  
46

1 Sandra Dragoo: Oh, yeah. But you had to, you had to play it Clare's way, and, um, Clare,  
2 Clare had enough confidence in what he was doing that he just wouldn't back  
3 down for anybody, didn't need to. He didn't need to.  
4

5 Shirley Bradley: [25:23] Uh, it sounds to me like your time there was or what kept you on your  
6 toes constantly, it was the challenge every day, it sounds to me like...  
7

8 Sandra Dragoo: Oh, it was.  
9

10 Shirley Bradley: ...I, I'm hearing that it was a good thing.  
11

12 Sandra Dragoo: Clare, Clare and Bod did not like each other...  
13

14 Shirley Bradley: Hm.  
15

16 Sandra Dragoo: ...and their styles were very different, and so as Bob was wanting these  
17 military trucks, the military trucks had to be merged in with commercial  
18 trucks.  
19

20 Shirley Bradley: I see.  
21

22 Sandra Dragoo: I mean, you had to sell these, and you had to sell these, and so it made a huge  
23 drop into manufacturing, and so then as Bob and Clare would sort of go at  
24 why aren't these trucks over here getting done, well it was then Clare was  
25 saying, "Well, you know, this commercial truck is going. I got this to be  
26 done." So they never really liked each other, and, um, because their styles in  
27 management totally, totally different, and, um – so anyway, after, after things  
28 happened at, at, uh, at REO and they, they terminated, uh, Clare and then they  
29 terminated Bob Long, uh, it was when Cappaert came in as President in a, in a  
30 period of time then when, when Cappaert had come in, followed Jack Adams  
31 who had been president, and Cappaert brought in a, [knocking] um, a person  
32 that was seen as the hatchet person. Um, her name was Mildred Johnson, and,  
33 um, and she was the hatchet person for Cappaert.  
34

35 It's when they did all the negative things, uh, with the pension, that the guys  
36 who had put their lives into REO, lost pensions because of what Cappaert had  
37 done. They wanted the place to close, and that was part of – I will always  
38 believe it was part of what they had planned, that they were gonna take those  
39 funds and put'm in other of Cappaert businesses, and so when you'd talk to  
40 any of the, the older people that their lives had, had totally been REO and then  
41 to have someone come in and take their pensions, um, as I have been here  
42 now for 30 years and I know what pensions mean to people, um, and know  
43 what these real people that came to work for us then, and they were starting all  
44 over with not being able to have a pension from REO and then be able to build  
45 a pension from CATA. CATA pension was all they have. And, so, it was such  
46 a sad time...

1  
2 Shirley Bradley: Hm.  
3  
4 Sandra Dragoo: ...because then...  
5  
6 Shirley Bradley: [Inaudible 28:06].  
7  
8 Sandra Dragoo: ...people were just being let go and let go and let go and, and, um, they let  
9 Stan Wright. Stan Wright had been there like 37 years or something, and, um,  
10 and it was just a very hurtful time. It was sorta like you didn't know who was  
11 gonna get shot next.  
12  
13 Shirley Bradley: Hm. Hm. Mm-hm.  
14  
15 Sandra Dragoo: And then they did the same thing with me after they had had me stay for quite  
16 a long time after Bob had been fired. Then there just wasn't any other place to  
17 go. Then they put me in with, with, uh, uh, another vice president that had  
18 been, uh, an outside guy. His name was Duff, D-U-F-F, and, and he was such  
19 a negative thing for REO...  
20  
21 Shirley Bradley: [28:49] Oh, really?  
22  
23 Sandra Dragoo: ...and, uh...  
24  
25 Shirley Bradley: Hm.  
26  
27 Sandra Dragoo: So negative. He was brought in from the outside to kill that part of it, and, uh,  
28 yeah, he...  
29  
30 Shirley Bradley: [28:57] He was brought in on purpose [inaudible 28:58]?  
31  
32 Sandra Dragoo: Yeah. He effectively did it by – I think he's probably, probably one of the  
33 very few people in my life if I ever saw in an afterlife that I would turn the  
34 other way.  
35  
36 Shirley Bradley: [laughter]  
37  
38 Sandra Dragoo: [chuckle] I, uh, there are a few, and he would be one of 'em.  
39  
40 Shirley Bradley: [chuckle]  
41  
42 Sandra Dragoo: But then it was after I left REO then that, uh, and this was in January of '74...  
43  
44 Shirley Bradley: Thank you.  
45

1 Sandra Dragoo: ...and then I got a call from Clare at this place named CATA that was a bus  
2 company...  
3  
4 Shirley Bradley: [laughter]  
5  
6 Sandra Dragoo: ...in Lansing, and he wanted me to come to work for him as his, as his, his  
7 executive secretary, and I thought to myself that guy is smokin' dope.  
8  
9 Shirley Bradley: [laughter]  
10  
11 Sandra Dragoo: I wouldn't any more go to work for Clare Loudenslager than I would go and  
12 jump off a mountain. I mean, I remember how scared I was of him. But I  
13 didn't – I couldn't not go in and talk to him and tell him face, that no, Clare, I  
14 mean this would never work. And, uh, and had the interview, and he said I  
15 don't need an interview. I go, yeah, I do. I need to come in.  
16  
17 Shirley Bradley: Ah.  
18  
19 Sandra Dragoo: So I came in. It was in our old building downtown. Uh, newspapers up at the  
20 window, rats. We were in this condemned city house. [tapping] Um, the  
21 garage was where REO's museum is now.  
22  
23 Shirley Bradley: Yes.  
24  
25 Sandra Dragoo: All torn – I mean it was in such shambles. The garage would flood. We were  
26 in the flood plain. Oh, we just – I mean, it was a terrible place. And the more  
27 he talked about what he wanted in a secretary, I thought man. I mean, that's  
28 what, that's what I love. That's, that's what I'm gonna be forever. I'm – I don't  
29 wanta be anything other than a secretary, and, uh, and so he'd been asking me  
30 all these questions and, and, uh, and, so, then his question was, "And, so, now  
31 what is it that your husband does?" And I looked at him, and it was sort of like  
32 a defining moment. We'd chuck about it sometimes afterwards, and, and, uh,  
33 and I looked at him, and I said, "Clare" 'cause you never called him Mr.  
34 Loudenslager.  
35  
36 Shirley Bradley: [31:03] Oh, really?  
37  
38 Sandra Dragoo: You'd meet him the first time, and he'd say, "My name's Clare." And he was  
39 Clare to everybody. No one ever called him Mr. Loudenslager. I've never  
40 heard a person who knew him that would call him anything but Clare.  
41  
42 Shirley Bradley: Hm.  
43  
44 Sandra Dragoo: And, uh, and I said, "Clare, you can't tell me that you were ready to hire to me  
45 without even talking to me and that you had talked to as many people as you  
46 say you've talked to about me and not know my husband is a preacher." And

1 he looked at me, and he said, "Will he try to save my soul?" And I said, "No."  
2 He said, "Alright. I don't care whether he's a goddamned preacher or not."  
3  
4 Shirley Bradley: [chuckle]  
5  
6 Sandra Dragoo: Okay. And I said, "Well, let's try it for 30 days because," I said, "I don't think  
7 your personality and my personality are gonna really match. Let's try it for 30  
8 days, and each of us can walk away, and we'll be friends." Alright. And, uh...  
9  
10 Shirley Bradley: [chuckle]  
11  
12 Sandra Dragoo: ...uh, one of the things that the other boss, this Duff, when I went to work for  
13 him, and he, eh, and when they were gonna transfer me over to him and the  
14 first time I met him, and he said, "A few simple rules that I have." I said,  
15 "Okay. What are they?" He said, "I want 12 pencils sharpened and on my  
16 desk every morning. I don't want 11 pencils. I don't want 13 pencils. I want  
17 12 pencils sharpened on my desk. Do you think you can handle it?" Yes, sir, I  
18 think I can handle that. And that was about all you had to do for him. He'd go  
19 in and shut the door.  
20  
21 And the reason that – I was told by personnel when they finally would tell me  
22 why they let me go is – and the personnel guy should never have told me this  
23 but he did, and he had said, "Mr. Duff said that you have a bad habit of  
24 treating salesmen as if they are real people and he doesn't like that." And I  
25 looked at the personnel guy, tears running down my face and I said, "And that  
26 is exactly why it was never gonna work." I said, "I have been on a 2-week  
27 Christmas vacation," and I said, "This is my first day," and I said, "I was  
28 coming in today to resign because I can't work for someone like him." And I  
29 said, "He beat me to it." He was in early, and he never came in before 10:00  
30 or so, and I had thought gee, maybe he really missed me in these 2 weeks. He  
31 was talking to me about how was vacation and how are the kids. First time  
32 he'd ever talked to me. I thought my goodness. He said, "Well, this is what  
33 we're gonna do. You – what are you?" Yeah.  
34  
35 Shirley Bradley: [33:54] Really?  
36  
37 Sandra Dragoo: Another, another one of the reasons of why for me and, and now having been  
38 the Director of CATA for almost 20 years is that when I've had to terminate  
39 someone, it has always been with so much background of letting the person  
40 know what behavior they had to change or what the rules were, and I can so  
41 honestly say and I've had to terminate many that I could look'm in the eye and  
42 say you knew what you were doing and you would try to change this behavior  
43 and it isn't [doing 34:20]. But it was such a heartbreaking thing to have that be  
44 it. So...  
45  
46 Shirley Bradley: [Inaudible 34:38].

1  
2 Sandra Dragoo: ...[inaudible 34:38] Clare and I that we're, that we're sort of where the same  
3 thing was happening to us from REO, and, uh, I never told that story about  
4 REO for so many years. It was so hurtful to me and I just – I mean, people  
5 now don't even know that that's the reason.  
6  
7 Shirley Bradley: Hm.  
8  
9 Sandra Dragoo: I mean, only, only a few people know that. But, uh, but anyway, it was, it was  
10 that, that whole part of some of those negative things that happened at the end  
11 that, that made it all so undesirable and so negative...  
12  
13 Shirley Bradley: Yeah.  
14  
15 Sandra Dragoo: ...and, uh, and, and all of that, but, but the interesting thing, I want to go back  
16 to that original story that I was telling you, when I was talking about getting  
17 hired at REO?  
18  
19 Shirley Bradley: Mm-hm.  
20  
21 Sandra Dragoo: And my office used to be right across the hall here and this was Clare's office.  
22 He had come in, and he always jingled change in his pockets, and he'd put his  
23 hands in his pockets, and we'd always laugh that we could always tell when  
24 the old man was coming because you could hear his, his change. He would –  
25 he'd put his hands in there, move the – move that change, and we'd think, eh,  
26 the old man's coming, the old man's coming. He'd come in and he'd walk  
27 around behind me and, and look out the window. There were dogs, the darn  
28 dogs are still out there too.  
29  
30 Shirley Bradley: [chuckle]  
31  
32 Sandra Dragoo: And because here he always saw that he didn't get to see houses and, and real  
33 things happening in the street and all this. He'd walk over in my office, and,  
34 uh, and we got to talking about something. I don't even remember what we  
35 were talking about. And he made a passing comment, and he had said, "Well,  
36 the second time I hired you." He went on, and I said, "Wait a minute. What'd  
37 you just say?" And she said, "Well, it's pretty bad when I have to hire you 2  
38 times." I said, "You never hired me 2 times." I said, "I came to work for you."  
39 I mean, I knew that that's what had happened. He said, "How do you think  
40 you ever got that job at REO?" And I said, "Well, personnel said that I'd got  
41 hired." "How do you think that happened? You didn't think it happened  
42 because of your boss, that wimp?" And I said, "Well, yeah." I said, "I know  
43 how much he worked with them." He said, "He coulda never made that  
44 happen." He said, "I'd heard the story about here was this secretary that knew  
45 what she was doing, but that the stupid personnel department wouldn't hire  
46 you," so he said, "I picked up the phone." He said, "Carol told me."



1  
2 The friendship with Carol – I mean, w-, it's another one of those of when you  
3 go back to one thing building on another, building on another and how my life  
4 w-, could've been so terribly different if this wouldn't have happened and this  
5 wouldn't have happened, and he said, "Carol was telling me." He said, "I  
6 checked it out." And he said, "Yeah, just because you got this bad back," and,  
7 uh, and he said, "So I just told 'em make it happen." And I said, "You're  
8 kidding me, Clare?" "No, by God, I'm not kidding you."  
9

10Shirley Bradley: [laughter]  
11

12Sandra Dragoo: I never, you know, there wasn't anybody left in personnel. It didn't m-, I  
13 mean, he had told me that, so that must have been what happened. But all  
14 those pieces then, it kinda went...  
15

16Shirley Bradley: [Inaudible 37:55].  
17

18Sandra Dragoo: ...so that's how that happened. But again, see, it was the difference of Bob  
19 tried to do it the right way. Clare's saying, "This is stupid. They're not gonna  
20 do it until you say do it," and you had to have enough power...  
21

22Shirley Bradley: Oh.  
23

24Sandra Dragoo: ...to do it, and so Clare would use his power if he felt it was the right thing to  
25 do, and he wasn't gonna be debated with or he wasn't going to do any of these  
26 other things that somebody else might do. If it felt right to him, he'd just do it.  
27 That was it. Don't want to hear any more about it. I tried to thank him. No, I  
28 don't want any thanks.  
29

30Shirley Bradley: [laughter]  
31

32Sandra Dragoo: And one of the other stories of Clare that as the history of Clare and, and as I  
33 said earlier, I probably know and have a closer relationship with Clare than  
34 probably anyone.  
35

36Shirley Bradley: Sounds like it.  
37

38Sandra Dragoo: Um, well 2 stories. At his funeral – he, he died of a heart attack on 4<sup>th</sup> of July  
39 1985...  
40

41Shirley Bradley: Hm.  
42

43Sandra Dragoo: ...and his family had called my husband to see if he would do the funeral, and  
44 again this one of those – and Clare very much respected Dave and, uh,  
45 because it was [inaudible 39:14] Dave didn't try to save his soul, and, uh, and  
46 Dave did his service. I thought I don't know how he's gonna do this service

1 because it, it was one – well, how was anybody ever gonna do a service with  
2 Clare when you had so many people with so many different experiences and  
3 stories and harshness and – but you had here would be the Clare who would  
4 go out on 10 limbs to save ya, but if ya lied to him, [slapping] you were done.  
5 I mean, you, you, you just knew all of those things about him.  
6  
7 And so I kept thinking how's this gonna be, and, uh, and so Dave started out  
8 by saying, "Many of you people don't know me. You know my wife and, uh,  
9 and I'm Sandy's husband, and I'm gonna – may base, base my, uh, base my  
10 sermon on the 2 faces of Clare," and, and he said, "Some of you only know  
11 the 1 face. Most of you here know the other face – the harsh face," but he said,  
12 "Through Sandy, I had the privilege of knowing both sides of it," and, and he  
13 said, "That's what we're gonna talk about." And, uh, and the quote, uh, that  
14 Dave used, that he molded the whole story around was that Clare was a person  
15 who could use the church hymn of "Just As I Am," and it was so true and that  
16 Clare would take no excuses of himself or would make no apologies for  
17 himself. It was always a matter of I am just who I am. And that phrase is on  
18 his tombstone.  
19  
20 Shirley Bradley: [41:19] Oh, it is?  
21  
22 Sandra Dragoo: Just as I am.  
23  
24 Shirley Bradley: Oh.  
25  
26 Sandra Dragoo: And he's buried over here on Mt. Hope, and, and that phrase so many people  
27 afterward said they could never have believed that Dave would be able to pick  
28 that up with Clare because Clare said, "If I stand up here and talk to you about  
29 Clare did nice things and he did this," he said, "you'd be saying, that's not the  
30 Clare I know. It would be the Clare of you don't have a tie on, no pay." But he  
31 said, "The reason you're here today is that for some reason you saw a spark of  
32 that other side of Clare or you wouldn't be here to pay honor to him." But, but,  
33 you know, that was one was, that one, that one was the Clare.  
34  
35 But one of the other things that Clare would always say if anybody ever tried  
36 to scare him or to beat him into submission or, or, um, or try to get him to not  
37 do something that he was gonna do, Clare would say and this was a phrase  
38 that he would always use, "I've been scared 29 times, and you can't scare me."  
39 I kept thinking 29 times. And you'd go to talk to him about it, he'd never tell  
40 ya. He was never gonna tell you what those 29 times were. And he'd gone to  
41 Washington for a legislative meeting here at CATA, and he had wanted me to  
42 go to Washington with him because I was doing more and more of those  
43 things as, as he'd keep giving me more responsibility and all this...  
44  
45 Shirley Bradley: He knew you could handle it.  
46

1 Sandra Dragoo: [coughing] And he had said I wanta go to that Air and Space Museum  
2 [inaudible 43:06]. “You know how to get there?” I go, “Yeah. I can get ya  
3 there.” “Alright. I wanta go.” I said, “Okay.” So we went. We went up to the  
4 display of World War II. He said, “I wanta go to World War II.” Okay. And  
5 we looked on the thing, and we got up. Now, my dad was never in the service,  
6 so I didn’t grow up with a military person on my life. So many of the things  
7 that Clare would talk to me about, they’d be – and he’d get going on about –  
8 [background speaker] my grandkids do that every hour. There’s 3 seconds of  
9 my grandkids talking on that clock.  
10  
11 Shirley Bradley: [43:47] On your clock?  
12  
13 Sandra Dragoo: On that clock. Yeah...  
14  
15 Shirley Bradley: How...  
16  
17 Sandra Dragoo: ...it has their picture and...  
18  
19 Shirley Bradley: Oh, isn’t that wonderful?  
20  
21 Sandra Dragoo: Yeah. Yeah, um, when I got this, uh, this past year, I got, uh, the national  
22 general manager of the year for all over the country, and so they had a big  
23 celebration in Salt Lake City, and my kids all went, and they got me all these  
24 awards over here [inaudible 44:07], and that was one of the things that they  
25 got me. And, um...  
26  
27 Shirley Bradley: [Inaudible 44:13].  
28  
29 Sandra Dragoo: And so, uh, we were standing up there, and, and Clare was looking at all of  
30 these planes, and they were hanging from the ceilings and, and a, a plane of  
31 this and a plane of that. He’d always given me such a hard time because I  
32 didn’t know the difference between a B47 and a B52 and all of those. “How  
33 can you not know that?” “Well, you know, Clare, I, you know, I, I was born in  
34 ’40,” and “Well, yeah, but when you got to be an adult, you shoulda paid  
35 more attention to that. Don’t you know the...” “Yeah, Clare, I do and...” and  
36 so I was always on the edge of not knowing what he was talking about, and  
37 then he’d always put some little twist in, “Oh, yeah, you don’t know any of  
38 that.” “Yeah, right, Clare.”  
39  
40 So he was there, and he was showing me that’s a B something, and that’s a B  
41 something else, and all of the sudden he got really quiet, and he looked up,  
42 and he said, “See that plane right there?” and I said, “Yeah.” And he said,  
43 “Well, that’s a B something.” And he said, “See in the bottom of that plane,  
44 that little narrow place at the bottom that’s like this?” And he was at a point  
45 that it was like he was almost talking to himself and that I wasn’t there  
46 because it, it was such a – I mean, he just kept talking, and he said, “I crawled

1 into the belly of that plane 29 times and dropped bombs 29 times, and that's  
2 why nobody can ever scare me in that life." He said, "I got scared 29 times  
3 that I was never coming out of the belly of that plane," and h-, and you – and  
4 looking at it and it was such a small, you know, just a long [inaudible 45:58].  
5

6Shirley Bradley: Oh, it's just a narrow catwalk.  
7

8Sandra Dragoo: And he crawled in there and would drop the bombs, and he said, "Twenty-  
9 nine missions in that plane." It was such a moving thing to me.  
10

11Shirley Bradley: [46:16] You musta had tears?  
12

13Sandra Dragoo: Oh, I mean, I, I can remember it as if it were yesterday.  
14

15Shirley Bradley: Hm.  
16

17Sandra Dragoo: It's another piece of Clare that, see, the rest of the world never would have  
18 seen...  
19

20Shirley Bradley: Right.  
21

22Sandra Dragoo: ...because he would never share that. He would never say what happened to  
23 him in 29 times because that would be letting people in to his, to his inner  
24 being, and he kept the doors locked to that to the rest of the word. It would –  
25 the rest of the world would only hear the term "You can't scare me. Don't you  
26 dare try to scare me. Don't you dare try to use that with me. I'll get you more  
27 than what you can ever get me." And, and it was just Clare. It was you, you  
28 deal with him fairly. You deal with him right up front. You go behind Clare's  
29 back to do something, and he will turn around and he will find you behind his  
30 back...  
31

32Shirley Bradley: Hm.  
33

34Sandra Dragoo: ...because it was just – it, it's a little like when you hear someone now talk  
35 about street – they're street smart...  
36

37Shirley Bradley: Mm-hm.  
38

39Sandra Dragoo: ...Clare had had so many things in his life where he had got snookered, is  
40 probably the best term I could use. Um, told about when he was a kid would  
41 have to go and – and again these were stories that only I would ever hear  
42 about Clare, and something would bring up something as he would be walking  
43 into my office and, and standing there and looking out and, and, uh, he had to  
44 go – boys in those years – and see Clare was born in 1921, June 21, 1921, and  
45 it's when they got to be 10, 11, 12, they would go and stay with a farm family  
46 to earn money for shoes and clothes and such to wear to school...

1  
2Shirley Bradley: Mm-hm.  
3  
4Sandra Dragoo: ...the next year, and that's what they were to do. So to Clare, the way he saw  
5 it at least, and I don't whether it was true or not, but the way Clare saw it is  
6 some of these doggone farmers would cheat ya. And then he's always go into  
7 but, you know, that's not your dad because my dad was a farmer, and I'm  
8 brought up on a farm, and the farmer to me was upright and would never do  
9 anything like this, but Clare would always make it be now that's not your dad  
10 because I love your dad. But boy, in those days, those farmers would try – as  
11 it got later in the summer, you didn't get money until you got all done with the  
12 job, and as the summer went on, they kept turning the screws down to try to  
13 get you to be a baby and go home, and then they didn't have to pay you for all  
14 the work that they to. So he said, "By God, they weren't gonna do that to me,"  
15 but she said they'd keep trying and keep trying.  
16  
17 And then he told the story that he was told one day – the farmer was gonna be  
18 gone, and the farmer had told him to take that pile out there at the barnyard  
19 and that whole pile of rocks and stones and he wanted 'em put down at the  
20 other end of the barnyard, so Clare said I worked all day hauling these stones  
21 to the other end of the barnyard. He said, "And by God, I got it all done too,"  
22 and he said, "and you were never to ask why you did anything," but he said, "I  
23 just kept wondering what was the difference between if they were here or if  
24 they were there." And so he said, "When the farmer had gotten home, I had  
25 said to him, I got that job all done. Can you tell me why I did it? What are you  
26 gonna do with 'em down there?" And he said, the farmer had said, "I didn't  
27 have anything else for you to do and by God you weren't gonna sit here and  
28 not do anything. I only did it just to keep – make sure you were working all  
29 day." And so again to Clare, it was this – that was pure crap to him, that, that  
30 anybody would treat a kid that way. He always saw kids as being that you –  
31 he, he would love kids. He always had a coin that he'd give to a kid or see  
32 what Clare's got for you here or whatever...  
33  
34Shirley Bradley: Hm.  
35  
36Sandra Dragoo: ...because he saw – uh, and he, and Clare had 3 daughters, and those  
37 daughters were the apple of his eye. I mean those are my girls, and the oldest  
38 daughter, uh, is 6 months younger than I am, and she and I are still good  
39 friends, and then the middle daughter, uh, worked here, and she and I were  
40 friends, and then the younger daughter, um, never worked here, but her  
41 husband did, and his youngest daughter died of cancer 2 years ago.  
42  
43Shirley Bradley: Oh.  
44

1 Sandra Dragoo: But Charmaine and Dawn are still, still, uh, going strong, and Dawn lives in  
2 Florida, and Charmaine, uh, Charmaine's son-in-law, so Clare's grandson-in-  
3 law is a mechanic in our garage back here...  
4

5 Shirley Bradley: Hm.  
6

7 Sandra Dragoo: ...and, uh, but, you know, those are the pieces of Clare that, that, um, that I  
8 feel on this whole thing of doing the history of REO that, that are such an  
9 important part because as probably as that history gets told about, um, it will  
10 be harder and harder for people to really catch that flavor of what REO was  
11 and what REO had been to so many families in this town and so many of the  
12 things with the bowling alley and the, the, uh, the movies and those that you  
13 read about as, as pieces that people talk about, you know, that are probably  
14 would be 80, 90, 100 years old now, I never knew any of that...  
15

16 Shirley Bradley: Oh.  
17

18 Sandra Dragoo: ...because that was all gone. They, they still had the clubhouse and, and as I'd  
19 said, there were these 8 secretaries, 9 after I came after they'd hired Bob as  
20 another vice president, and we were the first group of people that were ever  
21 allowed in the Men's Club because the Men's Club...  
22

23 Shirley Bradley: Oh, yeah.  
24

25 Sandra Dragoo: ...was the nonunion supervisor manager men, and so that, that had been the,  
26 the, uh, camaraderie, the boys...  
27

28 Shirley Bradley: [A missed opportunity 53:04].  
29

30 Sandra Dragoo: ...the boys.  
31

32 Shirley Bradley: Mm-hm.  
33

34 Sandra Dragoo: But then they had the union but then they had the 9 of us that didn't fit any  
35 place, and so we were the very first group that then started going to the Men's  
36 Club, and, uh...  
37

38 Shirley Bradley: [53:21] And you were nonunion, you secretaries?  
39

40 Sandra Dragoo: We were nonunion. The 9 of us were nonunion. We were the, the title clearly  
41 was we were the executive secretaries. Um, to my knowledge, I don't know of  
42 any of them that are still alive.  
43

44 Shirley Bradley: Hm.  
45

1 Sandra Dragoo: But I don't know that. But when I – and I couldn't name 'em all now, but  
2 Carol, the one that had been – she was my age, and she had died, oh goodness,  
3 probably 15 years ago. It was after Clare died. Uh, so.  
4

5 Shirley Bradley: Well this is a wonderfully unique portrait of a man that so many will have  
6 memories of, as you say, from other dif-, from different viewpoints, but I  
7 really appreciate. This has been wonderful.  
8

9 Sandra Dragoo: Well, well, like I say, you wind me up and then I get going...  
10

11 Shirley Bradley: [laughter]  
12

13 Sandra Dragoo: ...and going and going.  
14

15 Shirley Bradley: Well I could sit here all day and listen.  
16

17 Sandra Dragoo: [coughing]  
18

19 Shirley Bradley: This is just – it's just wonderful.  
20

21 Sandra Dragoo: Um...  
22

23 Shirley Bradley: [54:21] Uh, is there something else that you'd like to add that I hadn't even  
24 thought of covering? Uh, I've got a wonderful picture of how you felt about  
25 REO, how you felt about the job, how you felt about the way things were  
26 done. Um, I usually ask people is there – are there any last thoughts about  
27 REO or something else you'd like to contribute?  
28

29 Sandra Dragoo: Oh, I think probably in, in my job now as, as the head of CATA, and, you  
30 know, we run busses, which is our business and...  
31

32 Shirley Bradley: Mm-hm.  
33

34 Sandra Dragoo: ...all of that time when the REO buildings stood there and then going through  
35 all of the contamination of the REO, um, buildings and the grounds and what  
36 were they going to do with it and all of that, to so many people they don't  
37 remember that. I mean they look at what Washington Avenue is now and, and,  
38 um, hard to picture going back when that was just all filled with buildings and,  
39 and the plant out there. And the plant was a dirty, loud, uh, manufacturing  
40 plant. Um, just, I mean, it covered that whole block. And then to start seeing  
41 building by building torn down and dug up and, and out, um, I think it is so  
42 good that they finally have, eh, what they're calling it, the Diamond REO Way  
43 and, and, you know, the few years ago when they put the, the sculpture up  
44 and...  
45

46 Shirley Bradley: Mm-hm. Mm-hm.

1  
2 Sandra Dragoo: ...and they did the painting on the side of the building. For those people who  
3 weren't there, it's, oh yeah, that was where the old plant was. And I w-, and I  
4 had such a small part of that. I mean, eh, when I think about if I wouldn't have  
5 then come to CATA to have had the close relationship that I had with Clare,  
6 my sort time there would not have meant near as much. I mean, it was there I  
7 have those good memories of it. I, I am, am still such good friends with so  
8 many people that I'd met there in, in just that 2-1/2-year period of time. But it  
9 would have been a very different one. It would have been a whole lot more in  
10 my past than what it was with then being here with Clare all those years and  
11 him giving me his insights into what happened and the stories then that Clare  
12 would tell me, and I could only, I could only visualize all the plant out there,  
13 uh, and, uh, uh, and to kind of picture what things would be.  
14  
15 Uh, there was one other story that, that I chuckle at. This is still this Jim Cox  
16 and he had come as the head of our garage here, and, uh, so one day Clare was  
17 in my office and Jim was in my office, and we were talking and they were –  
18 you know, they'd get going on about old [rail 57:30] stories and, and I'd be  
19 doing I wish you guys would go, you know, in my head.  
20  
21 Shirley Bradley: [laughter]  
22  
23 Sandra Dragoo: I wish you guys would go back over to Clare's office, and so I could get my  
24 work done, you know, and, um, it's a – 'cause some of the time just didn't  
25 appreciate the piece of history that I was getting, you know, and, uh, and so  
26 Jim was in there, and they were doing hahas.  
27  
28 And, uh, so Jim started telling this story to Clare, and he was saying, "Did I  
29 ever tell you how we knew when you were coming out in the shop?" And  
30 Clare was going, "No." And so Jim just blundering his way right through it,  
31 and, uh, and he said, "Well, remember so and so, eh, remember so and so and,  
32 and..." Yeah. And Jim said, "Well, I mean we always needed to know when  
33 the old man was coming out into the shop," and, and so he said, "The first one  
34 would..." – they'd, they'd hooked up, they'd had the electricians hook up  
35 these switches, and so when the first guy up in the, in the administration  
36 building knew the old man was going out into the plant because Clare was  
37 always one of these anytime of the day or night, he'd walk in to see what was  
38 going on, and that was his way of keeping track. He didn't want 10 reports of  
39 paper. By God, you get off your rear and you get out there where the action is.  
40 And so 1 would flip a switch and a light would go on, and then when he'd get  
41 there or wherever, the next guy would flip the switch, and then there'd be a  
42 light going on down there, so it was like the old man's coming, the old man's  
43 coming...  
44  
45 Shirley Bradley: [laughter]  
46



1 Sandra Dragoo: ...because the light was on. Clare stood there and looked at Jim and I thought  
2 oh my gosh, why I can see it coming. He was so angry.  
3  
4 Shirley Bradley: [Inaudible 59:24].  
5  
6 Sandra Dragoo: And this has been, I mean, goodness, this would have been maybe '82/83. I  
7 mean this was – would have been 20 years after it happened, but to Clare it  
8 was the matter that somebody had got him.  
9  
10 Shirley Bradley: Oh.  
11  
12 Sandra Dragoo: Somebody...  
13  
14 Shirley Bradley: Oh.  
15  
16 Sandra Dragoo: ...had got him, and all of this time that he had felt that he was just walking out  
17 there to see what he could see and then to find that this Jim Cox who was this  
18 kid who had grown up as part of Clare's family that he had been a part of that  
19 turning the switch, and oh you could just see Clare seethe, and he let Jim have  
20 it...  
21  
22 Shirley Bradley: [1:00:15] He did?  
23  
24 Sandra Dragoo: ...and walked out of the office, and you could just see Jim's face just fall. It  
25 was like why in Heaven's name was I...  
26  
27 Shirley Bradley: Did I s-...  
28  
29 Sandra Dragoo: ...not smart enough to know that the old man wouldn't really like to hear the  
30 story about how we'd got him, and Jim and I will chuckle about that  
31 sometimes, I mean, when we see each other and, um...  
32  
33 Shirley Bradley: Found a chink in his armor, and he didn't appreciate it.  
34  
35 Sandra Dragoo: Yeah. He didn't because, you know, again, if you think back to all of the  
36 things that I've said, that was the Clare. It was Clare knew what was going on.  
37 Clare was gonna make it happen. Clare did make it happen. Clare could do all  
38 of these things, and he did it through his head, and then what came out as  
39 being you go do this and you go do this, and people never would say, "Well,  
40 why?" And you take that back then to the Clare story of, of the stones in the  
41 barnyard, and he'd ask why, and it didn't make sense to him why you'd have  
42 somebody just doing unnecessary things. See, I had told Clare the story and,  
43 and of course, Clare had very negative feelings about the people that had let  
44 him go from REO, and then he knew that they'd let me go, and in the  
45 interview, I have told Clare the story about the 12 pencils because the 12  
46 pencils to me as a, as a business school graduate to be an executive secretary

1 and then to have some stupid boss sit there and make my job be so  
2 demeaning...

3

4Shirley Bradley: Mm-hm.

5

6Sandra Dragoo: ...that I was to have pencils sharpened for him was, eh, it made me so angry  
7 inside. It was like I'm, I'm worth more than that.

8

9Shirley Bradley: Yeah.

10

11Sandra Dragoo: Now you give me a job to do and I'll do the job. So when Clare was  
12 interviewing me, he had been talking about it, and I'm not one that's gonna sit  
13 and look over your shoulder, and I hadn't even told him my story of Duff. He  
14 said, "The way I work is you've got your job to do and I don't look over your  
15 shoulder. By God, when you need something to get guided on, you come to  
16 see me, but otherwise I do my job and you do your job. Could you live with  
17 that?" I'm thinking man alive, he's giving me the freedom to go back and do  
18 what I think I do very well, not to sharpen 12 pencils.

19

20Shirley Bradley: Yeah.

21

22Sandra Dragoo: My kids know that story of the 12 pencils. I mean, I've told that story so many  
23 times on how stupid you can make employees feel when you do stupid things,  
24 and no. I mean, I'll say to somebody here, "Why would you want to do that?  
25 What's that gonna gain?" You know? No. We will never demean anyone. But  
26 then I had told that story to Clare. He was so angry. Clare had heard me ask  
27 the story when, when I told Clare the story about that that was what Duff had  
28 wanted me to do, it made Clare so angry because it was such a demeaning  
29 thing. It was, it was picturing what, what this guy had done to me in what, uh,  
30 in, in how that was demeaning to me, and here was Clare that knew how to  
31 build trucks and make a profit for the company, which then there's this other  
32 idiot that sat up there and fired Clare. It was like how can you do it when what  
33 you're supposed to do is to get trucks off the line.

34

35Shirley Bradley: Hm.

36

37Sandra Dragoo: For me, it was like how can you do that when you've paid me to do a job not  
38 to sharpen 12 pencils. Gosh, tell me you want pencils always sharpened, part  
39 of the job, sure, you'll always get 'em sharpened. You schedule it in your head  
40 and every morning you make sure the pencils are there.

41

42Shirley Bradley: Sure.

43

44Sandra Dragoo: But the 12 pencils was the stupid part, and it was such a, such a piece of  
45 stupidity, kind of like how some parents make kids do something so stupid,  
46 move the rocks from one end of the barnyard to the other just because I'm not

1                   gonna trust you to not do anything. I'm gonna make you do it because I got the  
2                   power to make you do it...  
3  
4Shirley Bradley: I have the power. Yeah.  
5  
6Sandra Dragoo: ...is, is then so derogatory to what anything should be.  
7  
8Shirley Bradley: The rocks and the pencils are so symbolic...  
9  
10Sandra Dragoo: Yeah. Uh-huh. Yeah.  
11  
12Shirley Bradley: ... of [known 1:04:44] behavior and motivation.  
13  
14Sandra Dragoo: Yeah. And the, the airplane and the crawling into the belly of the plane and...  
15  
16Shirley Bradley: Oh, yes.  
17  
18Sandra Dragoo: ...and all of those things that, that were there, um...  
19  
20Shirley Bradley: [1:05:00] Isn't it fascinating all these things that go to make up a person and  
21 then sometimes nobody ever knows [inaudible 1:05:06] little pieces?  
22  
23Sandra Dragoo: Right. And that's where then in my head I go back so often to that I was so  
24 fortunate to get to know so many of those things.  
25  
26Shirley Bradley: Yes.  
27  
28Sandra Dragoo: See, I don't really know whether sometimes even Clare's daughters would  
29 have known because it was very hard for Clare to share his, his internal.  
30  
31Shirley Bradley: Hm.  
32  
33Sandra Dragoo: The daughters, Charmaine and Dawn and Sharon, you'd, you'd have had to  
34 have had him in the right place with the right thought processes. He would  
35 never have planned that he was gonna see that B52 or whatever that plane was  
36 and that I was gonna be there and he was gonna get talking about crawling  
37 into the belly. That would never have been in his plan. Oh gee, I need to tell  
38 Sandy why... No. It would not have been that he we have ever thought it  
39 necessary or, uh, right that I would know what he'd been scared with. He  
40 knew what it was. What, what would be the object of telling anybody else. He  
41 would, he would never tell anybody else that. It – the moral of that story was  
42 don't you ever think you can scare me.  
43  
44Shirley Bradley: Mm-hm.  
45  
46Sandra Dragoo: Because you can't scare me.

1  
2Shirley Bradley: Mm-hm.  
3  
4Sandra Dragoo: And so it was a very unusual, um, revelation there of seeing what that was, so  
5 then many of the things that then in my 11 years of, of being trained by him  
6 and getting a telegram from Clare when I got the job, this job here, and he,  
7 and he had said, "I knew you could do it, kid." And, and I kept thinking man,  
8 all those years when I was taking all of the crap, and after I had got the job, he  
9 had said, "I betcha wondered why I was always so hard on ya, didn't ya?" I  
10 said, "Yeah, I did, Clare, many, many times." Many, many times I was gonna  
11 walk out the door, and I said there was something in my stomach that would  
12 say, "You're not gonna beat me. You're not gonna win." And I had so much of  
13 that, a lot of that from my own upbringing but such a very different  
14 upbringing. I mean, my dad was always treated so well by – he was the only,  
15 only child – by my loving grandfather and grandmother that my dad could  
16 never have told me a story about working in a barnyard and moving the rocks.  
17 I mean this was my granddad and my dad who taught me that you had, you  
18 had your own self-being and pride and, and that you were always to be, uh,  
19 without stain and without blemish and that you were to do things because they  
20 were right and they were Christian and they were all these things.  
21  
22 So I came from this farm background the most naïve person that could be, and  
23 then finding myself and, and loving my boss when I worked when I was first  
24 married and, and [Adrian 1:08:26], he and I are still friends. He was the City  
25 Manager. Uh, he and I are still friends. He's retired up in Midland, soft  
26 spoken, would explain things, what it was, loved his wife and kids and, and  
27 then stayed home for 10 years and then worked for Bob Long who was still  
28 my, my buddy and my mentor and my – that he's the greatest guy around, and  
29 here was Bob Long, and then all of the sudden, I get Clare Loudenslager that  
30 doesn't with these 3 men that have been and being married to a preacher, and  
31 these 3 men of my dad and Cliff Miles, and Bob Long that were of this kind,  
32 wonderful family people just, uh, would, would never do anything that wasn't  
33 totally explained out and everything else, and then here I am with Clare, that  
34 you had to keep working on to figure out, and you'd think you'd get him  
35 figured out, and he would also say, "Don't ever try to figure me out because  
36 I'll do something that'll make it be that you can never figure me out." I have  
37 told that to some employees that work for me.  
38  
39Shirley Bradley: Hm.  
40  
41Sandra Dragoo: Don't go jumping ahead and say, "Oh, I know Sandy would do this." It  
42 depends on what the circumstances are, depends on what the long-range part  
43 is in the end. You never can think exactly because you don't – no 2 people  
44 ever have the same background of learning.  
45  
46Shirley Bradley: Hm.

1  
2Sandra Dragoo: So you see things just a little different, and so you never can say this person is  
3 gonna do it this way because for whatever reason it may not be that way, and  
4 you learned that with – from Clare. You, you try getting too far ahead of him,  
5 and boy you'd get yanked back. You weren't to be that far out there, um, and  
6 you were to, uh, you were to be knowing what that was supposed to be, and so  
7 in that 11 year period of time, I got to see glimpses and pieces of Clare that,  
8 like I say, I just don't think were probably shared with his wife, Ginger,  
9 because Ginger would have seen the part of Clare that was the father, the  
10 husband, and she wouldn't have known the people associated at work or all of  
11 those other things either at REO or at CATA. I mean, she'd know some sure,  
12 but again I spent more time with him on a daily basis than what anybody else  
13 did, and, um, it's a very important piece of my life of, of, uh, you know, who  
14 Clare was and who I am and, uh...  
15  
16Shirley Bradley: And how he still is with you.  
17  
18Sandra Dragoo: Oh, absolutely.  
19  
20Shirley Bradley: Mm-hm.  
21  
22Sandra Dragoo: Absolutely. Um, learned from Clare, dealing with – how you dealt with the  
23 union. Learned it a piece at a time. Had never had – and never had any formal  
24 training in it and, uh, and it was – there was a line and you do everything that  
25 there is up to a line, but everybody has to know that there's a line. There's a  
26 consequence. This is the way it will be, and if you push, always remember  
27 that I got more power than you do, and I don't wanta ever use that power, but  
28 by God, I will, and you learned that from Clare.  
29  
30 So there were all these things that I would do with the union. Come on, guys,  
31 let's go. Let's get it done. Let's get it worked out. And so all of those 11 years  
32 then, because as I went then from executive secretary and then Clare had said,  
33 "You want to do this personnel stuff?" And then you're doing all of this We  
34 were getting too big. I couldn't do it all, so then I hired a former executive  
35 secretary at Diamond REO to take my place there, and then I'm over here  
36 doing this personnel work starting to negotiate contracts with the union. I'd  
37 never dealt with a union in my life. Never. And, and so then it was negotiating  
38 contracts and Clare sitting at home and the last night then, you know, being at  
39 the end of the phone, yeah, we got another quarter of a penny, and then I'd go  
40 back in there. I mean talk about learning by the seat of your pants was  
41 certainly what I did. And, uh, so then as all those things kept getting bigger  
42 and bigger and bigger and, uh, and then, you know, the influence that that is  
43 here and the, and the way that the relationships with the union. I mean, the  
44 president of the union.  
45

1 When I was trying to get this job and, and then in writing by the search firm  
2 had a guy, uh, out of Atlanta, Georgia, that the board hired to fill this job  
3 permanently after I'd been doing it on an interim basis for 6 months, he would  
4 not – this guy would not bring my name back to my own board of directors to  
5 even have an interview because he had said a woman cannot do this job, and  
6 only because of this very strong friend on the board that, that – from General  
7 Motors that I had earned his respect that he took the chance on me and, uh,  
8 and here I was. I had a business college degree, didn't have a 4-year degree. I  
9 mean I was this secretary, but, uh, the president of the union at that time came  
10 to the Board and said, "You will be fools if you don't put Sandy in here.  
11 Sandy's the one that knows how this place can run, and she will make it  
12 work." And when I think about it to this day, um, the relationship I have with  
13 this union and, uh, this past year I got this national general manager award for  
14 all transient managers throughout United States and Canada and a system our  
15 size never ever, ever in 20 years of this award has got this award. It's always  
16 the New Yorks and the Chicagos and the San Franciscos, and, you know, the  
17 huge cities [inaudible 1:15:11].  
18  
19 Shirley Bradley: Big visible...  
20  
21 Sandra Dragoo: Yeah.  
22  
23 Shirley Bradley: Yeah.  
24  
25 Sandra Dragoo: And so when I got that, I was the third woman to get it and, uh, and the first  
26 one of a small system, and so that award and having my 6 kids go to Salt – my  
27 3 kids and their spouses go to Salt Lake with me for that. I had 5 Board  
28 members that went. I had 6 staff members that went. And I had the president  
29 of the union that went, and it was a week like no other week in my entire life.  
30  
31 Shirley Bradley: [chuckle]  
32  
33 Sandra Dragoo: And, uh, and, you know, so much of again those pieces of how one thing adds  
34 to this thing, adds to thing and you go and pull out any of it, and it, it would  
35 crumble because the pieces that you, that you, uh, that you got are what made  
36 the tower work. And so I'd go back and, you know, how did I get that award?  
37 I got that award with, you know, lots of hugs, lots of heartache, lots of all of  
38 those things of learning from Clare, getting slapped by Clare, by, you know,  
39 [inaudible 1:16:26] do that for and, uh, and then you'd explain or I'd go out  
40 and do something that was right because it was right, and then I'd come in and  
41 Clare, it's the right [knocking] thing to do and I'd have to argue with him...  
42  
43 Shirley Bradley: [chuckle]  
44  
45 Sandra Dragoo: ...but he kept giving me more and giving me more and, um, it's the only way  
46 you're gonna learn and I, I would always say y-, "Are you gonna cry? And I'd

1 look at him. I'd sit in this office, and I'd say, "You will not make me cry." And  
2 I tell you I could've counted the steps from this office to that restroom down  
3 there because I would keep saying if I can only get to that bathroom. If I can  
4 only get to that bathroom. And it would be my thought, and I always made it  
5 to that bathroom because, by God, you were never gonna see me cry, and he  
6 didn't. But it was another one of those tests. You can't be a pansy ass. I know,  
7 Clare.  
8  
9 Shirley Bradley: [laughter]  
10  
11 Sandra Dragoo: You gotta get out all this stuff out of your head that the world's gonna just lay  
12 down and make everything right for you.  
13  
14 Shirley Bradley: [chuckle]  
15  
16 Sandra Dragoo: Yes, Clare. Yeah.  
17  
18 Shirley Bradley: Oh, dear.  
19  
20 Sandra Dragoo: You can't be a pansy ass. I know, Clare. I'm not a pansy ass. And, uh...  
21  
22 Shirley Bradley: [chuckle]  
23  
24 Sandra Dragoo: ...all of those things.  
25  
26 Shirley Bradley: Oh.  
27  
28 Sandra Dragoo: You know, that have, have, uh, made it into who I am and that, and that  
29 influence of Clare, the influence of Clare and, uh, and the influence that he  
30 had of this place and, and what – I mean, we're the only 2 directors it's had.  
31 Uh, well, I shouldn't say that. There were 2 other ones that stayed about a  
32 month...  
33  
34 Shirley Bradley: Oh.  
35  
36 Sandra Dragoo: ...and, uh, but Clare was director for a lot of the years and then I've now been  
37 almost 20. And, uh, and so everything goes back to when there were very few  
38 people – I think there's maybe 3 union employees that have been here longer  
39 than I have and I've been the longest administrative person, and so some of the  
40 people, you know, that come in to come here to work now, they hear the  
41 stories of Clare, but they have absolutely no idea what it was like when Clare  
42 was here...  
43  
44 Shirley Bradley: Hm.  
45  
46 Sandra Dragoo: ...and, um...

1  
2Shirley Bradley: And you have to work with somebody on a daily basis.  
3  
4Sandra Dragoo: Oh, yeah.  
5  
6Shirley Bradley: And even then, Mr. Loudenslager sounds like not everybody gets in.  
7  
8Sandra Dragoo: Oh.  
9  
10Shirley Bradley: [At all 1:18:59].  
11  
12Sandra Dragoo: Oh.  
13  
14Shirley Bradley: So not very many people that would get to know him.  
15  
16Sandra Dragoo: Very, very, very few people got in.  
17  
18Shirley Bradley: Yeah.  
19  
20Sandra Dragoo: And...  
21  
22Shirley Bradley: Well, you've certainly created a wonderful portrait here and this is [inaudible  
23 1:19:08]...  
24  
25Sandra Dragoo: Well...  
26  
27Shirley Bradley: This is wonderful information.  
28  
29Sandra Dragoo: Let me say, we got...  
30  
31Shirley Bradley: [Inaudible 1:19:12].  
32  
33Sandra Dragoo: ...an hour and 20 minutes here.  
34  
35Shirley Bradley: Yeah. I thank you so much.  
36  
37Sandra Dragoo: Yeah.  
38  
39  
40/lo