

1 **Edward Lazarus discussed his career as a production worker, quality control shipping**
2 **clerk, and UAW member at the Fisher Body plant in Lansing, MI**
3
4
5 Cheryl McQuaid: [humming sound in background throughout audio] This is Cheryl
6 McQuaid. [papers shuffling] It's, uh, 7:10 a.m., [grinding sound] October
7 11, 2005. We're in Lansing Car Assembly's Dock 15 and we're about to
8 interview Edward Lazarus. [0:17] Ed, will you please state your name and
9 address for the record and spell your last name, please?
10
11 Edward Lazarus: Edward Lazarus, L-a-z-a-r-u-s. 3105 West Willow, Lansing, 48917.
12
13 [tapping sound]
14
15 Cheryl McQuaid: [0:32] And what date did you hire in at Fisher Body?
16
17 Edward Lazarus: September 22, 1969.
18
19 [tapping sound]
20
21 Cheryl McQuaid: [0:39] Do you remember the first day you walked in this [tapping sound]
22 building?
23
24 Edward Lazarus: I remember the first day [chuckle] I walked in here.
25
26 Cheryl McQuaid: [0:43] Can you tell me a little bit about it?
27
28 [tapping sound]
29
30 Edward Lazarus: Well, actually, uh, I was coerced into coming here by my cousin who is
31 since deceased. Uh, I'm sure a number of people in here know Fred
32 Billings, uh, actually was a cousin of mine, and he bugged me for about 3
33 months "come down here and go to work." I said, "They won't hire me."
34 He said, "Yes, they will." He said, "They're hiring everybody that walk
35 through the door." Well, ta get him to leave me alone, I filled out an
36 application, he turned it in and brought me [papers shuffling] down here
37 and, and the rest is history.
38
39 Cheryl McQuaid: [1:15] So where did you hire in at?
40
41 Edward Lazarus: Um, I hired in, uh, workin' up in, uh – well A, A Line, um, repair actually.
42
43 Cheryl McQuaid: Wow, good job.
44
45 Edward Lazarus: Yeah, it was a good job.
46
47 Cheryl McQuaid: [1:31] What did you do?

1
2 Edward Lazarus: Uh, a job they call blackout. It was, uh, uh, adjusting the door glass.
3
4 Cheryl McQuaid: [1:38] And that was called blackout?
5
6 Edward Lazarus: Well, you know, when, when the window lays up against the seal strip, it
7 has a black line around it, and that's why they called it blackout.
8
9 Cheryl McQuaid: Oh [1:49]. And how long did you have that job?
10
11 Edward Lazarus: Well, I was on that for about a year and then I transferred to Quality
12 Control.
13
14 Cheryl McQuaid: [2:00] So was – what, what kind of initiation did you get when – I mean,
15 was there an initiation? When you walked in this plant did, did anybody
16 pull any pranks on ya, was it just kinda just come to work [scraping sound
17 in background] and...?
18
19 Edward Lazarus: Well, actually, they, they kinda sorta did. Uh, the worst one was my first
20 supervisor, uh, [Karl Shultz 2:22], who is since deceased also. But, uh, the
21 very first – th, the second week I worked here, come around payday on
22 Thursday night, [inaudible 2:34] I, I was 18 years old, and I was a green
23 kid from the country, ya know, I really was looking forward to that first
24 paycheck. And pretty soon all the guys I worked with, they start lookin' at
25 their checks and, and finally I said to'm, I said, "Where'd you get your
26 check?" They said, "Oh, the boss has got'm down there." And I said, "Oh,
27 well how do ya get it?" "Why [don't ya just 2:54] go down there and ask
28 him for it." So I walked down there and, and I kinda st-, stood around
29 there hanging my head 'cause I was real shy in those days. And, uh, finally
30 he looked at me, says, "What do you want?" I said, "Well, I was kinda
31 sorta wonderin' if I could get my paycheck." He reached back in his back
32 pocket and he pulled the checks out and he leafed through'm and he says,
33 "Here." He says, "If you don't straighten up, you're not gonna get another
34 one a them." And boy I tell ya what, I was scared.
35
36 [laughter]
37
38 Edward Lazarus: I was scared. If, if anybody, [inaudible 3:33] if any a you folks ever knew
39 Karl Shultz, he, he was quite a practical joker.
40
41 Cheryl McQuaid: [3:38] So apparently you got more checks?
42
43 Edward Lazarus: [Inaudible 3:42], yeah.
44
45 [laughter]
46

1Edward Lazarus: The other guys I worked with, I went back there [I said, 3:40] "Oh, the
2 boss is mad at me." [I said, 3:44] "I don't know what's, what's gonna
3 happen." And I was sure I was gonna get fired. I was sure. And they, and
4 they were all laughin' at me [saying "Ah 3:54] don't pay any attention to
5 him."
6

7Cheryl McQuaid: [3:58] So you mentioned that Fred Billings is your cousin and he worked
8 here. Did you have any other family that worked here? [papers shuffling]
9

10Edward Lazarus: My oldest brother worked here [clunking sound] a long time before I did.
11 He – I think he hired in about 1961, and he quit [tapping sound] about '63
12 or 4. He didn't work here very long.
13

14Cheryl McQuaid: [4:15] And where were you raised?
15

16Edward Lazarus: Oh...
17

18Cheryl McQuaid: [4:18] In the area or...?
19

20Edward Lazarus: Well, I was actually born in Flint and, uh, I grew up on a farm up
21 northwest of here about 50 miles till my folks divorced and then I moved
22 around a lot after that. My, my mother moved to Tennessee and, and then
23 Florida [clicking sound]. So I went to a lot of different places.
24

25Cheryl McQuaid: [4:38] Um, how long did ya work in your repair job?
26

27Edward Lazarus: I only worked that about a year and then I transferred into Quality Control,
28 and I was in QC for a long time, 14, 15 years.
29

30Cheryl McQuaid: [4:51] What kinda jobs did ya do in QC?
31
32 [papers shuffling]
33

34Edward Lazarus: Everything. I – for a long time I worked utility, relief. [tapping sound] I, I
35 never liked doing the same thing every day [tapping sound], so I always
36 liked utility.
37

38Cheryl McQuaid: And you did QC for a long time. [5:13] Can – do you have any special
39 memories?
40

41Edward Lazarus: Well, actually, ye-, I kinda do. Uh, one a, one a the things I remember and,
42 and it was a practice that I don't know where it got started but it always
43 seemed like the last day before Christmas – the Christmas shutdown every
44 year – everybody on Quality Control would always get dressed up. The,
45 the gals would all wear dresses to work, the, and the guys would wear a tie
46 and suit. And I don't know when that started or how long it lasted, but I

1 haven't seen'm do it for years. But we always used to do that. And then, of
2 course, we always had holiday dinners and, and, uh – and Quality Control
3 people always kinda set themselves a little bit above everybody else.
4 [tapping sound] I don't know why, but they always seemed to do that
5 [tapping sound]. They don't now, but that was then.
6
7 Cheryl McQuaid: I, uh, just realized that I did not inter – I did not introduce everybody that's
8 present in this room. [6:13] Could we quickly go around the room and let
9 everybody state their name?
10
11 Edward Lazarus: Sure, go 'head.
12
13 Mike Fleming: I'm Mike Fleming.
14
15 Linda Johnson: I'm Linda Johnson.
16
17 Doreen Howard: Doreen Howard.
18
19 Marilyn Coulter: Marilyn Coulter.
20
21 Jerri Smith: Jerri Smith.
22
23 Cheryl McQuaid: Sorry 'bout that.
24
25 Edward Lazarus: Oh, that's all right.
26
27 [clicking sound]
28
29 Cheryl McQuaid: [6:30] Um, [clicking sound] do you have a favorite boss?
30
31 Edward Lazarus: Oh, [inaudible 6:33] yeah, I'm sure [tapping sound] I do [chuckle]. Um,
32 for years I worked off and on for years in Quality Control. I worked for
33 Frank Spratto, and he was always, always was my favorite boss.
34
35 Female: [6:46] What made him your favorite boss?
36
37 Edward Lazarus: Pardon me?
38
39 Female: [6:49] What made him your favorite boss? Why – what was special about
40 him?
41
42 Edward Lazarus: Oh, I suppose because, uh, mutual hobbies, ya know, that, that we shared
43 and, and, uh – actually I worked for his wife before I worked for hi-,
44 before I even knew him. But, uh, after I met him, we, we became friends
45 and, and we're still friends.
46

1Female: I see that you're a hunter over here. [7:14] Is...

2

3Edward Lazarus: In fact, there's his pictures on the wall.

4

5Female: ...s that the mutual hobby? [chuckle]

6

7Female: [7:18] Is, is that your mutual hobby with Frank?

8

9Edward Lazarus: Well, that's what we share, yes.

10

11Female: I was gonna say, I thought he was a hunter [inaudible 7:25].

12

13Mike Fleming: [Inaudible 7:26]. A couple things before we go any further. [7:30] You
 14 wanna explain to everyone that doesn't understand that may be [creaking
 15 sound] listening to this what Utility and Relief was when you worked in
 16 QC?

17

18 [creaking sound]

19

20Edward Lazarus: Well, the u-, utility position [creaking sound] was, uh, loosely described as
 21 an absentee replacement. Now, whenever someone was on vacation, the
 22 utility person took their job or if somebody was off sick or whatever. And,
 23 uh, usually there, each department had a couple and, and, uh, that allowed
 24 ya not to have to do the same job all the time and alleviate boredom to
 25 some extent. And relief was, uh, in the older days we had what we called
 26 tag relief and the relief man would come around and give each person a
 27 short break in turn, 2 or 3 times a day.

28

29 [papers shuffling]

30

31Mike Fleming: Um, mutual hobbies being a hunter. [8:23] Um, Ed, you just a little bit
 32 more than a hunter? [papers shuffling] Would you like to explain to us
 33 what you do besides hunting? Uh, I, I kinda know you so go ahead and
 34 explain.

35

36Edward Lazarus: Well, I, I'm a gun collector. And, and, uh, and I travel a lot. Uh, I've
 37 always, uh, I've always traveled by motorcycle. [screeching in
 38 background] And at last count, I think I'm up to about 38 or 39 [outta
 39 8:50] the continental 48 on motorcycle. And, uh, and I'm planning, uh,
 40 shortly, hopefully in the spring, a trip to Alaska – on the motorcycle, of
 41 course.

42

43Mike Fleming: Um, let's go a little deeper, Ed. Explain – you are a gunmaker as well if
 44 I'm not mistaken.

45

46Edward Lazarus: No.

1
2Mike Fleming: [9:12] You don't make'm? Um, but you just, just...
3
4Edward Lazarus: No, I just collect.
5
6Mike Fleming: [9:16] ...you just collect? Ok...
7
8Edward Lazarus: Uh-huh.
9
10Mike Fleming: ...so you go to different antique shows and ev-...
11
12Edward Lazarus: Ya.
13
14Mike Fleming: ...and whatnot and collect, uh...
15
16Edward Lazarus: [clicking sound] Oh, I, I do a little service on'm, ya know, and, and, uh, ya
17 know, simple things that a lot of my coworkers have a, have asked for my,
18 use of my talents, if you will.
19
20Mike Fleming: [0:35] Now, that includes making your own rounds, and...
21
22Ed Lazarus: Oh, yeah. I, I load my own ammunition, and I shoot competitively as well.
23
24Mike Fleming: [And 9:44] y-, you've won some trophies at that, haven't ya?
25
26Ed Lazarus: Oh, jeez. I had s-, I've had so many trophies. But, uh, I used to shoot in the
27 national matches every year, and, and that was always an experience ta, to
28 go and hang out with a, the U.S. Olympic team, and, and be right there
29 with a, the people that travel and represent the country all over the world.
30 That was...
31
32Female: Wow!
33
34Ed Lazarus: ...the, the coach of the U.S. Olympic team was, he wasn't just a coach, he
35 was a friend to everyone – or is, I should say.
36
37Mike Fleming: [Inaudible 10:16] Can you remember his name, Ed?
38
39Ed Lazarus: Oh, yeah, Lones Wigger. Absolutely. Great guy, great guy.
40
41Mike Fleming: Now, we talked about the different docks in this, uh, facility. [10:29] Right
42 now you are what we consider a, dock...
43
44Ed Lazarus: Oh.
45
46Mike Fleming: ...dock controller, right?

1
2Ed Lazarus: No, actually not. I, I, I guess my official title would be shipping clerk.
3
4Mike Fleming: Ok.
5
6Ed Lazarus: 'Cause, 'cause this is now the shipping dock, or always has been actually.
7
8Mike Fleming: [10:43] But, ya have been dock controller [inaudible 10:44]?
9
10Ed Lazarus: I have been, yes.
11
12Mike Fleming: Um, and there's a lot of [clicking sound] things that you would do –
13 explain what you did as far as the safety of that, uh, the, [clicking sound]
14 uh, making sure that, uh, material got in and outside of the plant. [10:59]?
15 What did, what was your job?
16
17Ed Lazarus: Well, a-, a-, as dock controller you, uh, depending on whether you was rail
18 dock or truck dock, you schedule rail cars in the plant and, and I al-, and,
19 uh, do all the appropriate paperwork and the same thing with the
20trucks. And, and when I was a dock controller, um, I had a rail dock and
21truck dock [dinging sound] both, s-, so, I did it all [clicking sound] – or
22it
23 seemed like I did it all [tapping sound].
24
25Mike Fleming: But there was a particular function [clicking sound] that, uh, you had that
26 at some point made some people happy and made some people
27unhappy.
28 [11:36] Would you mind [tapping sound] explaining what that was?
29
30Ed Lazarus: Well, the, the problem with being a dock controller is, um, you're an
31 hourly person. And, uh, basically the work you do is what the supervisor
32 used to do. And, uh, so, y-, ya kinda get a, ya kinda get caught in the
33 middle so to speak. Um, I always tried to, to treat the people I worked with
34 as an equal. And, um, rather than tell'm to do somethin', I would usually
35 say, "Will you do this or, or this needs to be done." And, and try to be a
36 little diplomatic, if you will, because a lot of the people resented that. And,
37 um, you would occasionally get that, "You're not my boss. You can't tell
38 me to do this." But, um – so when you, when you get a situation like that,
39 you go to the boss and tell'm that this needs to be done and then go
40 tell the people to do it. [laughter]
41
42Mike Fleming: [12:29] Why don't you give more specificity [papers shuffling] of the job
43 that you had of, of letting the, uh, the train in and out, if you want to talk
44 about that?
45

1Ed Lazarus: Oh, th-, the, ya, th-, there was a safety involved in that. Uh, uh, you had to
2 make sure [clicking sound] that, uh, chocks were on, uh, that, uh, the
3 [tapping sound] railroad tracks were locked out with a personal safety lock
4 so [they 12:54] ensure the safety of the people that are, are, uh, unloading
5 the trains. And, and the same with trucks too, uh, although in the last few
6 years, we got docks [in the head 13:02], automatic dock locks [so 13:05]
7 where they couldn't unload the truck, couldn't even get on the truck unless
8 it was locked.
9

10Mike Fleming: [13:09] And you had to take a class for that, did you not?
11

12Ed Lazarus: Oh, yeah. I [had t- 13:12] safety and hazardous material and, and, and
13 everything.
14

15Mike Fleming: [Inaudible 13:16] Uh, well – I can [papers shuffling] remember, um, trying
16 to get from one end of the plant to the other and there was ole Ed blocking
17 my way. [13:27] Do, do you remember what I'm trying to say? Do you
18 know what I'm talking about?
19

20Ed Lazarus: Oh, yeah. The – we had a, uh, a bridge that was right in the middle of the
21 dock and, uh, it was kinda rather inconvenient. But, um, th-, the train was
22 on both sides of the bridge, of course, and so when it came time to switch
23 the trains in and out, you had to raise the bridge and block everything off
24 and. Course that raised problems in itself when people wanted to get from
25 here to there or especially if they were about due to go on break they
26 resent you raising the bridge. But, that, it was all part of the job. You had
27 to do it. And th-, the trains [tapping sound], of course, were on a strict
28 schedule. I mean they didn't, they didn't just come in at their convenience.
29 They, they ca-, they were supposed to come in at nearly the same time
30 every day.
31

32Chery McQuaid: [14:18] When did you go from QC to [tapping sound] the dock jobs?
33

34Ed Lazarus: Well, actually I, I worked for like about, um, maybe 14, 14 years on
35 Quality Control and then I transferred to the layout department and I, I did
36 rework, uh, during the pilot period when we changed over the front wheel
37 drive cars. It was a whole new concept of building cars and not the way
38 we built them prior to that. And, and there were a lot of problems getting
39 up and running wi-, with the new, uh, the unified body construction and,
40 and, uh, [tapping sound] and all that so. I worked at that for about 5 years
41 and, and, uh, then I went to – well actually went on the production line and
42 body shop for a couple years and then I was back into Quality Control,
43 worked in weld integrity for [tapping sound] 4 years and then I transferred
44 to material handling and, and, uh, ultimately got to be a dock controller
45 where I am now. Sadly, it takes about [tapping sound] 30 years to ge-
46 [chuckle], to get the job you always wanted.

1
2Female: [15:26] What is your current position?
3
4Ed Lazarus: A shipping clerk.
5
6Female: [15:30] And what does that entail?
7
8 [tapping sound]
9
10Ed Lazarus: Well, everything that leaves here has, um, has to be accompanied by
11 paperwork, which the corporate offices that's how they decide where to
12 bill everything to. So [I 15:50], if somebody takes out, uh, a box of, uh, a
13 box of gloves, for instance, it has to be accompanied by paperwork and
14 that's, that's what I do is all the paperwork, which is all, ya know,
15 computer generated now.
16
17 [papers shuffling]
18
19Female: [16:12] Do you have any specialized training that you had to have before
20 coming into this job?
21
22Ed Lazarus: Well...
23
24Female: Or...
25
26Ed Lazarus: ...actually, uh, computer skills are very useful. I kinda took to computer
27 like a duck to water. I mean not that I'm an expert at it, but I seem to be
28 able to make it do what I want it to do generally. Not always, but if I, if I
29 can't do what I want to do, I can usually find somebody who can [clicking
30 sound] show me how.
31
32Female: [16:41] [An- 16:42] so you were saying that th- [booming sound], this is a
33 preferred job so it takes many years of working here before you're able to
34 get into something...
35
36Ed Lazarus: Well...
37
38Female: ...like you're doing now?
39
40Ed Lazarus: ...it's all helpful, ya know, uh, having worked in, from one end of the
41 plant to the other. And, and, um, everything I've learned, ya know, during
42 the material handling process helps me now so.
43
44Mike Fleming: Talk about the material handling process from where we were to where we
45 are now. In fact, if I'm not mistaken, at some point we [tapping sound]

1 have gotten leaner and meaner in material to where we used to have stock
2 everywhere and to now we went to JIT. [17:25] Can you talk about that?
3
4 Ed Lazarus: Well, that started, uh, the concept started about 1984, um, when they
5 pioneered what they call just-in-time material. And, uh, [inaudible 17:38]
6 back when I first worked here, uh, they used 3 or 4 buildings for just, uh,
7 just warehousing material [tapping sound]. In th-, in those days you could
8 run for [clicking sound] better part of a week or more if you didn't have a
9 truck or a train come into the plant. And, course, all that warehousing cost
10 [tapping sound] money and y-, and the [clicking sound] stock is, has
11 money tied up that, that you're not using. And, course, and th-, with the
12 idea of freeing that up, they tried to streamline the, the process coming in
13 to where material coming in the plant would get here just a matter of a
14 couple hours before it was absolutely needed [tapping sound]. And often
15 times you would have the, the last box of stock on the line when the truck
16 backed in. You'd unload it and take it right to the line. And I mean it
17 would literally be just in time.
18
19 Mike Fleming: [18:36] And that's when they created what we call hot stock guys, right?
20
21 Ed Lazarus: Oh, yeah. Well, that's, that's where the dock controllers came from. They
22 usually – sometimes if a truck was late or whatever, sometimes you had to
23 have somebody grab it and run. They did-, they didn't have time to wait
24 for the, the regular operator to do it, might be tied up doing something
25 else. And there was a lot of that too.
26
27 Cheryl McQuaid: [19:03] So Ed, when you hired in here, this place was, was known as
28 Fisher Body and then it changed to BOC and then LCA and what did you
29 think about the name changes, um [papers shuffling] [clicking sound]?
30
31 Ed Lazarus: Well, actually, uh, that always saddened me because even, even now
32 people ask me where I work and, and I say, "Well, I work for General
33 Motors." But, ya know, I, I usually, um, qualify that by saying, uh, the old
34 Fisher Body plant. And, and this, of course, having been Fisher Body for
35 50 years or more before the name change, um, most people in the area
36 remember it [tapping sound] as Fisher Body, even now. And, g-, going to
37 – I always thought, ya know, when they went to the, the BOC for instance,
38 I always thought that made a lot of sense. But I still, I still felt I lost
39 something when it went to that, ya know, because we were for years a
40 separate entity in, within General Motors, and, and, um, that was special
41 [tapping sound].
42
43 Female: [20:15] Over your time here, um, has there been any, um, developed
44 friendships or lasting friendships? Um, you talked a little about Frank
45 Spratto and doing things outside with him. Um, do you have any other
46 coworkers that, that you do anything with?

1
2Ed Lazarus: Oh, uh, ya know, i-, it seems to be indicative of, of where we work, but
3 those of us that work here and have worked here for years, most of our
4 friends also work here. And, uh, I wouldn't say all my friends work here. I,
5 I've gotten involved in other activities and, um, in different, uh, singles
6 ministries in the area where I've volunteered and, and, uh, made friends
7 elsewhere. But still, most of the people I do things with are, ya know,
8 work here or have worked here, retired.
9
10 [tapping sound]
11
12Female: Now I know your, your cousin, Fred Billings, who passed away, I know
13 he was a union member, an active union member. [21:22] Were you e-,
14 ever an active union member? And were you ever active [inaudible
15 21:24]?
16
17Ed Lazarus: Well, actually I, I did, uh, try to run for alternate committeeman at one
18 time and I only lost by about 9 [chuckle] votes if I remember right. But,
19 uh, I don't know. I thought maybe I could do something good and it didn't
20 work out and, and it just – I never got interested in it again after that.
21
22Female: [21:49] You never got interested in running for office?
23
24Ed Lazarus: Right.
25
26Female: Okay. [21:52] But you were still a union supporter, right?
27
28Ed Lazarus: Oh, absolutely. [clicking sound] Ya know, I [tapping sound] been here for
29 a long time, ya know.
30
31Female: [22:00] Had you ever been through any of the strikes?
32
33Ed Lazarus: Oh yeah. 1970, [tapping sound] 68 days.
34
35Female: Oh.
36
37Ed Lazarus: Uh, I hadn't even worked here a year. Well, actually I got my, my first
38 year seniority during, during that strike. And newly married, and, and a
39 new baby, and, and, in those days we got – if you were married and had a
40 family you got \$35 a week. Uh, that was your strike benefit. If you were
41 not married, you only got 25.
42
43Chery McQuaid: [22:31] Do you remember why you went on strike?
44
45Ed Lazarus: Well, actually I kinda thought it was lark, but it sure did, uh, sure didn't
46 help the pocketbook. [tapping sound] Actu-, uh, the biggest issue at that

1 time I believe was, was retirement, was the 30 and out. And, uh, I, I do
2 remember, though, that, that, uh, the union asked for 30 – the right to
3 retire after 30 years seniority and, and they were paid [sigh sound in
4 background] \$650 a month. That was pretty good benefits in 1969, or
5 1970.
6
7 Mike Fleming: While we're talking about that, uh, you get the \$35 a week for your strike
8 pay. [23:18] When you hired in [tapping sound], Ed, versus to where you
9 are now, talk about your wage then, your wage now, benefits, and wer-,
10 what, what type of, um, what's – is it better or is it worse?
11
12 Ed Lazarus: Well, actually I hired in at \$3.39 an hour, which doesn't sound like very
13 much money now, but, but I actually believe we had more buying power
14 on, on that – in those days. Of course, we always worked a lot of overtime,
15 especially back in the 60's and 70's if sales were good and so, uh, ya know,
16 you would, you could actually make a pretty good living out of that.
17 [clicking sound] [Course 23:58] you could buy a new car for \$3000 then
18 too.
19
20 [laughter]
21
22 Mike Fleming: [24:03] And so now you are [clicking sound] at – where we are now is
23 wage-wise?
24
25 Ed Lazarus: Oh, 20, \$27 and change I think. I don't know, but seems like a lot. I just
26 think I pay more taxes.
27
28 [typewriter sound in background 24:19 to 25:50]
29
30 Chery McQuaid: So you've seen a lot of changes. I mean as we've already said, you started
31 when the place was called Fisher Body, saw it go to BOC, saw it go to
32 Lansing Car Assembly. [24:30] What are some of the biggest changes
33 you've seen over the years?
34
35 Ed Lazarus: Well, actually, this, uh, this part of the building we're, we're sitting in right
36 now when I hired in here was a parking lot. And, um, I remember when
37 this was built. I remember when the, the south end of the, the, the whole
38 south end of the, southwest end of the plant was torn down and remodeled,
39 Building 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21. Those were all, all remodeled. And, uh,
40 became the pai-, the new paint shop, which, uh, was really – at the time
41 that happened, we thought that was pretty, pretty good because where I
42 hired in on the line was right beside the ovens and it was really hot back in
43 those days [chuckle]. I mean especially in the summer. And then when
44 they, when they re-, remodeled the paint department and put the ovens up
45 on the 3rd floor, then you didn't have to deal [tapping sound] with that

1 extreme heat all the time. That made it a lot more comfortable in the
2 summer. It's still hot in the summer, but it, not like it was in those days.
3
4 Cheryl McQuaid: Ya make me glad I wasn't here then.
5
6 [laughter]
7
8 Cheryl McQuaid: [25:41] Did you ever participate in any of the department dinners or...?
9
10 [papers shuffling]
11
12 Ed Lazarus: Oh, yeah. We, ya know, in Quality Control for years we had, uh, we had a
13 Christmas party, ya know, an off-site Christmas party every year that, that,
14 uh, initially started [clicking sound], uh, with just the salaried people and
15 then as the salaried and hourly personnel became more intertwined, ya
16 know, the hourly people were invited to'm [tapping sound] as well. And,
17 uh, and we have a tradition that, uh, was started back in the early 70's by
18 Frank Spratto and a, and a bunch of other old timers in Quality Control.
19 They have a venison steak fry every year that, uh, originally was just for
20 salary people and now it's, it's mostly about 50/50 and, and a lot of retirees
21 still go. Ya know, I go every year and I see people that retired years ago
22 and some people even come up to me and say, "What's your name again?"
23 And I say, "You were my boss for how many years and you don't
24 remember my name?"
25
26 [laughter]
27
28 Cheryl McQuaid: [26:52] Where were some of the, um, Christmas parties held? You said
29 they were [tapping sound] off site.
30
31 Ed Lazarus: Oh, they would often rent a hall [inaudible 27:01] or a banquet facility at a
32 golf course or something. One year we had it down to the civic center,
33 when we still had a civic center [chuckle].
34
35 Female: Now, Ed, you said that the Quality Control people kinda felt they were a
36 little bit maybe above the rest of the people. [27:17] Is that one of the
37 reasons because you had such a different type of relationship with
38 management than other people? Is that one of the reasons they felt a little
39 bit different or...?
40
41 Ed Lazarus: Well...
42
43 Female: ...[inaudible 27:25] above the rest?
44
45 Ed Lazarus: ...ya know, I, I don't know. It's just that, uh, it, it seemed like, course, the
46 different parts of the plant didn't intermingle that much with the other

1 parts of the plant. I mean the people that worked in the body shop always
2 stayed in the body shop. The people worked in trim always stayed in trim
3 and the people worked in the paint department stayed in the paint
4 department. And, ya know, having worked a little bit in the paint
5 department, but a lot in trim and body shop, ya know, I got to know people
6 all over, all over the plant. And oddly enough when I first had to work in
7 the body shop, I hated it 'cause I didn't know anybody out there. But now I
8 know people everywhere, so doesn't matter where I work.
9

10Mike Fleming: Bein', bein', uh, out here on the dock and doing what you do [sniffing
11 sound] this is like fall harvest time. [28:18] Do you get anything from like
12 your truck drivers [tapping sound] or whatever? Do they bring in produce,
13 stuff that they've grown or whatnot? Do you get any [inaudible 28:24]...?
14

15Ed Lazarus: Uh, the regular truck drivers do that sometimes. And, uh, not always, but
16 sometimes they do. Um, and, course, a lot of the people that have hobby
17 gardens here [clicking sound] bring in their surplus and just pass it out to
18 anybody that wants it.
19

20Mike Fleming: [Inaudible 28:43].
21
22 [typewriter sound in background in next several paragraphs]
23

24Ed Lazarus: I've seen that quite a bit.
25

26Female: [28:47] Now, will you be going out to the Delta plant?
27

28Ed Lazarus: Actually, no. When I'm done here, I'm retired.
29

30Female: [28:55] So what are your plans for retirement?
31

32Ed Lazarus: Travel.
33

34Cheryl McQuaid: Oh, that Alaska trip.
35

36Ed Lazarus: Ya the Alaska trip.
37
38 [laughter]
39

40Ed Lazarus: Who knows what I'm gonna do. I, I'm considering moving out of town.
41 Um, I live real close to work, which has been a real blessing. Um, I didn't
42 do it on purpose but, but, uh, having driven 50 miles one way back and
43 forth to work every day and get to where I only gotta drive a mile and a
44 half, that sure made a difference in, in wearing out a, the vehicle, ya know.
45 And I love living close, but since I'm not gonna be working anymore, I
46 just a soon live out of town.

1
2Female: [29:28] So since you're not gonna go to the new plant and since you're
3 gonna retire [inaudible 29:43], what would be a good message, what
4 would be a message that you'd like to leave for the young ones that are
5 still here?
6
7Ed Lazarus: Well, we don't get a lot of new younger people coming in and that's sad
8 because, um, manufacturing jobs aren't as available as they used to be.
9
10Female: Yeah, but we, but we have people who are, ya know, they're 5, 10 years in
11 and they still gotta a little bit of [work to go 30:09] before they can g-, get
12 to where you are.
13
14Ed Lazarus: Well, perseverance, uh, perseverance more than anything. Ya know, I, a
15 lot of the people I worked with over the years say, "Well, you've always
16 had a good job." And I, and it would seem that way, but, but, uh, ya know,
17 I put my time in on the production line too and, and I didn't always have a
18 good job. And, I remember one time for, for several months I worked at a
19 body shop hanging deck lids and, and when you pick up a deck lid out of
20 the rack and hand it across the line to your partner on the other side 8, 9
21 hours a day, ya get pretty sore at the end of the day.
22
23Cheryl McQuaid: [30:48] What would ya say a deck lid weighs?
24
25Ed Lazarus: Oh, now they don't weigh hardly anything, but back in those days they
26 were pretty heavy. Ya know, they probably weighed 30, 40 pounds.
27
28Female: [30:59] And for those that don't work here, a deck lid is?
29
30Ed Lazarus: Trunk lid. What we, now we cal-, commonly call it trunk lid.
31
32Cheryl McQuaid: Well, Ed, I really appreciate you spendin' the time with us this mornin'.
33
34Ed Lazarus: Oh, it was my pleasure.
35
36Cheryl McQuaid: [31:13] Is there anything that maybe I've not touched on that you'd like to
37 say or?
38
39Ed Lazarus: Well, I could say that th-, that this place – it, it's sad to me to see this place
40 close because, ya know, having – I didn't come here with the intention of
41 making a vocation but, but, uh, the benefits that I reaped over the years
42 and, and the friends that I made, it just made this place special. And when
43 it, when they, when they really close it for good, I mean we're [inaudible
44 31:42] closed, but when there's absolutely nobody working here and they
45 tear the place down, it's, it's gonna be a sad day. I can tell ya it's gonna be
46 a sad day.

1
2 Cheryl McQuaid: I agree. [creaking sound] Thank you so much.
3
4 Female: I have just one last comment. [31:54] Um, since you are one of the few
5 people that are left here with the plant closing, um, and you look out your
6 door here and you see all the lights down and, and hardly any people
7 [tapping sound] and all the equipment and everything gone, um, tell me
8 what's your viewpoint on, on that?
9
10 [clicking sound]
11
12 Ed Lazarus: Well, it, it, it seems pretty quiet. Seems like a tomb [tapping sound]
13 around here. It, it's so quiet now because for years even when, uh, there
14 was a lot going on even when the, the plant wasn't running and, ya know,
15 walk, people walking in and walking out and you don't see hardly anybody
16 walking in anymore. And I miss that. But, the, the new plant's gonna have
17 its advantages in increased ergonomics and safety and, and, uh – but I
18 don't think it's ever gonna be like it was. Nothing ever is. But this, uh,
19 [coughing in background] this was always a great place to work. And I
20 was always proud to say I worked here actually, yes. And, and I would,
21 uh, in my travels I would occasionally run into people in, in, uh, other
22 states [tapping sound]. I remember one time I was visiting my sister in
23 Arizona. My brother-in-law was in the sign business and he was working
24 at an Oldsmobile dealer.
25
26 And I was just spending some time with him and I was down at the dealer
27 just kinda wandering around and one of the salesman, of course, tried to
28 sell me a car and I said, "No, I was just lookin', just checkin' the cars out."
29 He said, "Well, why?" And I said, "Oh, I, I work where they build these,"
30 ya know. And, and he said, "Where ya work?" And I said, "Well, Lansing,
31 Michigan." And he said, "Oh." He said, "If we could get Lansing built cars
32 here," he said, "they don't sit on the lot at all." He said, "The cars that are
33 built in the other plants will set here." But he said, "People come in and
34 they, they, they look right at the sticker and if that's a Lansing built car
35 they'll buy it in a heartbeat." And that always made me feel special
36 because, uh, our cars were desirable. And, and, uh, [coughing in
37 background] people wanted'm.
38
39 Female: I, I think everyone [sniffing sound] here can agree with, with all of the
40 statements that you just said [and we're 34:17] also very proud to have
41 worked here [too 34:19].
42
43 Ed Lazarus: Well, I certainly am.
44
45 Female: We thank you for your time. We appreciate it, Ed.
46

1Ed Lazarus: You're welcome.
2
3Cheryl McQuaid: Thank you, Ed.
4
5Female: Thanks, Ed.
6
7Female: Thank you, Ed.
8
9Female: Thanks, Ed.
10
11Mike Fleming: Thank you, Ed.
12
13Ed Lazarus: My pleasure.
14
15
16/ce