

**Hattie Greene, an African American, discusses her 40-year career as a production worker and UAW member at the Fisher Body plant in Lansing, MI**

5 Marilyn Coulter: [recorder clicking] Uh, Fisher Body Historical Team interview. Wednesday, November 16th, 2005. Interviewer – Lead Interviewer Marilyn Coulter. Uh, interview taking place at UAW Local 602 Conference Room. Our interviewee today will be Ms. Hattie Greene. Uh, first we will a-, the other teams members are?

11 Cheryl McQuaid: Cheryl McQuaid.

13 Linda Johnson: Linda Johnson.

15 Doreen Howard: Doreen Howard.

17 Marilyn Coulter: Okay. [0:28] Um, Ms. Greene, [door closing] can you please state and spell your name for us, please?

20 Hattie Greene: State and spell my name? Well, my name Hattie L. Greene. I spell it H-A-T-T-I-E, middle initial L, last name Greene, G-R-E-E-N-E.

23 Marilyn Coulter: All right. Thank you. [0:49] Um, so, uh, what we're gonna do is do you want to just tell us a little bit about yourself? Now, do ya – are you married with children?

27 Hattie Greene: I am the mother of one child. I was married to a lovely man by the name of [Clifford A. Greene 1:06], but he's deceased now; he's no longer with me, except in my heart.

31 Marilyn Coulter: Mm-hm.

33 Hattie Greene: And we were married almost 48 years.

35 Marilyn Coulter: Mm-hm.

37 Hattie Greene: And I have a daughter; her name is [Alison Renee Johnson 1:22]. She lives in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and of course, at the m-, time now, she's wheelchair bound; she has MS...

41 Marilyn Coulter: Oh.

43 Hattie Greene: ...and she have had that about 14 years, but she's still my baby and I love her.

45 Marilyn Coulter: [Mm 1:45]. [1:45] Now, we're gonna talk a little bit about hiring in at Fisher Body. Can you tell us what date you hired in?

1  
2Hattie Greene: I was hired in 'bout the date was, uh, April the 15th, 1953.  
3  
4Marilyn Coulter: [1:58] Now, was this your first job?  
5  
6Hattie Greene: No, it wasn't my first job. I had one job before that, which was working in a  
7 grocery store where they sold grocery and one side was an ice cream side...  
8  
9Marilyn Coulter: Mm.  
10  
11Hattie Greene: ...where they sold, you know, ice cream, and I was just all around in there.  
12  
13Marilyn Coulter: Mm-hm.  
14  
15Hattie Greene: Mm-hm.  
16  
17Marilyn Coulter: So, um, 1953 ya hired in. [2:26] What brought you into Fisher Body?  
18  
19Hattie Greene: Definitely it was more money. [laughter] Better my [condition 2:32]. Ah ha.  
20  
21Marilyn Coulter: [2:34] Do you remember what you were making back then in 1953, what you  
22 hired in at?  
23  
24Hattie Greene: You know, that's kinda hard to remember. It's somethin' like 'bout a dollar  
25 and 45 or 49 cent.  
26  
27Marilyn Coulter: Mm-hm.  
28  
29Hattie Greene: 'Cause the mens did make a little more than we did. [background  
30 conversation]  
31  
32Marilyn Coulter: [2:48] So in 1953, you come into an automotive plant. What was that like?  
33 Could you tell us what that was like? Can you remember what it was like?  
34  
35Hattie Greene: Oh, uh, that...  
36  
37Marilyn Coulter: That first day?  
38  
39Hattie Greene: ...the first day, well, it was okay, but it was really scummy, dirty, you know.  
40 It was – because I worked in the Paint Department, that's where I was hired  
41 in, and I worked on the line, and it was the Sealer Line, and we used a black  
42 rubber [dough 3:19] they called it, to seal the jobs, because the o-, some a the  
43 other ladies worked here, of color, they didn't even wanna walk 'cross the  
44 line, ya know. It seemed like they put all the minorities mostly over on the  
45 Sealer Line.  
46

1 Marilyn Coulter: And was that because it was – Linda Johnson?  
2  
3 Linda Johnson: [3:46] Hattie, was it because people didn't wanna cross the line because of the  
4 gummy stuff, they didn't wanna get it on their shoes, or?  
5  
6 Hattie Greene: Well, it could have been, and some of'm just thought they was a little bit  
7 better than...  
8  
9 Linda Johnson: Too good to...  
10  
11 Hattie Greene: ...yes.  
12  
13 Linda Johnson: Ah.  
14  
15 Hattie Greene: Yes.  
16  
17 Linda Johnson: [4:00] So minorities were put on lesser jobs, you think, because they would do  
18 the work and...  
19  
20 Hattie Greene: Well, all of'm didn't do the work...  
21  
22 Linda Johnson: Mm-hm.  
23  
24 Hattie Greene: ...because some of'm quit. [laughter]  
25  
26 Linda Johnson: Oh.  
27  
28 Hattie Greene: But I was one who did survive.  
29  
30 Marilyn Coulter: Cheryl?  
31  
32 Cheryl McQuaid: [4:17] Hattie, how was the sealer applied? I mean, was it somethin' that you  
33 used your hands and applied it or?  
34  
35 Hattie Greene: N-, no we didn't use our ha-, we had a gun, but they call it a gun, it was a long  
36 [main 4:29], and you had to mash it, you know, the fa-, get the sealer out,  
37 'cause if you had to seal around the, seal around the, um, wheel, you know,  
38 the part of the car, not the wheel itself, but you had to go right down that line,  
39 you know, part, part the, where they were connected together, you know, and  
40 things like that, go 'round the t-, the trunk ledge; you had to raise that up, go  
41 all around that and seal in there. We had a lotta places. And then some places  
42 it was, uh, what they call the rub-, rubber dough t-, too, you'd used – you  
43 know, it's [perma-gum 5:06] or somethin', you used to fit, put over those  
44 holes and then put it on.  
45  
46 Cheryl McQuaid: Oh, okay.

1  
2Marilyn Coulter: [5:12] So you primarily sealed seams and...  
3  
4Hattie Greene: Yeah.  
5  
6Marilyn Coulter: ...plugged holes?  
7  
8Hattie Greene: That's what we did.  
9  
10Marilyn Coulter: Okay. [5:18] So in 1953, were there very many minorities?  
11  
12Hattie Greene: No, to tell you the truth, uh, I was probably about the third or fourth one that  
13 was hired in [had been 5:31]. That's when they did hire [for all of us 5:33] in  
14 here then.  
15  
16Marilyn Coulter: [5:36] So were you treated any differently...  
17  
18Hattie Greene: Well...  
19  
20Marilyn Coulter: ...back then?  
21  
22Hattie Greene: ...in some way, they tried to be nice, but you could always see it on their face,  
23 at least I could, and tell the different...  
24  
25Marilyn Coulter: Mm.  
26  
27Hattie Greene: ...'cause there's somethin' within me that I can always tell with somethin', ya  
28 know. But the supervisors, they was kinda, some of'm kinda snotty and some  
29 of'm wasn't.  
30  
31Marilyn Coulter: Uh, Doreen?  
32  
33Doreen Howard: [6:09] Um, was it a male-female discrimination or was it a minority, uh, as far  
34 as color, issue?  
35  
36Hattie Greene: Well, the male, the males, some of'm would, ya know, talk more, but they  
37 knew, they – I knew then where the discrimination was, because you could  
38 tell. At least I could. I was no dummy.  
39  
40Marilyn Coulter: Mm-hm.  
41  
42Hattie Greene: Uh, no. Even to this day, I can tell.  
43  
44Marilyn Coulter: Mm-hm.  
45

1Hattie Greene: Nobody don't have to tell me; I know. I have common sense, but, you know,  
2 but that's, that's all right. I learned to live with it, because, uh, you know, if,  
3 if someone hate me here, well, how do they expect to get to Heaven?  
4

5Doreen Howard: Mm-hm.  
6

7Hattie Greene: You know, we supposed to love one another and color not supposed to have  
8 anything to do with it, because we are all God childrens, and my blood, even  
9 though ma skin is dark, but my blood is just as red as yours...  
10

11Doreen Howard: Mm-hm.  
12

13Hattie Greene: ...and then some a those who thought that they were better, well, I'm sure that  
14 ma blood was just as red – it was redder than theirs, 'cause I don't do drugs or  
15 none a that stuff. [laughter]  
16

17Marilyn Coulter: So...  
18

19Doreen Howard: [7:28] Um...  
20

21Marilyn Coulter: ...Doreen?  
22

23Doreen Howard: ...but as far as black males, was there black males in the area that you worked  
24 with and were they discriminated against in the same way that the women  
25 were discriminated against?  
26

27Hattie Greene: Well, not, not totally, but they was, they had to be on their P's and Q's  
28 because, uh, it seemed like that we bein' of color, we had to work just as hard  
29 and we had to do our jobs, seems like, a little bit better than they did. They  
30 would get away with somethin', you know, where they would, you know, we  
31 g-, have to have it just right...  
32

33Doreen Howard: Mm.  
34

35Marilyn Coulter: [8:09] So...  
36

37Hattie Greene: ...you know.  
38

39Marilyn Coulter: ...at times the discipline seemed a little bit different for you?  
40

41Hattie Greene: Well, yeah, I nev-, I – a course I did my job...  
42

43Marilyn Coulter: You just did your job.  
44

1Hattie Greene: ...I did my job. All I wanted them to do was just tell me what my job was and  
2 show me what they wanted did, and so I did my job. I never had any trouble  
3 except for fightin'. I didn't fight.  
4

5Marilyn Coulter: Oh.  
6

7Hattie Greene: I didn't fight; I just, really, what I did, this guy I was workin' with, well, I was  
8 gonna get a drink a water. So course this was sometime later, you know, and I  
9 was goin' 'crossed the line to get some water. When I come back, he didn't  
10 re-, he didn't hit me, but he put like that.  
11

12Marilyn Coulter: [8:54] And that would be...  
13

14Hattie Greene: He, he had...  
15

16Marilyn Coulter: ...he rushed towards you?  
17

18Hattie Greene: Y-, yeah. But that's all he did, because I had picked up a gun and I bust his  
19 heel open. [laughter] I gotta a couple weeks off, but it was worth it. [laughter]  
20

21Marilyn Coulter: [9:08] And that surely changed the [laughter] climate on how people treated  
22 you...  
23

24Hattie Greene: Yeah, he...  
25

26Marilyn Coulter: ...there, right? [laughter]  
27

28Hattie Greene: ...he became a good friend. [laughter]  
29

30Marilyn Coulter: [9:14] So can you tell us, um, in working in the Paint Shop, did it require any  
31 special equipment? Any special clothing or [tapping] gloves or anything like  
32 that when you worked in the Paint...  
33

34Hattie Greene: Well, we...  
35

36Marilyn Coulter: ...[Shop 9:24]?  
37

38Hattie Greene: ...we had gloves, but far as clothes, you know, we, we all wore blue jeans or  
39 somethin' like that, you know, um, but, uh, we didn't wear – at least I don't  
40 wear'm now – shorts to work and things like that. 'Course the mens, you  
41 know, they wore – in the Paint Department, they mens, they wore, you know,  
42 jeans and stuff, and they worked on the wet sand, they call it. [phone ringing]  
43 [recorder clicking]  
44

45Doreen Howard: Okay. All set.  
46

1Hattie Greene: Now what?  
2

3Marilyn Coulter: [9:59] So now, you [sniffing] didn't have any s-, so you, you didn't, didn't  
4 have to wear any special breathing products or anything like that when you  
5 were working?  
6

7Hattie Greene: [coughing] Uh, no, we didn't then. We didn't have – I'm just tryin' to think, I  
8 know we used to wear, we had to wear a – [late- 10:14], I don't know think I  
9 wore'm when I first went in there, safety glasses, you know.  
10

11Marilyn Coulter: Mm-hm. [10:19] So now, you, you're retired now, right, Ms. Hattie?  
12

13Hattie Greene: Yes, ma'am.  
14

15Marilyn Coulter: [10:21] And what year did you retire?  
16

17Hattie Greene: 1993.  
18

19Marilyn Coulter: [10:25] And in '93, in that time period that you were in the Paint, were you  
20 always in the Paint Department for your whole life?  
21

22Hattie Greene: No, I worked in the Cushion Room, um, few years, after – I believe it was a  
23 plant in, uh, what was it, Grand Rapid? They had a fire that didn't-, or  
24 somethin'. Somethin' went wrong there and some a the folks came to, I think  
25 over here to Fisher Body, and then, you know, folks was gettin' bumped off  
26 their jobs and thing and that's when a lotta those who – some a those who was  
27 walkin' around the line when we was in the Sealer Room, you know, some  
28 of'm had to come there on the Sealer Line and work too, which it didn't  
29 make'm very happy, but...  
30

31Marilyn Coulter: [11:12] So, Ms. Hattie...  
32

33Hattie Greene: ...[inaudible 11:13].  
34

35Marilyn Coulter: ...for people who will hear this and know th-, can you please explain what  
36 bumping is?  
37

38Hattie Greene: Well, might a been what we, what we call bumpin' was, uh, if you was on a  
39 job and you get bumped off, so somebody come on that job that [just, um  
40 11:29], have more seniority than you do, well that's what we call bumpin',  
41 you know, and then you would have a chance, if it was somebody there that  
42 you could go bump them, but it didn't work that way all the time because  
43 supervisor, they was screwy too, because I know, I was laid off for a couple  
44 years and I had the seniority to be in there, but they kept guys in there, you  
45 know, with less seniority than, uh, you know, than we had.  
46

1 Marilyn Coulter: [12:02] So now, were you – you, you just spoke about layoffs. Were you laid  
2 off very many times during your time there?  
3

4 Hattie Greene: Yeah, I was laid off, um, I don't know how many times [background  
5 conversation], but it was quite a few times that I was laid off and it so  
6 happened that, uh, you know, if you're laid off, if you were laid off longer  
7 than you'd worked there, well, you know, if they call ya back, you was startin'  
8 out new, but it so happened that I was never laid off as long as I had worked  
9 there, so therefore my seniority was there, you know.  
10

11 Marilyn Coulter: [12:33] So you said – now, you said you spen-, you were laid off by you  
12 primarily spent your time in the Paint Department. Now, do you remember  
13 how long you were in the Cushion Room?  
14

15 Hattie Greene: Oh, gee. I was in there, hm, I don't know, 3 or 4 years, I guess.  
16

17 Marilyn Coulter: 3 or 4 years?  
18

19 Hattie Greene: I guess it was somethin' like that.  
20

21 Marilyn Coulter: [12:52] And the Cushion Room...  
22

23 Hattie Greene: But yeah, that was a different, different angle. We made the, uh, they, uh,  
24 made the seats, you know, and we, we used to put the springs in'm, you know,  
25 [thumping] and also we put the, uh, cov-, the s-, the leather over'm, you  
26 know?  
27

28 Marilyn Coulter: Mm-hm.  
29

30 Hattie Greene: Put the r-, put the [thumping] springs in'm, then we had a pad we had the [hog  
31 ring 13:19] down on it, then after that, as you'd put, uh, the leather on it and  
32 they'd fastened that up and send that on [thumping] down the line somewhere  
33 to the next place.  
34

35 Marilyn Coulter: [13:29] S-, [laughter] so what's hog-ringing? What was hog-ringing?  
36

37 Hattie Greene: Well, call it hog ring. You h-, you had a gun, [inaudible 13:36] gun, and it  
38 had, uh, just like a round earring, you know, you'd tape it down in there's a  
39 hole that [had on there 13:42].  
40

41 Marilyn Coulter: [13:44] So now, did you prefer the Paint Shop to the Cushion Room?  
42

43 Hattie Greene: Well, the, the Cushion Room was cleaner. You didn't have all a that, not all a  
44 that fumes that you, you know, had over in Paint, you know, [background  
45 conversation] but I guess I worked in there long enough I got used to that and  
46 so it didn't bother me, I guess.



1  
2 Marilyn Coulter: [14:06] So, um, [thumping] in working in the Paint Department and working  
3 in the Cushion Room and coming in post-war, um, how would you say  
4 women in general were treated towards the men?  
5  
6 Hattie Greene: Well, some of 'm was treated nice because, you know, only the strong survive,  
7 I think, because it's – I think it's b-, was a lot of separation and stuff, you  
8 know, and that kinda stuff. Uh, supervisor, you know, he may like this one or  
9 that one. Course it didn't matter to me. I wasn't married when I went to work  
10 there...  
11  
12 Marilyn Coulter: [14:47] So, now was your...  
13  
14 Hattie Greene: ...but...  
15  
16 Marilyn Coulter: ...did your, did your husband work in the Plant?  
17  
18 Hattie Greene: Yes, he worked there. I saw him every day. We rode together most a the time  
19 [laughter], 'cause I had to work nights after our daughter was born. Let's see,  
20 we married in '53 and our daughter was born in '59. So, we worked together  
21 then, and so, when I had to go to nights, I called back to – I was laid off and I  
22 was called back, and that's when I went to the Cushion Room, and so, I  
23 worked in nights for quite some years, and that way I didn't have to have a  
24 babysitter. So, when I decided it's time for me to go on days, I came back to  
25 the Paint Department [background conversation], went on days.  
26  
27 Marilyn Coulter: [15:39] And you were hold days in Paint?  
28  
29 Hattie Greene: Excuse me?  
30  
31 Marilyn Coulter: You were able to hold the day shift on Paint?  
32  
33 Hattie Greene: Yeah, I was able to hold it, mm-hm. [background conversation] Course it, it  
34 wasn't, it wasn't days all the time. When I first went there, it was 3 weeks  
35 days and 3 weeks nights; it would swing. That's...  
36  
37 Marilyn Coulter: Oh.  
38  
39 Hattie Greene: ...that's the way we would do it, we'd swing shift. You never got used to one  
40 shift. [background conversation]  
41  
42 Marilyn Coulter: [15:59] So how long did they c-, continue that process? [background  
43 conversation]  
44  
45 Hattie Greene: Oh, they continued that for quite a, quite some time. You worked 3 weeks  
46 days and 3 weeks night. [background conversation]

1  
2Marilyn Coulter: Oh, wow. [background conversation] Cheryl?  
3  
4Cheryl McQuaid: [16:12] Hattie, you said that you hired in April of '53...  
5  
6Hattie Greene: Mm-hm.  
7  
8Cheryl McQuaid: ...and you were married in '53.  
9  
10Hattie Greene: Yes, I was hired in on the 15th of April and I got married on the 26th day of  
11 June 1953.  
12  
13Cheryl McQuaid: [16:26] And did you meet your husband in the Plant?  
14  
15Hattie Greene: No, I was – he was lookin' at me, he was tryin' to mess around, you know  
16 [background conversation] how guys do. No, I didn't meet him in the Plant.  
17 I, I was at this grocery store, he used to come over and buy ice cream and  
18 stuff, you know how mens do. [laughter]  
19  
20Cheryl McQuaid: [16:44] And so he had already worked in the Plant and...  
21  
22Hattie Greene: Yeah.  
23  
24Cheryl McQuaid: ...and then you came and, and finally a relationship?  
25  
26Hattie Greene: Uh-huh.  
27  
28Cheryl McQuaid: Oh, okay. Excellent.  
29  
30Marilyn Coulter: [murmuring] Doreen?  
31  
32Doreen Howard: [16:58] You said that your daughter was born in what year?  
33  
34Hattie Greene: 1959.  
35  
36Doreen Howard: '59. [17:06] How did that affect your working life? You said that you were  
37 on a swing shift at, at that time when your daughter was born? Were, were  
38 they still doin' the 3 weeks on...  
39  
40Hattie Greene: Mm-hm. You know...  
41  
42Doreen Howard: ...one shift 3 weeks on the next?  
43  
44Hattie Greene: ...I, I, I don't really remember that right now.  
45  
46Doreen Howard: Okay. That, that's okay.

1  
2Hattie Greene: But...  
3  
4Marilyn Coulter: [That's okay 17:26].  
5  
6Hattie Greene: ...but I, I don't, I don't know, but I know she's born in '59.  
7  
8Doreen Howard: Okay.  
9  
10Hattie Greene: At that time...  
11  
12Doreen Howard: That's when I was born.  
13  
14Hattie Greene: ...I, I was on days or somethin', because at that time, when I came back to  
15 work, uh, I would take my daughter to my aunt to keep [inaudible 17:47] that  
16 time, we would take her there to, for her to keep her durin' the day. I don't  
17 remember when that s-, s-, change did take place, but I know it did.  
18  
19Doreen Howard: [18:01] But you said that your husband and yourself, you worked opposite  
20 shifts so that you could...  
21  
22Hattie Greene: Y-, yeah, that was...  
23  
24Doreen Howard: ...have...  
25  
26Hattie Greene: ...later.  
27  
28Doreen Howard: ...childcare [inaudible 18:11]?  
29  
30Hattie Greene: Yeah, I worked, I was workin' nights at one time and, uh, he was workin',  
31 um, days. That was – she done grewed up a little bit then.  
32  
33Doreen Howard: Mm. [18:21] Was that mainly for childcare and family or...  
34  
35Hattie Greene: N-...  
36  
37Doreen Howard: ...or was it because...  
38  
39Hattie Greene: No, 'cause I was...  
40  
41Doreen Howard: ...a your seniority that, that you [didn't have 18:29]...  
42  
43Hattie Greene: ...no, I was just...  
44  
45Doreen Howard: ...[the time 18:30]?  
46

1Hattie Greene: ...havin' to be on nights at that time when I was – when, uh, that happened.  
2

3Doreen Howard: Okay.  
4

5Hattie Greene: Because, uh, let's see, she wasn't – she started school in '60, '65 I think it  
6 was. [murmuring] 'Cause she woulda been – she started like September and  
7 she'd have been 5, you know, in like that November. And I stayed on nights.  
8 Didn't bother by it. I could've got on days before, but you know, I didn't  
9 push it, you know, then.  
10

11Doreen Howard: Mm-hm. Okay.  
12

13Marilyn Coulter: [19:13] So, um, Ms. Hattie, just kinda goin' back to the Paint Shop and  
14 because a the time you've been here, what were some a the biggest – well,  
15 what were some a the biggest changes that you saw take place during your  
16 time working at Fisher Body?  
17

18Hattie Greene: Workin' at Fisher Body? Well, I know the Paint job, it ch-, it changed a lot,  
19 because, uh, you know, uh, in workin' in the Paint Department, like I said, we  
20 wore blue jeans or whatever. That, that changed, because – and the womens –  
21 at that particular time, I don't think the womens didn't – they worked in the  
22 Paint, but you know, they didn't spray the paint, you know, like paint the cars  
23 or somethin' or other, but then that change. The womens, they would have to  
24 go in the spray booth and spray cars, put on their coveralls and whatever. I'll  
25 never forget that [Fern 20:17]. [laughter] She had to go there for a while, and  
26 she, oh, she was sick, 'cause she happened to marry a supervisor later, though,  
27 but she was sick, but she had to go in there and spray paint just like the mens,  
28 and that was somethin' else. That, that, that was, uh, no job for [inaudible  
29 20:39] no women, but they said equal rights and so they put'm in there, and it  
30 was, it was tough, I think. They had to wear the hoods, a cap on their head,  
31 and, you know, all that stuff, and I was wearin' gloves and the shoes get  
32 gummy and, uh, all of that kinda stuff. So but some of'm made it.  
33 [background conversation]  
34

35Marilyn Coulter: [21:06] So would you say that this, that, those particular jobs started  
36 happening like, like in '70s, in '60s, or? When did women start having to do  
37 some a the same types of jobs that were traditionally done because of men  
38 prior to equal rights?  
39

40Hattie Greene: Well, all the, all the time except in the Paint, they – I think, more or less, they  
41 had jobs that, ya know, I guess they figure wasn't for the womens at first, but  
42 all the jobs, just like when I even was hired in, see, mens was workin', but that  
43 wasn't sprayin', you know.  
44

45Marilyn Coulter: Mm-hm.  
46

1Hattie Greene: But they was workin' right beside the womens doin' the same thing, you  
2 know, that w-, we all was doin'.  
3  
4Marilyn Coulter: [21:45] But some a the jobs like spraying, women started doin'm?  
5  
6Hattie Greene: Y-, they started doin' that later years.  
7  
8Marilyn Coulter: [21:50] Like in late '70s or so? '80s?  
9  
10Hattie Greene: It c-, it could have been. I d-, I don't really know.  
11  
12Marilyn Coulter: No? Oh that's fine. Doreen?  
13  
14Doreen Howard: [21:57] Do you think that that was because it was, um, a higher paying job  
15 that...  
16  
17Hattie Greene: Well, it didn't...  
18  
19Doreen Howard: ...did they receive more money for that job and that's maybe why more men  
20 were in there and not the women or...  
21  
22Hattie Greene: Well, that was...  
23  
24Doreen Howard: ...or not the case?  
25  
26Hattie Greene: ...just a man job to me, it looked like...  
27  
28Doreen Howard: Yeah.  
29  
30Hattie Greene: ...but you know, when they got this equal rights and stuff, uh, you know, they  
31 started that, just like, you know, it used to be a time that you, like, you  
32 couldn't work over 40 hours, you know, but then that changed. You could  
33 work'm long as you wanted to, because I know I had worked 2 or 3 Sundays,  
34 you know, 7 days a week. I used to be glad when, um, 40 hours or 54 hours  
35 come, ya know, and know I couldn't any more. They usually get men, you  
36 know, somebody who wanted to volunteer and work come over and whatever,  
37 you know, they would do it.  
38  
39Marilyn Coulter: [22:57] So they had the whole, the Sundays, the whole line would work 7  
40 days?  
41  
42Hattie Greene: Well, n-, no, no, not the whole line. That was when I, later years when I was  
43 workin', maybe I was workin' in Repair or doin' somethin' other, you know,  
44 and the jobs be back up, you know, [inaudible 23:16] and they'd be tryin' to  
45 get'm out, you know, s-, and s-.  
46

1 Marilyn Coulter: Oh.  
2  
3 Hattie Greene: I know 2, 3 Sundays I did work.  
4  
5 Marilyn Coulter: [23:24] So, um, you, you, towards your retirement, you usually began to work  
6 in Repair.  
7  
8 Hattie Greene: Um, well, yeah, I had worked in Repair quite a few years [inaudible 23:35]  
9 time, yeah.  
10  
11 Marilyn Coulter: [23:38] And was that something that – w-, was that one of the good things that  
12 happened when the equality...  
13  
14 Hattie Greene: Well...  
15  
16 Marilyn Coulter: ...and things came? Women started gettin' repair-type jobs?  
17  
18 Hattie Greene: ...well, it was good for me because I was over on the sea-, I was on the Sealer  
19 Line there, over th-, over there in the sealer. You know, this was a different  
20 sealer. This wasn't like when I first came there.  
21  
22 Marilyn Coulter: Mm-hm.  
23  
24 Hattie Greene: But this was a different sealin' stuff you did. And then when they got down to  
25 Repair, then they had, oh, m-, I was a relief person in Repair, but the, just  
26 before I retired, about a month or so before I retired, and then they screwed  
27 around and got somebody else up there and then they sent me upstairs, but I  
28 was getting' ready to retire anyway; it didn't matter.  
29  
30 Marilyn Coulter: Mm-hm. [24:26] So now you said you were a relief person. Can you tell me  
31 what a relief person does?  
32  
33 Hattie Greene: Well, a relief person, you have so many peoples to relief; maybe it was, I  
34 don't know, 6, 7, 8, and that mean that whatever job they perform, you have to  
35 know that job, and you relief the person. Say I, okay, I'm gonna relief you.  
36 You come, I come there and do your job and you'd have 10 or 12 minutes of  
37 whatever time was to go to the bathroom or whatever you gonna do, and then  
38 you come back. Then I would go to the next person, whatever job they were  
39 doin', I would go do their job, and that's the way we did relief.  
40  
41 Marilyn Coulter: All right. [25:16] Um, so, uh, were any other changes that you remember?  
42 Like as far as breaks or anything that happened?  
43  
44 Hattie Greene: Well, we had, uh, we had a, c-, what, coffee break I guess it was called.  
45 [laughter] We'd have a break, um, I forgot, it wasn't too many minutes, but is  
46 it 6 minutes we would have, and they used to have wagons come down

1 through there with rolls and things on it and you might actually have to eat in  
2 6 minutes or somethin' before I go back to the line. Yeah. [laughter]  
3  
4 Marilyn Coulter: Do you have – Cheryl?  
5  
6 Cheryl McQuaid: Yeah. [26:00] Hattie, you, um – what was a typical lunch like? Did you sit  
7 down right where you worked? Did you bring a lunch? Did you go  
8 someplace to eat?  
9  
10 Hattie Greene: Well, they always had a cafeteria here. You could go to the cafeteria. Either  
11 you sit down – they had a break area, uh, yeah, you know, you could sit down  
12 and you could eat your lunch there. Uh, wherever you wanted to. If you  
13 wanted to go out – at first we had how many minutes? 30 minutes? Seemed  
14 like we had 30 minutes break, lunch, but then later, we had – did we have 42  
15 or what? I don't remember that.  
16  
17 Cheryl McQuaid: [26:48] So did you usually just go to the break room and sit down and have  
18 lunch with friends or...  
19  
20 Hattie Greene: Oh, I...  
21  
22 Cheryl McQuaid: ...did you go to the cafeteria.  
23  
24 Hattie Greene: ...yeah, sometime I'd go to the cafeteria and, and sometime I'd just sit down  
25 because my better half was there havin' his lunch too, so.  
26  
27 Marilyn Coulter: [27:05] So did you usually prepare lunch and bring it in...  
28  
29 Hattie Greene: Well, I...  
30  
31 Marilyn Coulter: ...[inaudible 27:08]?  
32  
33 Hattie Greene: ...usually bring my lunch most a the time, sometime. I like to bring mine  
34 'cause I didn't like all that they had, 'cause I never heard of bean soup till I  
35 had some here. [laughter] I really didn't. I never heard a bean soup.  
36  
37 Marilyn Coulter: So, Ms. Hattie, um, that's what lunches were like. [27:27] What were some a  
38 the types of things that went on in the Paint, maybe during holiday times,  
39 maybe when somebody was sick? Did you guys ever have dinners and  
40 things...  
41  
42 Hattie Greene: Oh, we had...  
43  
44 Marilyn Coulter: ...[inaudible 27:23]?  
45

1Hattie Greene: ...some a the best dinners that you could ever have. When a holiday come,  
2 we'd go around, we would, uh, plan what we gonna have, you know, and this  
3 person say they'll bring maybe baked beans. After I started bakin' beans, they  
4 always wanted me to bake beans. And we'd have chicken, we'd have ham,  
5 and you name it; all a that good stuff, we'd have it. They'd bring it in, and  
6 sometime, uh, we would, uh, take up money, they'd give money and someone  
7 would, um, you know, buy the ham or buy the chicken, and we'd bring it in  
8 here and we have all th-, everything that goes with it. It was really, really  
9 nice. We had some a the biggest dinner, and when a person come to time for  
10 retirement, we really had some dinners. We'd have a big dinner there and we  
11 would always, uh, take up an offerin' for that person. We'd go around,  
12 [thumping] they'd put the money in, and sometime, well, they would, they'd  
13 give'm the money. I remember, I think, when I retired, they gave me a little  
14 billfold and put the money in it. But it, it, it was nice. Those was the good ol'  
15 days. Everybody had gotten along good, you know. They'd realized that we  
16 all were the same.  
17

18Marilyn Coulter: Mm-hm.  
19

20Hattie Greene: I guess they realized, or at least they showed it, they didn't – so it, it w-, it was  
21 good. It was – the – I, I used to take up a lotta offerin' and things and get the  
22 dinner together. We didn't have to wait to no special day. Sometime even on  
23 the weekend, you know, like on Friday, we used to have a we gonna have a  
24 snack somethin'. You know, we'd bring food in and spread it on the table and  
25 everything. Good days.  
26

27Marilyn Coulter: Mm. [29:35] Did you develop any friendships during that time?  
28

29Hattie Greene: Well, I guess I did. The only s-, thing about it, I, I had friends; if they wasn't,  
30 they act like they was, because I s-, I spoke what I think. That's one thing  
31 about me: I speak what I think and they know, and, uh, you know, I have saw  
32 s-, so many times guys, you know, they would seem like they'd be – well,  
33 they seemed like to be kinda gettin' smart. You know, if you give'm an inch,  
34 they'll take two, and I would see some a these guys, some a these members  
35 was kinda [flippin' 30:11] girls, and these guy used to pat'm, you know, and  
36 they did, they really did used to pat'm and stuff, and so, but they didn't bother  
37 me. I said, "This belongs to Clifford A. and you touch not," and I was set. I  
38 covered the ground I was standin' on. Don't touch me. And you – I myself, I  
39 could tell if a guy, even if a guy, somebody would pass by me, and if they  
40 would kinda touch me, I could tell if it was intentional or just bein' smart, you  
41 know? I could. But I didn't'm an inch because I didn't want them to be  
42 comin' up to me for this and that; I had a husband, couple a months after I  
43 went in there.  
44

45Marilyn Coulter: [30:56] So, Ms. Hattie, in, in saying that and knowing how times have  
46 changed and because, you know, sexual harassment basically really didn-, was



1 something of later years, did a lot of that go on with the women? Were a lotta  
2 peop-, women sexually harassed and things like that in the Plant?  
3  
4 Hattie Greene: Well, they, they might a hollered that, but I don't think they were. They was,  
5 they was doin' that theirself, and then if they get caught, they might would say  
6 it, but, but some a these womens needed it, you know, and, and with all due  
7 respect, you supposed to carry yourself in a way that a man will respect you,  
8 and some a these womens went in here with the, they, they would look better  
9 if they had when they got to where they could wear pants and stuff like, you  
10 know, I mean shorts, you know? They would wear'm up so short and then  
11 they'd have holes in the pants, and some a the boys, the mens would have, you  
12 know, the younger men, have holes in their pants, you know, and stuff like  
13 that. Well, they, they brought all a this on theirself. If you want respect, you  
14 gotta show respect. And so, they were just all hangin' out, so what the guys  
15 gonna do?  
16  
17 Marilyn Coulter: All right, I see that. [32:11] So, um, [laughter] um, we had talked about the  
18 one thing, and I know you said one thing about being laid off, but one thing  
19 we didn't talk about, and you spoke a little bit about the wagons, [sniffing] but  
20 were you ever involved in any of the strikes?  
21  
22 Hattie Greene: [sniffing] I sure was.  
23  
24 Marilyn Coulter: [32:30] Is there anything that you can tell us about those that you remember?  
25  
26 Hattie Greene: Well, [inaudible 32:33] the s-, the strike, and, uh, you know, they had, um, we  
27 had strikes, and we had to picket and, you know, so long. You know, we, we  
28 w-, had a strike and we worked so long, you know, you stand at wherever they  
29 assign you to, you go out there and stand, and [background conversation] at  
30 times they would come around with coffee and stuff like that, you know, and,  
31 um, but it was okay because we had our rights, you know. If you – you gotta  
32 have to fight for what you want. So we were there, standin' up, some of us  
33 kinda shiverin' a little sometime, but it w-, it w-, it was nice, though.  
34  
35 Marilyn Coulter: [33:18] D-, do you remember how long you were out for [30 an hour 33:19]?  
36  
37 Hattie Greene: How long were we out?  
38  
39 Marilyn Coulter: When they did, when they took the strike for 30 an hour?  
40  
41 Hattie Greene: You know, I don't remember. I really don't.  
42  
43 Marilyn Coulter: [Inaudible 33:29] that long? Okay, that's fine. That's fine. Um, so –  
44 Doreen?  
45

1Doreen Howard: [33:37] Um, you were here [papers rustling] when the Plant was called Fisher  
2 Body...  
3  
4Hattie Greene: Mm-hm.  
5  
6Doreen Howard: ...and you were here through the name changes that occurred. What is your  
7 feelings about the name changes to the Plant?  
8  
9Hattie Greene: What's the name now? [laughter]  
10  
11Cheryl McQuaid: Lansing Car Assembly.  
12  
13Doreen Howard: Yup.  
14  
15Hattie Greene: Yeah. Well, yeah. Fisher Body was a real popular name, you know? Hoo,  
16 hoo, hoo. Some – I always called it Fisher Body, just, you know, 'cause that's  
17 all – that's what it was to me, you know. I guess that's what it'll always be.  
18  
19Marilyn Coulter: [34:18] Can you remember one of your happiest moments in the Plant?  
20  
21Hattie Greene: One a my happiest moment when I got my check. [laughter]  
22  
23Marilyn Coulter: [34:31] Can you remember what your check was when you retired? What you  
24 were bringin' home when you retired versus when you first came in?  
25  
26Hattie Greene: Well, when I came, came in, it was, it was very small; um, it was somewhere,  
27 uh, pro-, I don't know, \$100. You know, you used to work all them hours,  
28 you know, I mean work 40 hours and you didn't get a lotta money, but y-, it  
29 was a lotta money then...  
30  
31Marilyn Coulter: Mm-hm.  
32  
33Hattie Greene: ...and you could do a lot with it.  
34  
35Marilyn Coulter: So \$100 versus [coughing] several hundred dollars later.  
36  
37Hattie Greene: Yeah.  
38  
39Marilyn Coulter: [35:09] Um, what about your, um – do you have a best [coughing] – a worst  
40 job or a best job that ya did?  
41  
42Hattie Greene: A what?  
43  
44Marilyn Coulter: A best or worst job that you did in the Plant?  
45

1Hattie Greene: The best, the best job I did was, uh, relief on Repair. [Is that what you mean  
2 35:30]? The worst I did was sealer. [recorder clicking] I don't remember  
3 everything. [laughter]  
4

5Marilyn Coulter: [35:35] Now, did you [throat clearing] – I know that, [coughing] I know that  
6 you're a Christian woman and things like that. Did you participate in the  
7 bible studies that took place in the Plant?  
8

9Hattie Greene: Uh, once in a while I would go over and, you know, [inaudible 35:51].  
10

11Marilyn Coulter: And participate in the – were they a...  
12

13Hattie Greene: Well, I'd just go over and listen to them read the scripture and all that kinda  
14 stuff...  
15

16Marilyn Coulter: Mm-hm.  
17

18Hattie Greene: ...and be talkin' about it.  
19

20Marilyn Coulter: [36:00] And those are some a the things you did during break sometimes?  
21

22Hattie Greene: Yeah, in my later years.  
23

24Marilyn Coulter: Okay. So, um, the next thing is I know that you were also union activ-, union  
25 active.  
26

27Hattie Greene: Mm-hm.  
28

29Marilyn Coulter: [36:12] Um, w-, did you ever hold a union office?  
30

31Hattie Greene: No.  
32

33Marilyn Coulter: [36:15] Did you go to union meetings?  
34

35Hattie Greene: Yes, I went to the union meeting.  
36

37Marilyn Coulter: And were you...  
38

39Hattie Greene: I didn't go all the time, but I went to union meeting.  
40

41Marilyn Coulter: Mm-hm. Occasionally? [36:25] Were you involved in any of the, um,  
42 committees or auxiliaries that were part of the union?  
43

44Hattie Greene: Pardon?  
45

1 Marilyn Coulter: Were you a member of any of the [sniffing] committees or auxiliaries for the  
2 union?  
3

4 Hattie Greene: Uh, [background conversation] no, I, I was a – no. [background conversation]  
5

6 Marilyn Coulter: [sniffing] You never participated? [36:43] Now, do you participate in any of  
7 the activities now?  
8

9 Hattie Greene: Well, I do occasionally. Yeah, I'm retired now.  
10

11 Marilyn Coulter: [36:51] So [laughter] you participate in the retiree functions?  
12

13 Hattie Greene: Yes.  
14

15 Marilyn Coulter: [36:56] And, um, I know you're also a part of the AARP, yes?  
16

17 Hattie Greene: Uh-huh.  
18

19 Marilyn Coulter: All right. And, um...  
20

21 Hattie Greene: And I'm takin', I take, I'm takin' those classes. I went over to this, um, Local.  
22 What's this Local right downhill from the 652?  
23

24 Cheryl McQuaid: 1618?  
25

26 Hattie Greene: 724?  
27

28 Marilyn Coulter: 754?  
29

30 Hattie Greene: Si-...  
31

32 Cheryl McQuaid: Oh.  
33

34 Hattie Greene: Yeah, you know, they was talkin' about, uh, community service and stuff and  
35 people's be abusin' all that kinda stuff and I went over there to see what it was  
36 all about.  
37

38 Marilyn Coulter: Mm-hm.  
39

40 Hattie Greene: There's a lotta things goes on that you don't know nothin' about, you could  
41 help somebody.  
42

43 Marilyn Coulter: Mm. [37:39] So, um, out of all the bargained benefits that we have, which  
44 ones do you appreciate that the union have got for you the best?  
45

46 Hattie Greene: Say what?

1  
2 Marilyn Coulter: Out of all our bargained benefits, which ones do you appreciate the best?  
3  
4 Hattie Greene: Which one do I appreciate the best? Well, I can't say which one I appreciate  
5 the best, but far as the, uh, since I've gotten old, the insurance, the retirement.  
6  
7 Marilyn Coulter: Mm-hm.  
8  
9 Hattie Greene: But it's one thing I always said, that the union, they missed their part.  
10 [background conversation] Uh, now what I'm gonna say? They bargained for  
11 everything else. I'm a person, I feel like – I'm just one person, I'm gonna  
12 speak what I feel – I feel like that a person retires from here, whatever their  
13 pension is, that they should be able to [papers rustling] get their pension then,  
14 and when they [papers rustling] become old enough for Social Security, they  
15 should get their Social Security and it shouldn't be no cut. Now, that's where  
16 they missed the ball at, [background conversation] because it so happened that  
17 when I retired, I never, never got the full pension. It wasn't somethin' that I  
18 had planned, but the year that I retired, 1993, I just said when I go this year, I  
19 said I'm gonna retire.  
20  
21 My husband tried to get me retired when he did; he retired about almost 7  
22 years before I did. But I had to make my own mind up, because I know it  
23 wouldn't be no comin' back, but in, in, in the end too, at that particular time  
24 when I retired, okay, I got my pension, but it was cut. I didn't know. I was 65  
25 years old when I retired. So, I never got the full pension. But I felt like if I  
26 didn't have it then, I won't get it. The Lord said that he would supply I would  
27 ever need [background conversation] and he has supplied my need, and the  
28 Lord is my shepherd and I shall not want. So I just thank Him and praise Him  
29 for that, so.  
30  
31 Marilyn Coulter: So, Ms. Hattie.  
32  
33 Hattie Greene: Yes, ma'am.  
34  
35 Marilyn Coulter: 40 years. Um, you went through a lotta changes, [background conversation],  
36 lotta name changes at the Plant. [background conversation] [40:32] Um,  
37 [background conversation] is there anything else that has a big – that left a big  
38 impact you, on you on, over your 40 years that you want to share with us?  
39 Just anything that...  
40  
41 Hattie Greene: Well, the only thing I can say, whatever you do, [beeping] do your best. Do  
42 the best thing that you could do, and don't let nobody turn you around, and  
43 when the time come for you to, you ladies to retire, you be very sure – it's just  
44 like that song – be very sure that [inaudible 41:09]. Be very sure that you's  
45 ready to retire. So I don't have any regrets whatsoever...  
46

1Marilyn Coulter: Mm-hm.  
2  
3Hattie Greene: ...of my retirement.  
4  
5Marilyn Coulter: And uh, I was gonna quick – I have one other thing. 40 years. 40 years...  
6  
7Hattie Greene: [Yes, ma'am 41:24].  
8  
9Marilyn Coulter: ...and they always called Lansing the Capital of Quality, and you've been  
10 through a lot of model changes...  
11  
12Hattie Greene: Yeah.  
13  
14Marilyn Coulter: ...different vehicles, and they called us a Capital of Quality.  
15  
16Hattie Greene: Mm-hm.  
17  
18Marilyn Coulter: [41:34] What would you attribute us being always #1 or #2?  
19  
20Hattie Greene: Well, you've worked hard. You worked hard and you try to put the – do a  
21 job, put the jobs together. That's one thing. You put the jobs together. When  
22 I, when I g-, you know, got my car and, uh, I always look around at the – you  
23 know, some people just look at the outside, but I know, I worked on cars. I  
24 know where to look for things at...  
25  
26Marilyn Coulter: Mm-hm.  
27  
28Hattie Greene: ...and so I, I look and – like my car was [hidden 42:09] one time, and so I said,  
29 "Well, let's call this to get it fixed." You know, well, everybody's gotta make  
30 a livin', and I understand. These repair shop, a lot of'm are just a ripoff, you  
31 know, because I, I, I know how we repaired cars on the line. You didn't have  
32 to – if you had a door, you didn't have to do that whole door. You know what  
33 I'm sayin'? We sand that door down, that spot, if it was a flaw in it, we  
34 mashed it all, it went through the spray booth, and you couldn't even tell that  
35 it had even been there. But everybody have to make a livin', so I understand  
36 that.  
37  
38Marilyn Coulter: Well, all right. Well, that's it. All right.  
39  
40Hattie Greene: Well, that's it.  
41  
42Doreen Howard: Yup. Thank you.  
43  
44Linda Johnson: Thank you.  
45  
46Hattie Greene: Well...

1  
2Marilyn Coulter: Thank you for your time.  
3  
4Hattie Greene: ...I'm – I was very pleased and I hope that I said somethin' that will enlighten  
5 you ladies.  
6  
7Marilyn Coulter: All right.  
8  
9Doreen Howard: Well, that's – thank you.  
10  
11Cheryl McQuaid: Thank you, Hattie.  
12  
13Hattie Greene: Thank you.  
14  
15Marilyn Coulter: Thank you, Ms. Hattie.  
16  
17Doreen Howard: Thank you.  
18  
19Hattie Greene: Mm-hm. [recorder clicking]  
20  
21  
22/rt