DB: Fifteenth, 1987, Baytown, Texas. I am interviewing Mrs. Mary Easley, Mrs. Margie Eastwood, and Mrs. Francis ... Mary Francis Bonds on their work experience at the Humble Refinery during World War II.

Mrs. Easley, how old were you when you started working?

M. Easley: Eighteen.

M. Eastwood: My, you were young, weren’t you? [Laughter]

Ok, Mrs. Bonds, how old were you?

MB: Twenty-one. [Inaudible]

M. Eastwood: Twenty.

DB: Twenty? That’s Mrs., uh, Eastwood that said 20.

Ok, uh, Mrs. Easley, what kind of education did you have?

M. Easley: Uh, I had gone to Our Lady of the Lake College for three years, and I was majoring in chemistry. And, uh, they made me this fabulous offer. So, I left college, and came here to work.

DB: Ok, so you did leave college.

M. Easley: Um-hmm.

DB: It was before you completed your college.

M. Easley: When I came, I really thought I would go back. But I was making so much money, [Laughter] I just couldn’t ...

Unidentified: That was really a good job.

M. Easley: I couldn’t have done better with my degree.

Unidentified: No.

M. Eastwood: Couldn’t have done as well.

M. Easley: So I stayed.

DB: Ok, so you didn’t have to have a degree then? It was just ...

M. Easley: No, Uh-mm.

DB: They propositioned you out of the college is what they did.

MB: But most people did have their degree.

M. Easley: I was visiting a friend in Houston that summer right after school was out, and we decided to get summer jobs. And we went to Humble and applied. And then I got this letter when I got home. They put the wrong name on it, but it was to me. They put Sue on it.
[Laughter]

DB: Oh. Oh, ok. Uh, what year did you start to work there?

M. Easley: 1943, July nineteenth, ‘43. And I was actually 19 in August.

DB: Oh, ok. Mrs. Eastwood, what kind of education did you have?

M. Eastwood: Uh, I went ... I attended Rice for four years, and I have a general academic degree. I have a major in Spanish.

[Laughter]

DB: A major in Spanish. And you went to work for their lab, right?

M. Eastwood: Right. Well, I had had some biology and some chemistry.

DB: Ok, uh, how did you find out about your job?

M. Eastwood: Uh, they sent a representative to school, and uh, gave us some tests, and had some interviews, and then made some job offers.

DB: Made some job offers.

M. Eastwood: Um-hmm. And that was more money than I had ... but that was a real good time to be looking for a job, because, um, all the men were gone, and, uh, you didn’t have to go to them. They all came to you. But that was the best offer by far I had.

DB: Ok, what year did you start to work?

M. Eastwood: Uh, 1943, July the fifth.

DB: July the fifth, ok.

Ok, Mrs. Bonds, what kind of education did you have?

MB: I had my degree in Home Economics from TWU. It was TSCW then. And, uh, they came out ... I majored in Home Ec, and had a Minor in Chemistry. And so many from there that, they got the home economic majors ‘cause they had had the science minor. And, uh, let’s see, that’s was the most money we could make anywhere. For sure.

M. Eastwood: People wouldn’t believe it when I told them how much I made.

M. Easley: I know.

MB: I was gonna be rich!

[Laughter]

MB: And they came to college and gave tests. And, uh, then they made offers. And I came.

[Laughter]

DB: Ok, did you ever complete your degree?
MB: Oh, I did finish.
DB: You did finish?
MB: Uh-huh. I was finished when I came.
DB: Ok. What year did you start?
MB: 1944, July 17. That year, remember?
DB: That ... they must have hired in at July.
Unidentified: July, I remember.
Unidentified: Ya we all came in July.
MB: I said I ... they ...
[Inaudible]
Unidentified: No, in June.
M. Eastwood: There was one group that came the week before I did.
MB: And Barbara.
M. Eastwood: All ... everybody from Rice but Kathleen and I came the week before, and we were real hurt.
MB: Hurt? I told them, they said, ‘when can you come to work?’ And I put September.
Unidentified: Well they wrote me and told me to come in July, and be counted.
M. Easley: She wanted the summer off.
Unidentified: I wanted the summer off. [Laughter] That’s the way kids are these days.
M. Easley: I know it.
DB: Ok, uh, were any of y’all married?
M. Easley: No.
DB: Ok, that makes that question easy. Ok. Well it sounded like it was pretty easy to get on then.
M. Eastwood: It was.
DB: At that time. That’s one of my questions. Ok, Mrs. Bonds ...
MB: It wasn’t that easy, either, cause a bunch of ‘em took tests up there, and they didn’t hear and they were killed ‘cause they didn’t get the job.
DB: Oh, ok.
MB: When I ... they were hiring so many, but they really did go to a lot of schools.
M. Easley: The company.
MB: And they gave tests, they, you know, they interviewed you. It wasn’t that, uh, that easy.

DB: But they did have a … they basically, though … they, they sort of had a large selection of women to choose from then, going to all the colleges?

MB: I guess they went to all colleges that were...

M. Easley: They hired about 90 or something that first summer, didn’t they?

M. Eastwood: Uh, well they had two labs. Remember the butyl lab and the butyl dining room. And I bet there were more than 90. I think we had 90.

MB: Now, at ours they were all college people. Over at the other lab they were not. You remember that? Every time …

M. Easley: That’s right. Many of them were not across the street or any time.

Unidentified: Um-hmm, um-hmm. Ya they were not. But then, uh, but in our lab they were. In fact, can you think of anybody that wasn’t?

M. Easley: Uh-mm, they all were. And mostly graduates from college.

MB: Um-hmm. You were the only one.

M. Easley: I think I’m the only one that wasn’t. And the only reason I got on was because I was a chemistry major.

MB: Um-hmm.

DB: Ok, ok. Um, Mrs. Bonds …

MB: Um-hmm?

DB: Were you expected to give up your job after the war ended?

MB: No. Now they told us we were not. We were not hired to replace anybody. That this was a new – well, which it was – it was a new laboratory, and uh … but, but this was a year later they made that letter. That said you would …

M. Easley: That says you might have to.

MB: Uh-huh.

M. Eastwood: Well, you had the understanding that you could be laid off any time they wanted.

MB: Well, now, see they didn’t tell me that a year later. Uh-uh.

DB: If I’m not mistaken, I read something about, and I have it on notecards at the house, that after a certain year, that they didn’t have to sign … they used to have to sign a card saying that they knew that they were going to be temporaries or something, I believe. And then after a certain date, that went out of effect. But I forget what date it was.

M. Easley: I don’t believe I did.

DB: It may have been before ’43.
M. Easley: Well we were the first women to ...

M. Eastwood: I don’t remember signing anything to that effect, but I, I do remember saying the job was temporary.

DB: Ok, that was Mrs. Eastwood that said the job, remembered that the job was temporary.

M. Eastwood: Let’s see, mine wasn’t either ‘cause I remember staying in Baytown for the year or two at least.

MB: That I can remember it was not. And I don’t remember signing any ... I know I didn’t sign anything.

DB: Ok, Mrs. Easley, what – were you told it was temporary, or sign this?

M. Easley: Maybe I was, I don’t remember. I don’t remember signing anything, but, uh, that doesn’t mean I didn’t sign anything. Because I might have.

DB: Ok, uh, I’m, I can’t, it was form ... some kind of number, I can’t remember. It was form something, and it had a number on it.

M. Easley: We had a lot of, um, things we had to do when we first got to the office. And, uh ...

M. Eastwood: I could have easily have signed it and not ...

Unidentified: Well me too!

M. Easley: That’s what I’m thinking that I may, I probably signed everything they gave me to sign, and I may have signed something like that--

MB: But now I know for a fact--

M. Eastwood: [Talking over each other]: [Indecipherable]...help.

MB: ...when the war was over, those women were let go if they were packing rubber. And the people ... over 35 ...

M. Eastwood: All the people over 35 were terminated.

DB: Ok. Mrs. Easley, what was it like to work at the lab?

M. Easley: Oh, it was so much fun. The first thing they did was train you.

DB: Um-hmm.

M. Easley: Showed you what to do even though you had a little background, but, uh, oh we just had a wonderful time! There was all girls our age, and, uh, we just did everything together, and we enjoyed it, our supervisors were good to us. And uh, we just ... it was just the most wonderful time of my life, really.

MB: How many was it, were the girls at one time?

M. Easley: Over 100, a 125 or something like that, that I remember.

M. Eastwood: The only thing, I guess, unpleasant now is shift-work.

MB: Oh. It was horrible.
Unidentified: That [indecipherable] was at the shift-work.

MB: And I agree, it was terrible.

M. Easley: And I was fortunate, I only worked shift-work one night.

M. Eastwood: And I didn’t work shift-work long.

MB: And I did. Worked it two years.

DB: Ok, so Mrs. Bonds had to work it two years, she’d work two years. Ok.

MB: And I’ll never forget it.

[Laughter]

DB: What were your … what were your responsibilities?

M. Easley: Oh, we analyzed samples that came in, we went down on the units and took samples sometimes, and, uh, wrote up reports. I guess that’s about the only one.

DB: Ok, and Mrs. Bonds, was that the same? Ok.

MB: Ya, but let me tell you how they made us - and this is how they made us wear pants.

[Laughter]

MB: And we hated them. In that era, we didn’t like pants at all. We wanted to be a girl.

M. Easley: Where did they find them?

MB: And they were hard to find, and, uh, that was one thing that, have to remember Miss Hill [10:22] who came to college. She said, ‘Oh the girls look so cute running around in their little slacks.’

And, and you know shift work is nothing like a slumber party every night. [Laughter] It didn’t end up that way. But we thought it was the first night we … first time we had to work graveyards. We thought the next day was a holiday, and we all went into Houston and nearly died that night. [Laughter]

DB: Ok, I remember reading something in … something in one of the home things about … and it was, it was called Sleepy Time Gal, and it recommended putting black-up curtains up on your windows so that a shift-worker could go to sleep during the day. Did they mention any of that to y’all when you were working shift-work?

MB: No, but it was HOT. And we had no fans. It was horrible trying to sleep in those days.

M. Easley: No air condition.

MB: Trying to sleep in the daytime in the summer.

DB: Oh no. Ya.

MB: It was horrible.

M. Easley: Ya, I bet it was.
DB: Ok.

M. Easley: It’s hard for people nowadays to realize what it is without air conditioning because, uh, but we didn’t have it. It wasn’t even anywhere.

MB: We’d go to the store, and we wouldn’t even have a fan. Did y’all?

M. Easley: We had a little fan. I think we did, I don’t know ...

MB: I brought one from home well they finally let me have it. It was just terrible.

DB: Ok. Mrs. Bonds, what lab did you work in?

MB: I worked in the butyl … at the rubber plant.

DB: At the rubber plant?

MB: Uh-huh.

DB: Ok. And you met Mrs. Eastwood there?

M. Eastwood: We all worked there.

DB: All at the plant. Ok, so this ...

M. Eastwood: To begin with.

DB: And then you moved over to the refinery, or, uh?

MB: We did, and then, and then Margie and I worked out there for 15 years before I moved.

M. Eastwood: And I worked out there for five.

DB: Ok. Do y’all know, in the refinery itself, were there women working at the Humble Refinery in the lab?

Unidentified: Yes, yes.

Unidentified: In the lab?

M. Easley: Yes, because when I first came, I worked in the PT lab for two weeks. Before I went out to the Humble.

DB: Ok.

Unidentified: I had forgotten that.

M. Easley: And, uh, there were some…women out there.

DB: Ok, so. Ya.

M. Eastwood: We [indecipherable] over there because the rubber plant lab … the plant itself wasn’t open. Well maybe the land wasn’t ready.

M. Easley: I don’t think the land was ready yet.
MB: Well they didn’t, they didn’t start making rubber until after I came. So you were here a year before.
M. Easley: Ya. Well, we set ... we kind of set up some of that land, I think cause, uh ...
M. Eastwood: Then some units came on but not...
M. Easley: The PT lab in the refinery.
M. Eastwood: Ya. The light hydrocarbon lab.
M. Easley: Ya, had been there for years. Light hydrocarbon, that’s where I worked.
DB: Well, ok.
M. Easley: PT was next door. Physical testing is what PT means. Cause I worked in the light hydrocarbon I remember.
MB: Ya, and they hired a bunch of ‘em from college came and went to the light hydrocarbon lab up there.
M. Easley: Well, we just worked there temporarily.
M. Eastwood: We were contract.
MB: Ya. But I mean afterward [Inaudible]. They stayed there afterward. Well there was some women working in there at that time. I remember in particular, Rainy Fuller, was one of the ones, and she stayed there most of the time.
Unidentified: I didn’t know her.
M. Easley: She was Dr. Fuller’s wife.
M. Eastwood: Oh.
DB: Mrs. Eastwood, what were your responsibilities working in the lab?
M. Eastwood: Just running samples, tests, and setting up procedures, and, uh, we went down to the control labs out in the plant and, uh, took some samples, caught samples. Turned ‘em to IHB.
(Laughter, coughing)
DB: Ok, what is that?
M. Eastwood: IHB it was, uh, Isobutylene Humble Baytown, was what it stood for, and the ... it’s the place that they subtracted the isobutylene from the feedstock. And they did it with 55 percent sulfuric acid. [Laughter] And they had, uh ...
Unidentified: It did get on our clothes. We ruined all our clothes.
MB: Ya, your clothes – that was it – they just fell off of, you get acid on ‘em. You put an apron on, and then your slacks would fall off when you pull on the apron. And if you had a scarf when you started the beginning of the shift, it would be a tattered by the end of the shift.
M. Easley: And we went and washed ‘em is when we really found ...
MB: When I first came, I thought this is the awfulest bunch of looking people with their holey clothes, you know. I just thought, this is horrible! But it wasn’t long till I was just - a week - I was just the same way. It ruined everything I owned.

DB: OK, that’s Mrs. Bonds that made that comment.

MB: Yes.

[Laughter]

DB: OK. I remember reading ... I went and memorized...

M. Eastwood: the RHB and FHB, but that’s just too far from what you are saying?

DB: No. What is, no, I need to ... that would be, you know, something that’s difficult and unusual would be what I’d like to have on this tape. What is that?

MB: I can tell you something terrible about when they first started making the butyl rubber. At FHB, that was the finishing belt where the rubber was coming off, and they had these dryers that they put rubber on to dry them out. And they had built the building during the war with no windows in case Germany came over and bombed us. [Laughter]. No windows! It would get to 130 degrees, and no window. And they’d keep heating rubber and they were testing it right beside me. I never will forget that. That was horrible.

DB: That was Mrs. Bonds. That ... it sounds terrible. I mean, to be in room with no windows and that hot.

MB: Ya.

DB: Sounds like the inside of a car with the windows rolled up.

MB: Uh-huh. One man died.

Unidentified: Uh-huh.

MB: I remember when they cut a window. After a while, they cut a window, and that was wonderful. Just a 120 then. [Laughs]

M. Eastwood: Ya, you mentioned that.

DBL Ok, Mrs. Easley, was your pay equal to a man’s pay at that time?

M. Easley: I really don’t know.

M. Eastwood: I can ... I remember that it was. The union asked ... took a vote of all their male members in the laboratory, and they were afraid that if they paid the women less, that they’d get rid of the men and hire women. So the union insisted that the pay be the same.

DB: That was Mrs. Eastwood. So the union insisted that the pay ...

M. Eastwood: That’s the way I remember it. Course that’s been 40 years ago, but I remember Buster Austin told me that. That they had a meeting, and, uh, but... I, whether the company wanted to pay women less, or uh, or some of the men just wanted the women paid less. But they decided that that
would be to their disadvantage if they did. Because the company might get rid of all the men who were left who hadn’t gone to the service by then.

Unidentified: Which it would have.

M. Easley: I know, ya.

DB: Ok, and then ...

M. Eastwood: So as far as I know, the pay was equal. But the opportunity was very different.

DB: Ok, so y’all basically made the same.

MB: But there were very few men in there. In this. When we were there. It was a supervisor and just a few men.

M. Easley: Very few, right. Most of them off in the service.

MB: And I was telling Mary, I remember this very well. Y’all may have been gone by then. Always, uh, when the men started coming, well if a supervisor was gone, it was the senior person that would be in charge. They would push-up to supervisor. But a woman couldn’t do it. They wouldn’t let a woman do it. Were you gone then?

M. Eastwood: No, we, I was still there.

DB: That was Mrs. Bonds. They wouldn’t let a woman become a supervisor.

M. Eastwood: No. They did not.

MB: Um-mm. No even push-up for a supervisor. No way.

DB: Ok, it says here that after the training period, she’d make 95 and a half cents per hour. Is that what, basically what y’all made?

M. Eastwood: As far as I know, now, I’m sure that’s what it was.

M. Easley: I think they followed that pretty close.

MB: Um-hmm.

DB: Ok. It probably was [Inaudible]

Ok, now I also read in the Humble Bee, and I forget the man who wrote it. Mrs. Easley, were there restrictions put on you about talking about the plant? Were you told not to talk about the plant to anyone outside of the plant?

M. Easley: I don’t think so.

DB: No?

MB: I don’t think so. I don’t remember.

DB: Because there’s, there’s an article in the Humble Bee that talks about be friendly with outsiders and telling them what’s going on in the plant, because of the, the verse of people out there trying to get it all, gather information on the refinery. And I, I ...
M. Easley: We, I don’t think we knew anything to tell.
Unidentified: No, we didn’t know anything that we couldn’t tell.
DB: Ok.
MB: Maybe the BOW, or some of those others where they made the ...
DB: Made the TNT. That might have been out of that?
MB: Uh-huh. Was at one time, ya. I don’t remember it being ...
DB: But the Baytown ordnance were [inaudible]
Unidentified: There’s really nowhere ...uh, huh, I know it.
DB: I’m trying to catch up on all this. Cause I tried to ... I went back to the *Humble Bee* from 1941 through 1945 at Lee, but they’re all tore up so I have a hard time finding dates and places and ... BOW. And I’m ... that’s probably where the article come out of was BOW then. Because it, it had numbers.
MB: Ya, were they made the TN- [inaudible].
DB: Well, I, they made ...
M. Eastwood: They made some component of it.
Unidentified: Ya.
M. Easley: But it’s not the nitrogen?
M. Eastwood: No, the ... how do you pronounce it? The toluene?
MB: Toluene.
M. Easley: The Ni ... Oh, I don’t know.
MB: Nitrogen?
M. Eastwood: I don’t remember. It was ... That was pretty hush-hush what went on over there.
MB: Toluene for TNT, ya it was.
DB: Oh, ok, that, I’m sure that’s probably where it comes from then was that one. Ok, uh ...
M. Easley: But see, it was run by Humble. At Humble in [Inaudible]
DB: Now, the rubber plant was leased by Humble, and owned by the government.
MB: Right.
Unidentified: It was?
Unidentified: Oh, ya. Uh-huh.
M. Eastwood: I didn’t know that.
Unidentified: I thought it was.
DB: I remember you told me that.

MB: That’s why they didn’t care how many employees they had ‘cause the government was ...

M. Eastwood: Well, I knew the government called those bases, 10 ... called themselves 10 percent or something like that, but I didn’t know that the government actually owned the plant.

MB: Oh ya. Because when they ...don’t you remember when they sold it to, uh, Humble, everything started changing? They started not being so free with everything. That’s right.

DB: They had to start tightening down because the government wasn’t footing the bill anymore.

MB: That’s right. That’s exactly right.

M. Easley: Well.

MB: And we worked six days a week. Did you know that?

DB: Ok, six days, hmm? Uh, I talked to, uh, Mrs. Macy, June Macy. She worked in the storehouse. She was in the accounting department, and she, she said her job was already considered a woman’s job. The clerical-type work. But she said sometimes they’d work till 12:00 a.m. in the morning because of all the government paperwork over there that they had to do.

[Inaudible chattering]

Unidentified: That’s true.

DB: She said they’d, some of them used to try to hide out before they’d get out, before they got caught and had to work is what she told me all that.

DB: Ok, do y’all feel you were doing your part for the war effort? Mrs. Easley?

M. Eastwood: [Laughter] I didn’t really.

M. Easley: I was gonna say, I don’t think that that had anything to do with me coming to work here.

M. Eastwood: No, we were too young.

DB: You were too young?

M. Easley: We just, uh ... I just wanted a job. It was a wonderful job, and I loved it. I loved every minute of it.

DB: Ok. Mrs. Bonds?

MB: No, I didn’t feel like I was helping the war effort, I just had a job.

M. Easley: You know, we weren’t as close to that war because, you know on TV now, you see everything that’s happening all over the world. Only place we’d ever see anything like that is at the movies in the news segment, which they would have between shows.

MB: Uh-huh.

DB: No television.
MB: We didn’t have any TV, I assure you of that.

M. Easley: No TV at that time, but uh ...

DB: Well, I, I kind of forgot about that part of it. Uh, huh.

M. Easley: You’d listen to it on the radio, and read it in the paper.

MB: And read it in the paper.

Unidentified: Well everybody’s very [inaudible].

M. Eastwood: Everybody was real patriotic.

M. Easley: Oh ya. But much more so than they are now.

DB: Ya. Oh yes. They’re … um-hmm.

MB: Oh ya, I can remember I wanted to go into, uh, that … what was the name? Uh, Wade? And everybody threw a wall-eyed fit.

DB: That’s Mrs. Bonds.

[Laughter]

MB: They didn’t want me to go anyplace. But I thought that’d be …

M. Easley: I had a friend who was a nurse in the WAC. I guess … she was overseas right in the thick of it.

Unidentified: I wanted to, but …

DB: Mrs. Eastwood, that’s your opinion, too? That you were just there, you really, it was too far off to …?

M. Eastwood: Ya. Uh, no I never did really consider the job doing anything for the war effort. I would have like to have done more. But, uh …

M. Easley: Ya, now we went to USO dances, but that was for our own.

[Laughter]

M. Easley: But we did! Oh, we just had a wonderful time. They were held right here in Baytown in the county building.

DB: I remember reading about some of the things …

MB: I never went to a USO dance.

DB: Really?

MB: They must have stopped them by the time I came. Or I didn’t know they were …

DB: Ok, do any of y’all, or did any of y’all know anyone who worked – a woman – that worked in welding?

Unidentified: No.
DB: Uh, ok, I have a picture here in this book, and maybe you can tell me where it is. I’ve even doctored this book here and read it. And this has got a picture of a woman in an instrument shop.

Unidentified: Now that was many years later.

DB: Well this was supposed to be, and from what I understand, during the war.

M. Eastwood: But they might have been over at the refinery.

MB: I don’t think so.

M. Eastwood: You don’t think so.

M. Easley: I think that the lab was the only place that they had women, wasn’t it?

MB: No, no they had them on the units.

Unidentified: They had ‘em on the units.

MB: Not working, they had ‘em, like, well now, packing rubber, and uh ... They had someone at RHB, don’t you remember, they kept a bed. And, um, it wasn’t ... but they didn’t do any instrument work or anything like that.

DB: Ok, it says that this is Mrs. Mary Margaret Marson, and she makes a repair at the final instrument shop. And that’s what I was wondering if y’all knew of anyone who had, who had done any type of work like that.

[Inaudible chatter]

M. Eastwood: Not at our plant, these people were all men.

[Inaudible chatter]

DB: Ok. Do y’all have any pictures, or, or any time. Did y’all ever take your pictures with your outfits that you had to wear to work?

Unidentified: Mary, get out the pictures.

M. Easley: No, no, no, those aren’t the ones. They were from ’49.

MB: When they finally told us we didn’t have to wear slacks we were tickled to death. I remember that.

DB: Oh, they did let y’all ...

MB: Finally! Finally! Oh, that was a long time, ya.

Unidentified: That was after the war.

M. Easley: That was ’49, that was after the war.

MB: They ... we were supposed to wear long sleeves, remember? And close-toed shoes, and, and slacks.

DB: I think Mrs. Bonds is making a face over there.

[Laughter]
DB: Um, I remember reading in the *Humble Bee* that they had a pretty good segment there about what a woman should wear because it said if you dress her in something that’s unbecoming, her morale is going to drop, or maybe that was before it was banned.

M. Eastwood: What we wore was very uncomfortable.

DB: And so they had tried to find a design of a jumpsuit, which some of them had a jumpsuit.

MB: We didn’t have one, uh-uh.

DB: No, and some kind of scarf to go along with that.

MB: That must have been later, or they’re making up stuff.

DB: Or it was, it, or, I don’t know if it might have been maybe for the ones packing the rubber.

M. Eastwood: Well, it could have been, but I don’t know.

Unidentified: They had overalls?

M. Easley: Got any overalls in town?

MB: Uh-uh. No they didn’t.

M. Eastwood: I don’t even remember the men having them back then.

MB: They didn’t.

M. Easley: All I remember is those heavy old rubber aprons that we used to wear.

DB: Um-hmm. ‘Cause it said the women wanted to make sure they had pleated pants that showed off their tiny waists.

M. Eastwood: Probably.

DB: And, and it talked about wearing makeup. It said that, that women could use makeup in moderation, and they weren’t to have it painted on their face. You know, because that was sort of, distracts you because then she had to go back and forth to check her makeup all the time. This is out of the *Humble Bee*.

M. Easley: We weren’t restricted in any way that I remember.

M. Eastwood: No.

MB: Maybe they brought in some people into refinery one time, but I don’t know, uh ...

M. Easley: I don’t remember any of that.

M. Eastwood: Nothing was ever said to us about dress, except for the slacks.

M. Easley: You had to wear slacks. Is that in that, or did that lady tell me that when I hired in? Probably that when I hired in.

MB: They told us that, I know.
Unidentified: I can remember [inaudible]… what we should wear.

M. Easley: That we had to wear slacks. Because I really thought at the time, I thought: they’re really not gonna make us wear slacks. You know, she just said that. [Laughter] Cause really nobody, women did not wear pants in those days.

MB: When they, will you, when did they start hiring women out here like if they were somebody in instruments. With your notes, do you know?

DB: It was probably somewhere around 1942 at the time. It was after the men started going in. Um, ya I have … I’ve got to go back, I’ve got to find the [inaudible] Humble Bee’s with all the dates in it. I have the list of the … they, they said at one time they had 425 women hired in to somewhere. And I have the list of names of women that were hired in too, [indecipherable] at the plant. Um, probably un-marri-, they, they weren’t, a lot of ‘em probably weren’t married, and right now, it’d be hard to track those people down because of the name changes.

Unidentified: Um-hmm.

DB: I didn’t notice any of your names, but I’m not sure what your …

M. Easley: What our maiden names were. No, none of, nobody was married except, uh …

Unidentified: Jackie.

DB: Um-hmm.

M. Easley: Was there anybody else that was even married?

MB: Ya. There was, uh, Helen, what was her name? And her husband was a policeman. He was a friend of Mary Virginia.

M. Eastwood: Well, uh, Sandy was married.

MB: Ya.

M. Easley: Fanny and Betty were both married.

M. Eastwood: Fanny and Betty. But they came later.

MB: Later. They came later. And Patti Shaver. She was Patti Spear.

M. Easley: Ya, she was married. But didn’t she marry after?

MB: Uh-uh. He was, in fact he was, uh, a prisoner of war. When she was there, he was … because I remember when she got her letter from him that he was released.

DB: Ok, Mrs. Easley, what was your maiden name?

M. Easley: Carlson

DB: Carlson?

M. Easley: Uh-huh.

DB: Mrs. Bonds, what was your maiden name?
MB: Barron.
DB: Barron?
MB: Barron.
DB: B-A-R-R-E-N?
MB: B-A-R-R-O-N.
DB: O-N, ok. And Mrs. Eastwood, what was your last name?
M. Eastwood: Walker
DB: Walker?
M. Eastwood: Um-hmm.
DB: Ok. That will help me. I can to go back and see if any of your names were on that list.
MB: We could probably help you out with a lot of it.
M. Easley: I would love to see a list of the workers over at the lab where, ya.
DB: Ya.
M. Easley: We’re always trying to find one ... I oughtta write my name on that so that, cause I will want that back, it’s been one of my favorites all these years.
DB: Oh, ok. Ya. And, and, ok, none of y’all have any pictures or any, like, photographs?
M. Eastwood: Uh, not back then, I don’t think.
M. Easley: When we first hired in? I was showing them some pictures.
MB: We didn’t wanna have our pictures made lookin’ that ugly.
M. Easley: Looking like we did. But when I was showing them pictures when you came I found this. When I retired, when I retired, now this was in ’49, see ... let me show you. Mrs. Eastwood is right here. See, she has on slacks.
DB: Ok.
MB: Oh my goodness.

[Laughter]
MB: You had a dress on, though.
M. Easley: I had a dress on, ya. And there’s Jenny and Vicky. Now Jenny still lives in the area. And, uh, [inaudible]. Well now I’ve got a dress on, too. I don’t know why everybody’s in dresses. We weren’t in dresses by then, were we?
MB: Ya, we were in dresses. We were, as soon as they found ... we found out they could do it in the refinery, boy they ... see here’s... where you didn’t have to wear slacks.
M. Easley: Anyway, these were, these were just with that letter.

MB: And her ... when she retired, did we tell you that? You had no options when you were pregnant.

DB: Oh, you had to retire?

MB: You had to quit, you couldn’t work.

M. Eastwood: You could work for six months.

M. Easley: Ya, that’s what I’m saying, they ... I quit before they had to tell me to retire.

DB: Oh.

MB: And you didn’t get your job back. That was it. That was...it.

M. Easley: Oh, no.

MB: And they didn’t hire another woman until the ’70’s, I think. Barbara Morgan was the first one.

DB: So from the time y’all hired in, do you have any idea of when they quit hiring the women in?

MB: Probably about a year after I came.

Unidentified: Or after then.

DB: 1945?

MB: Probably. Cause Margie was in that last group, wasn’t she?

M. Eastwood: I don’t remember when anybody came for sure.

MB: But she was, she was a year after me, I know. And I don’t remember ‘em hiring anybody after that.

DB: And then y’all, ya’ll were able to stay out there. Unless you became pregnant, and then you had to quit.

MB: Correct.

M. Easley: Well, and a lot of ‘em quit when their husbands or boyfriends came back from service, you know.

DB: Or they married.

M. Easley: Or they moved, ya, or got married and moved away. But, uh, for the most part, uh ... But they stayed.

Unidentified: Ya, they stayed.

DB: Because, because I know that, that even in here, there’s a quote when she’s, she’s talking about the war and how that were the women really going to give up their jobs? The ones that must have hired-in inst-... replaced the men at the very beginning and signed that form, or, were told that they were temporary, and they knew this.

MB: They had to.
DB: They had the, you know, we were given the impression, and from, well, let’s see, like, I’m 33. I’ve always been given the impression that the women would gladly have given up their jobs when their husbands or their boyfriends come back, or when the men come back, they would ...

M. Eastwood: They probably would have in those days.

M. Easley: A lot of ‘em would. We were ... that’s what we were taught.

Unidentified: I would! [Laughter]

M. Eastwood: But we were pretty well brainwashed.

M. Easley: Oh ya, it’s like I was telling Sue this morning. Nobody complained when they didn’t let the woman be the supervisor.

M. Eastwood: No, we just thought that’s the way things worked.

M. Easley: Of course, ya.

DB: So y’all didn’t think it was unfair, or you didn’t have any objection?

M. Eastwood: No, we didn’t even think about it.

MB: I thought it was, I ... it made me mad. It sure did.

M. Eastwood: Well, I guess it crossed my mind that the men weren’t as well qualified as we were.

Unidentified: I thought ... that’s true. It’s really true.

MB: But I’m, I was telling Mary, I was trying to remember. Out there at the rubber plant they were doing exactly what they wanted to cause we didn’t know what they were supposed to do. And Kyle Wade before he was killed, was trying, with the union, he was doing something. Seemed like after a year. Then he went in training for – what was that – if you dried hydrocarbon it was, uh, a name. You remember?

Unidentified: No.

MB: And they weren’t lettin’ ‘em all do it. It was ...

Unidentified: Oh! Special tester.

MB: Special tester. They were not lettin’ ‘em all do it, and they were supposed to. That was the next step. And they were picking whom they wanted. And, uh, Kyle Wade was gettin’ ‘em straightened out when he was here.

DB: Gettin’ who straight?

M. Easley: The union, you know.

MB: The union. He was gettin’ the union to it because, see, we didn’t know they were supposed to do any different. We didn’t know there were rules they had to go by, or were supposed to go by.

M. Easley: That’s right. We didn’t know that much about union work; how it, how it was done.

M. Eastwood: We just expected whatever it was told.
M. Easley: uh-huh.

DB: Well were the women allowed to join the union?

M. Easley: Oh ya.

M. Eastwood: Oh ya. But the union fought for women a lot, too. They were ... I think.

MB: Well I can remember going to a union meeting. Maybe it was after the war. And the men probably started the rumor that they were gonna get rid of us or something. And going to a union meeting – I remember this. There weren’t very many there and Satterwhite, remember Satterwhite?

Unidentified: Um-hmm.

MB: Would stand up and he said y’all have nothing, he said the National Labor Relations Board would come down and take our charter so fast if something like that happened. So, uh, maybe we were scared at one time, I don’t know. That they were going to take our jobs. But they did take a bunch of ‘em that had to quit.

DB: Ok it says here, “When the war ended in August 1945, the refinery made plans to replace returning veterans in their old jobs with as little delay as possible. It also would help them find housing, which was very scarce in the area. Most of the women planned to quit and resume, or take up housekeeping. While not mentioned in the Bee, it was understood that women would gladly relinquish their high-paying wartime jobs. Those who must work would return to clerical positions to make room for veterans.” Uh, “The Baytown Ordnance Works closed almost immediately after VJ day, and it had furnished the Armed Services over 50 percent of the chemicals needed for explosives, but now it was no longer needed.”

MB: And they all came to the rubber plant, you remember that? They came and they stayed.

DB: They all did?

MB: Uh-huh.

DB: So the workers that had worked there just transferred over to the rubber plant?

MB: Um-hmm.

DB: See, this is what we’ve always read. That women were just, you know, just ...

MB: Ok, if they were out in the refinery, it could have been, but not in the laboratory.

M. Easley: Not where we were, it was ...

M. Eastwood: Well, they never asked us to leave.

M. Easley: Uh-uh. Oh, see, by that time I had transferred into the refinery.

M. Eastwood: Ya.

M. Easley: And I was at the general local lab and I never had any doubt about my job.

MB: Well I can remember, now who told me this many years ago? It was back then if they found out that women were really good in a laboratory, they could do more things faster than men, and would have more things going than, uh ...
DB: Is it because maybe a woman was out to prove that she could really do it, that she did it better?
MB: No.
DB: Y'all didn’t think of anything like that. I know sometimes, you know ...
M. Easley: These days, I think women are usually doing that, but I don’t think we were.
MB: I don’t think we were either. We did it for our own ...
M. Easley: We just did it cause we enjoyed it, and ... or did y’all?
[Laughter]
M. Easley: Had to make our own living.
M. Eastwood: Well, we, and we were children of the Depression, and jobs were appreciated back then.
Unidentified: Right.
MB: And, were hard to find.
M. Easley: That’s right.
DB: Ok. Were y’all there for the, I think it was the billion gallon day?
MB: I was.
M. Eastwood: I was.
M Easley: Ya I was.
DB: All three of you were there for the billion gallon day celebration?
Unidentified: Uh-huh.
DB: That was a, a real big thing for the plant, wasn’t it?
Unidentified: Ya,
MB: Uh-huh. I remember the day they invited the community out, remember they had all that [inaudible]
M. Eastwood: The whole community.
DB: I’m trying to think of the date.
MB: I don’t remember the date. I probably have some stuff on that. I’ll look in ... I have ... I’ve saved some things, but not much as Mary. [Laughter]
M. Easley: This is all I had. I just had a ... I have a little ...
MB: Do you have our safety pin that looks like a bow?
M. Easley: Ya.
MB: Did you pin it on you?
M. Easley: And I have a little piece of butyl rubber.

Unidentified: First day it came off the [inaudible].

M. Easley: Ya, but it doesn’t have a date on it. I can’t believe it doesn’t have a date on it. Has my name on it, but it don’t have a date on it.

DB: Date on it.

MB: I remember the night that came up.

DB: Now if any of y’all can find any kind of pictures or even news ... I don’t know if I ... newspaper clippings that I can make copies ... well I may be able to ... no, all the newspapers are on file now. I mean, but I have to look through this machine to find ... I’ve got to go back through. Um ...

M. Easley: Most of the pictures that I have are social. [Laughter]

MB: Uh-huh.

M. Easley: Yes, you know, they’re not [inaudible]

DB: Well, ‘cause would y’all have any pictures of the billion dollar – I mean, billion dollar – billion gallon day celebration? Can you think?

[Inaudible chatter]

M. Eastwood: I know there were a lot of pictures from the Sun.

[Inaudible chatter]

MB: I just went ‘cause it was something to do, I’m sure.

[Laughter]

DB: Um ... that’s ... I’m trying to think. There was something here, and I forgot to write it down.

MB: I think up to a year they could fire you at any time.

M. Eastwood: They still ... I think they still can.

MB: They still have that option. But after a year, then, there’s supposed to be just cause for, you know, and ... And I saw Mrs. Dean. You remember Cybil Kerrington? They ... Lefty came out there and fired her at night. And I know good and well that wasn’t legal, cause she’d been here ... had been here long enough that they couldn’t have done that.

M. Easley: I don’t remember. I remember when ... I’m gonna change that name cause they, that was not my name.

M. Eastwood: Mrs. ... was let go, but I don’t remember why.

MB: I don’t know why, but I just remember that it was in the middle of the night.

DB: Do y’all remember reading any stories, ok, I’ve been reading some of this propaganda magazine. Like, and I don’t know if y’all read True Story or The Post. Do you remember reading any stories about
how the women were coming to work to help, to replace the men? In other plants, you know? And have it seeing pictures in magazine showing the women working in the plants?

MB: I just remember that show, “Rosie the Riveter.”

[Laughter]

MB: I think that was all kind of fiction on that.

M. Easley: Ya, we weren’t that kind of ...

M. Eastwood: I think they did in places like shipyards and places like that they did women working as welders and that kind of stuff.

DB: Well, do you think it was because the Humble Refinery was maybe more conservative? That they didn’t have women out doing that? Or did they still have enough men down here?

M. Eastwood: Well, I think that, uh ...

MB: They got deferments for the men, too.

M. Eastwood: They got to keep ... ya, they got deferments for men that they could sit out on the units and places like that. And the engineers, a lot of ‘em wouldn’t accept ‘em there either, cause ... could’ve had a deferment, but he ... in fact he had to quit. He couldn’t, they wouldn’t let ... they wouldn’t release him, so he had to quit to go work ...

MB: Work the BOW. Uh-huh.

M. Eastwood: Ya.

M. Easley: They made him stay, so he quit.

M. Eastwood: He had a hard time getting his service back, too, didn’t he?

M. Easley: He never did.

M. Eastwood: He never did.

MB: Oh, he didn’t ever?

M. Easley: No. He probably should but he ...

Unidentified: Because it ... Ya, he should.

M. Easley: He didn’t like to make waves, you know.

Unidentified: Ya.

M. Easley: But, uh ...

M. Eastwood: All of the men were eligible for deferment, if they wanted. A lot of ‘em didn’t want it, though.

DB: Uh, I read in the Humble ... did y’all read the Humble Bees at the time they were being made?
MB: Oh, ya. We ... the gossip, probably.

M. Easley: We loved ‘em.

DB: Uh, Amy McCullough was for ladies, the Interest of Ladies. She wrote a lot of the Interest of Ladies for a while. And then it changed to another woman, I forget who started writing it. In fact, I saw Mrs. Teeter’s, uh, engagement picture and her wedding picture in the *Humble Bee*.

MB: Uh-huh.

M. Eastwood: Ya.

DB: And then I, I would hear, uh, a lot of the, they would tell a lot of the women’s engagements and who’s marrying who and ... and different things like that.

MB: Ya.

Unidentified: Ya, mine was in there.

DB: Ok. Um, I was wondering, because that’s where I come up with some of these articles about the dress and the makeup, and the picture of the lady with the jumpsuit and the ... the scarf around her head. It’s out of the *Humble Bee*.

M. Easley: Out of the *Humble Bee*. Imagine.

MB: Well I, I remember hearing stories about the women in town – now, this was not us – it was out in the plants. There must have been some men that didn’t like it that women were gonna go to work in the plants. And my favorite story is Connor. Did you ... you remember Connor, didn’t you?

M. Easley: Yes.

MB: He said his wife said, ‘What kind of women work out there?’ And he said, ‘Dogs. They’re ugly as they can be.’ And he said, ‘I was in Houston with my wife, and I got off the elevator and here came three women. They were all good looking women.’

MB: It was Fernie and Goldie and Carrie.

M. Easley: Oh!

MB: Dressed up. He said, ‘They never spoke to me in their life,’ and said, ‘that day they just all fell on me.’

[Laughter]

MB: Said his wife said, ‘who were those women?’ He said, ‘those are those dogs.’

[Laughter]

DB: That was Mrs. Bonds.

[Laughter]

DB: There’s one ... That, that’s ... I’m glad you said that because that’s something I wanted to ask. Did y’all feel any resentment, yourselves, from any of the women out [inaudible].
M. Easley: Never.

MB: Never. Because we didn’t work with ...

M. Eastwood: Ya, they invited us over to their homes. They were so nice.

M. Easley: They had us over for holidays; the men and their wives. Ya. Lovely. Our bosses ...

M. Eastwood: Ya, and the supervisors and everyone.

DB: Ok, what was the average age at that time, out there for women workers?

M. Eastwood: The lab?

M. Easley: For us it was all pretty close to the same.

MB: Uh‐huh.

M. Eastwood: About 20, 21.

DB: Ok. Because, when … I lot of people have done a lot of studies, and I happen to pick up and the read the books, and it was saying like, you know, most of the pictures portray the women as being very young, very beautiful. And yet, they’re also finding that a lot of the women had gone to work that were in their 30’s, uh …

[Tape 1 ends.]

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Transcribed by: AS 12/15/2017

[Tape 2 of 4 begins.]

MB: Fannie and, uh, oh …

M. Easley: Betty?

MB: No. Florence Olberg and somebody when they were giving a safety award, and it was on the front of the Bee, and Ray Sweet sent that to me one time. I’ve got that. But you don’t need those. You can find those from the Humble Bee.

DB: I can get those from the library and stuff and make copies of ‘em, I’m sure that they’ll allow me to … you know, we were just hoping we might be able to find some kind of photograph, you know, we wanted to sort of try [inaudible].

M. Easley: I, now, that’s one thing: I don’t think we could take pictures of the plant.

M. Eastwood: I don’t think so. I don’t think they allowed a camera inside the plant.

M. Easley: Uh‐uh. No, they didn’t. They did not.

MB: They didn’t. That’s one of ‘em. That’s right.
M. Easley: That’s probably one reason you don’t find many, is because I don’t think [inaudible].
M. Eastwood: Unless they were official pictures.
M. Easley: Uh-huh.
M. Eastwood: And that’s probably ...
M. Easley: They had a photographer, now, like that took pictures at parties and things like that.
M. Eastwood: Ya, ya.
MB: Ya that’s right.
M. Easley: But I don’t believe we were allowed, that ... we didn’t ...
M. Eastwood: And I don’t ...I still don’t think you can take pictures of the plant.
MB: No, you can’t. You can’t.
M. Easley: I bet not.
MB: It’s against the rules.
M. Eastwood: It’d have to be an official picture. Official picture.
DB: Official picture. That makes it hard. Did y’all have a lot of information in the Baytown Sun about the...when you were going to work at the plant or not? Do you remember?
M. Easley: I don’t have any idea. I don’t remember.
Unidentified: I don’t remember any pictures or anything.
MB: Since we just came, you know, to Baytown and you might talk to some old people that lived here. [inaudible].
M. Easley: But I really do think our experience in all that was a really unique thing, and we were so fortunate.
M. Eastwood: We thought at the time, of course.
M. Easley: Well, I still think so.
M. Eastwood: Ya.
M. Easley: I mean, I, when I was looking at that letter this morning, I thought, now this has shaped my life. If I hadn’t come here when I did ...
MB: That’s right.
M. Easley: ... I wouldn’t have known any of these people. I wouldn’t have married Glen. You know, my whole life was shaped by that.
M. Eastwood: Well of course.
M. Easley: But I really loved being out there.
MB: Oh, I enjoyed my job. I really did.
M. Eastwood: I did, too.
DB: Ok, y’all weren’t originally from Baytown?
MB: Oh no.
M. Easley: No, no. We were from everywhere.
DB: Ok, where were you from Mrs. Easley?
M. Easley: I was from Palestine, up in East Texas.
DB: Ok, Mrs. Bonds?
MB: I was from Pearsall, below San Antonio.
M. Eastwood: Yes and I was from Houston.
DB: You … Mrs. Eastwood was from Houston.
MB: I’d never heard of …
M. Easley: But we had [inaudible] from Louisiana …
MB: Mississippi … they went to Mississippi ; they went to girls’ schools and guys’ schools
M. Eastwood: All parts of Texas.
DB: I remember reading about, uh, they were writing to colleges …
Unidentified: They were writing to people from Mississippi.
DB: … uh, Louisiana, Mississippi, the Texas colleges. There’s an article in one of the Humble Bees that, when they’re mention ’em being hired-in, they put all the colleges they’re from, but also what, where they were from.
M. Easley: Now, see I never even saw any of those Humble Bees when I was …
MB: Uh-uh. No, we weren’t here long enough to …
M. Easley: We weren’t interested in reading about what was going on. We hadn’t even been here.
MB: But after we had been here a year or two …
M. Easley: After we’d been here a while, we wouldn’t miss it.
MB: We’d read it, you know.
M. Easley: I still read the Bee.
DB: Ok, did y’all … did they help you find a place to live here in town, or …?
MB: Yes.
M. Eastwood: Ya.
M. Easley: They helped us with everything, didn’t they?
M. Eastwood: Ya.
M. Easley: Oh, they were really nice.
M. Eastwood: The old Humble Company was very good to work for. That was just ... they had a good reputation.
M. Easley: Well they took care of their own. They did.
M. Eastwood: The old Humble Company. Now I’m not talking about Exxon. Although they’re ... I’m not going to say anything against ‘em, but it’s not the same company. There’s no doubt about that.
MB: No, I remember.
M. Easley: It’s not personal.
M. Eastwood: No.
M. Easley: It was so personal with Humble.
M. Eastwood: Ya.
M. Easley: I mean they would all come and find you a place to live.
MB: Find you a place to live, and ...
M. Easley: Find you a place to live, made sure you had a little social life. I mean they were ...
M. Eastwood: And if you needed some money, if you’d come here without money, they’d help you with that, or whatever you needed.
MB: I can remember when Blondie came here, we walked into Dr. Camden’s office, and there was a formula that covered the whole black board. And I said, ‘My Lord, do we have to know what that is?’ I don’t know, but it scared me to death! I thought, oh my word! I’m ruined!
[Laughter]
DB: Oh no. Ok, um. Right now, I guess that’s all. And I may ask to speak again to y’all later if that’s alright.
MB: Now vacations, let me tell you they changed this, too.
DB: Ok.
MB: When we came, you just got one week the first year, remember? And then you got two weeks. And then you had to work 15 years before you got three weeks. And it was 20 years before you got four weeks. Now you get four weeks at 10 years, don’t you? Now?
M. Easley: I don’t know.
DB: Ok, so you did get a vacation in there, too. After a year.
M. Easley: Oh, ya.

MB: Uh-huh, after a year.

M. Eastwood: I don’t think you got a vacation the first year. You had to work a full year.

MB: Ya, you had to work a full year, and then you can get ... got a week’s vacation.

M. Eastwood: We worked six days a week. Shift-work.

[Laughter]

M. Eastwood: But we enjoyed it. I enjoyed it.

MB: But I bet we could probably find some names for people that packed rubber. I’ll have to ask my husband. He might know.

DB: See, I would, I would ... Ok, because see, I’d really like to have ...

M. Easley: That’d be a whole different perspective.

MB: Uh-huh.

DB: Ya, see that’s, you know, I’d like to really have ...

[Tape cuts out]

DB: ... they would have hired the women in, had not the men gone to war? And left?

M. Easley: I don’t know.

MB: They didn’t for 24 years.

M. Eastwood: They didn’t. No they didn’t.

M. Easley: Ok, no they didn’t.

MB: Or 25.

M. Easley: I don’t think a woman ever got past the main office until the war.

DB: Ok.

M. Eastwood: They hired lots of women as secretaries, but they ...

MB: But not in the lab.

M. Easley: They worked in the main office, which is no longer there, but it was right at the gate. And women did not go past that gate.

DB: Ok.

M. Eastwood: It was, well, it took the civil rights laws ...

MB: Before they started hiring women.
M. Eastwood: ... before they started hiring women in men’s – in what they called men’s jobs. They’re called men’s jobs cause they paid about twice as much as the women’s jobs.

DB: Ok, that’s enough ...

[Tape cuts out.]

M. Easley: And it was, it was hilarious looking back at it, but at the time ...

MB: But the room we got, we had a school teacher’s room, and she came back, and we had to move. You know, it was just ...

M. Easley: Oh there were just no places. No places. It was terrible.

MB: But the room we got, we had a school teacher’s room, and she came back, and we had to move...

DB: I, I guess for me it’s sort of hard for me to see that because we have so many apartments around here.

M. Eastwood: I know it.

M. Easley: There was no such thing. A few duplexes. If anybody had a duplex ...

MB: Or units.

M. Easley: ... they were the luckiest person in the world.

MB: That’s right.

M. Easley: And we ate down at the little cafes downtown, you know, Waffle Shop.

DB: Well, that wasn’t very expensive to do that back then, was it? Or was it?

M. Easley: Nothing was very expensive, but of course we didn’t have a whole ... you know, our salaries weren’t big either. I’m sure it was ...

MB: It was big compared, but uh ...

M. Easley: Ya, but we had to, I mean we had to pay for everything but our – I don’t guess our room rent – I don’t even have any idea what we paid.

MB: Well see, it was frozen. The rent was frozen. They government put a freeze on it so they couldn’t charge you too much.

M. Easley: No one had a car. NO ONE had a car. We had a bus that ran into Houston. And there was a taxi that went from Baytown to Pelly to Goose Creek. You probably don’t even know about Pelly and Goose Creek.

DB: Well see, my father-in-law and them live off of Bolster Street. So that’s considered ...

MB: There was a bus running...

M. Easley: That’s Wooster.

MB: ...every 15 minutes to Houston.

M. Easley: To Houston.
MB: And we rode it every time. Every minute we had.

M. Easley: Down in old Baytown. That’s right. That’s right. Foley’s was right downtown close to the old Rice Hotel, and we’d go down there ... But, uh, we could take that taxi, you could go to Goose Creek – had two or three nice shops over there – Pelly, and then back to Baytown. It just ran a little triangle, and you hailed it. You know, and if somebody was in there, you got in there with ’em, and it was like a quarter, or something.

MB: And we rode the bus to work. I did. Or sometimes, when I first came.

M. Easley: Ya. I rode my bicycle when I got in the refinery.

MB: Ya.

M. Easley: I bought a bicycle, and rode a bicycle. Thousands of bicycles.

MB: Let’s see, out at Roseland, that’s too far.

M. Easley: That’s too far, ya. Well, we had a carpool when I lived down there. Rode with somebody carpool. I couldn’t drive it, I didn’t have a car. Nobody we knew had a car.

MB: I remember bringing Mother’s car. I got it [Inaudible] a little while.

M. Easley: If you had a car, you didn’t have any gas because of all the rations.

DB: Because the rations.

M. Easley: Right.

DB: I remember, going back to the Humble Bees, I saw where they had an all-women, volunteer ambulance corps. Corps, you know. It was all women, it was a whole group of women that was volunteered, and they were constantly asking for women to help make bandages.

M. Easley: Bandages. Red Cross bandages.

DB: Calling for the Red Cross helpers. At first they said you had to have a uniform. You had to wear certain stuff. Then it got so that they needed so much of it, they, they said you could come, you know, just dressed in normal ... you didn’t have to have all this other stuff. They just needed help getting ...

MB: We were just too young to do that.

M. Easley: Now see, my mother did all that, ya.

MB: Then we were ... You’re not from Baytown either, huh?

DB: I was born in Houston, but I’ve lived in five different states. And I’m out in Old River right now. But I lived in Baytown for just a short while. I just come to, I drive to school here.

MB: From Old River?

DB: Um-hmm. Ya. I used to live over in Craigmont. That was almost 11 years ago.

MB: Did you go to school here?
DB: I went to Sterling for one year, and I’ve gone to Lee College for a while. But I’ve been to school in Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma … all kind of places.

Unidentified: Everywhere.

DB: Everywhere, so …

[End of tape.]

Transcribed by: AS 12/18/17

[Tape 3 of 4 begins]

DB: October 29, 1987. I am interviewing Mrs. Eastwood, Mrs. Bonds, and Mrs. Easley on their social life that they had in Baytown during World War II when they had come to work at the Humble Refinery as young women.

Ok, Mrs. Eastwood, what did your parents think about your job?

M. Eastwood: Well, they thought it was a wonderful job. Or, my father and my grandmother. My mother was dead. My grandmother raised me.

DB: Ok. Uh, Mrs. Bonds?

MB: Oh, thought it was great. Didn’t want me to teach school. That’s what my mother did. Cause they didn’t pay enough.

DB: Ok. Mrs. Easley?

M. Easley: I think my folks were real proud that I was doing something. Working in such a wonderful position, ya. Making so much money.

DB: Ok, let’s see what I have. Ok, was this the first time you’d been away from home, Mrs. Eastwood?

M. Eastwood: Yes.

DB: Mrs. Bonds?

MB: I’d been to college.

DB: Well I meant, I guess, on a job, or off working off by yourself.


DB: Ok. Mrs. Easley?

M. Easley: Ya. Except for college that was the first time I’d gone anywhere.

MB: See, she stayed at home.

M. Eastwood: I went to school in … I lived in Houston and went to Rice.

DB: Ok. Ok, when you first came to Baytown, was it easy to find a place to rent, Mrs. Eastwood?
M. Eastwood: No, it was hard. Very hard. The company found us a temporary place. A school teacher had gone on a trip for the summer, and we would just have a...just had a three month room. This girl and I from Rice. And, uh, we had to find our own place after that. We had to get out after the school teacher came back. It was old Mrs. Shirley. I don’t know if you know the Shirley’s over in Goose Creek on South White.

DB: I don’t know that name. Ok, Mrs. Bonds?

MB: I had the same thing. I had a school teacher’s room. And we had to find something...something when they came back. And it wasn’t easy.

M. Eastwood: No it wasn’t.

MB: We rented a house. We found a house – it was on Massey Tompkins – we thought it was way out in the country. Well, it was. And we were so thrilled, and everybody thought we were so lucky. And then we stayed there for, like, three months, and it was supposed to be forever. They came back. They just wanted to make some money for two or three months. That was ... so I had to move to a room then. After that.

DB: Ok. Mrs. Easley?

M. Easley: And when I came down, I wrote ... I didn’t know a soul in Baytown, and I didn’t know that all these other women were being hired because I hadn’t been hired out of college. I ... and, uh, I wrote the parish priest here, and asked him to find me a temporary place. And he found a lady who was willing to let me share her daughter’s room.

M. Eastwood: Really?

M. Easley: Her daughter was a senior in high school. Pat Jacobs.

MB: I don’t know ‘em.

M. Easley: I stayed there six months. They were the...so nice to me. Wonderful.

M. Eastwood: Was that ... what was her name?

M. Easley: Pat Heiman.

DB: Ok. Ok, Mrs. Eastwood, how much did you have to pay for rent?

M. Eastwood: I don’t remember.

DB: You don’t remember?

M. Eastwood: I wouldn’t have any idea.

DB: Mrs. Bonds?

M. Eastwood: It wasn’t much.

MB: It wasn’t much, because there was a freeze on it. And, uh ...

M. Eastwood: But not too many of the landlords observed that. I think Mrs. Shirley did.
MB: Ya, it was, like, $25 a month, and two of us together. You know, it was just nothing, really. Cause I remember we had to get a room in the, where it was $30, and that was kind of ... we hated to go up in rent. [Laughter]

DB: Ok, Mrs. Easley?

M. Easley: I think I paid $40 or $45 room and board. And I had the best food. That lady was the most wonderful cook.

DB: Ok, and that’s for a month, right?

M. Easley: Ya, and I can’t remember if it was 40. It might, just put 40, that’s ... it might have been that. It was ...

MB: What Jacobs was that?

M. Easley: Al Jacobs. Albert Jacobs. Pat worked at the credit union for years. She has just recently quit, and [Inaudible]. Albert Jacobs. She was Pat Heiman. You’d know her.

DB: Ok. Ok, if you ... Mrs. Eastwood, if you rented rooms from private homes, did they have a curfew for you?

M. Eastwood: No.

DB: No curfew?

MB: No.

DB: None of you had curfews? Ok, I thought maybe that would ...

M. Easley: We didn’t really need one, I don’t think. We didn’t ever stay out late or anything.

MB: We stayed out all night when we were working shift-work.

M. Eastwood: When we had to work graveyards.

[Laughter]

DB: Ok. Mrs. Eastwood, how ... ok, if you worked shift work, how long was your shift at work?

M. Eastwood: Eight hours.

DB: They were eight hours? Were they all eight hours?

MB: Eight hours.

DB: Ok. Mrs. Eastwood, did you go straight home after you got off work? If you didn’t, where did you go?

M. Eastwood: Uh, well, ya, probably. We didn’t have cars. And usually you rode the work bus, or, every once in a while you got a ride. And when I moved to Baytown, I had a bicycle. You couldn’t get around too much without a car. I’d maybe go to the grocery store or someplace like that.

DB: Ok, Mrs. Bonds?
MB: Usually, but um ... there were four of us that had this house after we had to move out of that room. And if we wanted to buy groceries ...

M. Eastwood: She had a car.

MB: But before I had the car, when we wanted to buy groceries, we rode the bus, see, we’d have to buy the groceries and take a cab home. And of course on graveyards, the first week we all went to Houston that day cause it was a holiday we thought.

[Laughter]

MB: And every bus was every 15 minutes to Houston.

DB: Ok. Mrs. Eastwood?

M. Easley: Usually I just went straight on home.

DB: Ok.

M. Easley: I did go to Houston, though, when I worked graveyards. As soon as we got home we’d go shop! Spend money.

DB: Ok, Mrs. Eastwood, on your days off, what did you do?

M. Easley: We’d [Inaudible]

M. Eastwood: Go to Houston.

M. Easley: Go see the monument, went to Houston.

M. Eastwood: Ya. A few of the girls had cars. Like Florence. We’d all pile in ... I remember when 13 of us piled in one car.

M. Easley: Ya.

M. Eastwood: And went down to Coon Lake and swim in the ...

M. Easley: Galveston.

M. Eastwood: Galveston, and ... we hardly ever stayed home on weekends.

M. Easley: No, we always did something on the weekends. But it was ...

M. Eastwood: It was just something like a picnic or ... Lyondell.

MB: It wasn’t always weekends, though.

DB: Ok.

M. Eastwood: Well, no, because we had different days off during the week. You very seldom had Saturday or Sunday off. And we just one day a week off.

DB: So really, whichever day you had off, you basically did what you would have done on a weekend.

M. Eastwood: Ya.
MB: Ya, ‘cause, uh, we didn’t ... well not too many people had Saturday or Sunday off. If you worked days you did, but ... Well, not even that, ‘cause when I went on days even, we had that. They changed everybody’s days off.

DB: Ok. This is one that y’all can just answer together. What movies were playing at that time?

M. Eastwood: Good movies.

M. Easley: Oh, all good.

MB: Let’s see ... when we came, what was showing?

M. Eastwood: Janette McDonald and the Orphan Annie movies. Or was that earlier?

MB: That was before. We were in high school for that, I think.

M. Eastwood: Were we? I can’t remember.

MB: Ya.

M. Easley: I know there were a lot of excellent war movies.

M. Eastwood: Ya, there were a lot of war movies.

M. Easley: Now when was Song of Russia? Now, I remember that was such a wonderful movie, and they just made Russia look like ... Robert Taylor.

MB: No, Waterloo Bridge is, I remember. That was high school ‘cause I remember seeing it, and uh...

M. Easley: Ok, I think, Song of Russia was during the, was right early in the war, and that was Robert Taylor. I remember them showing Stalin’s picture and all the war.

MB: What was that, when everybody came home from the war? What was the name of that?

M. Easley: Yankee Doodle Dandy, and, uh, with James Cagney, when they’d won.

Unidentified: Johnny Comes Marching Home Again.

MB: I remember seeing Meet Me in St. Louis, what was it, with Judy Garland, in Houston after a graveyard. And I thought it was a terrible movie because I was so sleepy the whole time that I could hardly stand that. But we went to the movies constantly. Every time they changed.

M. Eastwood: Ya.

M. Easley: They changed usually three times a week.

MB: Uh-huh.

DB: I started, I should have went ahead, but they were having trouble with their copier machine. They had a list of pictures that were playing. I was gonna make a copy, but the machine was messed up on the one I could find it on.

MB: That’s when band giants... they weren’t ... 

M. Easley: Oh, they had one about Glenn Miller when he was killed.
MB: Uh-huh.
M. Easley: *The Glenn Miller Story*.
MB: *Orchestra Wives*...
M. Easley: *Orchestra Wives*, um.
MB: I see them on these old movie channels now, and I’m trying think of some of them.
M. Easley: What about Walter Pidgeon in ...
MB: *Mrs. Miniver*.
M. Eastwood: *Mrs. Miniver*. [Inaudible] Or was that after the war?
M. Easley: I think it must have been around during the war.
DB: I can go back and check them out.
M. Eastwood: Cause we saw everything that came to Baytown.
MB: Everything. Didn’t miss any of them.
M. Eastwood: And there were about three shows, I think. One in Goose Creek, and one in Pelly. Well now that one in Pelly...
M. Easley: There was two in Pelly, weren’t there? The Bay Theater wasn’t built yet. Was it?
MB: It was built early, I mean it was early after we came, soon after we came.
M. Easley: Soon after we came?
MB: Soon after we came. There was Arcadia.
M. Easley: And Arcadia, and that one closed, didn’t it?
MB: And the Texas, there were two in Goose Creek: Texas and another one.
M. Eastwood: You’re right, I thought there was three. One of ‘em, you didn’t like to go to it too much, ‘cause it had things crawling.
[Laughter]
M. Eastwood: I’d forgotten which one it was.
MB: It was the Arcadia. I remember seeing *Arsenic and Old Lace* that was, I remember seeing that in Houston.
M. Eastwood: Oh ya, well we went to Houston to the movies, too.
MB: Uh-huh.
M. Eastwood: The Bayshore bus ran every hour on the hour, or even off the hour.
MB: What about *Wuthering Heights*? Wasn’t that on then? I think it was. I saw it here, I know.
DB: Ok, um, do you remember how much it cost to go to the movies back then?

M. Easley: Not over 15, or 20 cents maybe? A quarter at the most. It was a dime when I was a little girl, I remember. A nickel on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

M. Eastwood: I was going to guess 50 cents, but it may not have been.

MB: I don’t remember. I really don’t.

M. Eastwood: Probably 25.

M. Easley: It’ll say … if you find the ads, it’ll say how much, but I’ll bet it wasn’t over a quarter.

DB: Ok. Ok, Mrs. Eastwood, did it cost you a lot to eat out?

M. Eastwood: No, because we usually ate at a boarding house. There was one over in Goose Creek, and then there was one in Baytown. And if I’m not mistaken, she charged, Mrs. Meekin charged $1 a day. For three meals; she’d fix you breakfast, pack your lunch and you’d eat supper over there.

Unidentified: Good gravy!

M. Eastwood: And all you wanted over there. And it was delicious food!

M. Easley: It was wonderful food, ya.

M. Eastwood: I remember we had three sandwiches in our lunch, and a piece of fruit, and a piece of cake or pie.

M. Easley: And no chips. No such thing, hardly.

M. Eastwood: Well, no. And, but, wasn’t it $1 a day?

M. Easley: I don’t know. I never ate there. See I ate with Mrs. Heiman.

MB: Well, I ate in the cafés. I wasn’t that lucky.

M. Eastwood: Well we did, oh I ate at the cafés, too.

M. Easley: Well I had to when you and I moved in together. Well then we ate in the cafés.

MB: I never ate at Mrs. Meekin’s. Ever.

M. Eastwood: Well I don’t see how Mrs. Meekin ever made any money. Because I didn’t eat all that much. I guess I did, but …

M. Easley: She fed a lot of people.

M. Eastwood: But some of those men, they ...

MB: I don’t remember what it cost, but I can remember when we first came here ...

M. Eastwood: I remember she charged a dollar a day.
MB: ... and we ordered, cause we were living in Goose Creek, we had to eat there. And, uh, we ordered the lunch. Everyday they’d fix our lunch. But we went to get it. It must have been the first week, and they were closed that day.

[Laughter]

MB: And we didn’t have a lunch! And we hadn’t been here a week, I guess, you know, and we were embarrassed to tell anybody we didn’t have anything to eat. We were starving to death. They didn’t tell us, you know, well, I guess they figured everybody knew, but we didn’t know they were gonna be closed.

M. Easley: Ya well see, Mrs. Heiman packed my lunch.

M. Eastwood: She didn’t ... well yah...

M. Easley: No, she was wonderful.

DB: Oh, ok. I was wondering about that, too. Well, basically you answered what type places did you eat at. So it was really cafeterias and ...

M. Easley: No cafeterias.

M. Eastwood: No cafeterias.

M. Eastwood: Cafés

M. Eastwood: No cafeterias, café‘s.

M. Eastwood: The Lone Star, um ... 

M. Easley: And boarding houses.

M. Eastwood: The Waffle Shop, and uh ...

M. Easley: Well there was that Tyree Hotel that ... now I never ate there either.

Unidentified: Lone Star

M. Eastwood: That was kind of a boarding house. I didn’t eat there, but a lot of people did.

M. Easley: I never did eat there. But I never ate at any of those ... I didn’t eat out until you and I lived together.

MB: And there was a drug store that we ate breakfast at.

M. Eastwood: Comb’s Drugstore.

MB: Comb’s.

M. Easley: Right across from the bus station.

DB: What drugstore?

M. Easley: Comb’s
MB: There was a Comb’s, but there was also where, in Goose Creek, Burt Black had a pharmacy.

M. Easley: There was a nice café downtown in Goose Creek, too.

MB: Um, what’s his name, not Francis Kiber, but his, Albert Kiber, his brother had it. I can’t remember the name of it, though. Tri City Café.

M. Easley: Tri City Café.

MB: Then I can remember, it was the second Christmas or something like that, that we came in. Dot was here. We had to work holidays, you know. Unless you happened to be off, be …

M. Easley: Have the day off.

MB: Have the day off, you worked it. And uh, there was no place open but the bowling alley. They got a hamburger at the bowling alley. There was absolutely nothing open in town.

DB: But the bowling alley was open on Christmas Day?

MB: Uh-huh. And they could get a hamburger there.

M. Easley: I remember that.

DB: Is that the bowling alley that’s on Bayway, or was that a different bowling alley?

M. Easley: No, it was in old Baytown.

MB: It was in old Baytown.

M. Eastwood: No, the one in old Baytown.

M. Easley: They used to have the...

DB: Across from Robert E. Lee?

MB: No.

DB: A totally different one.

MB: Ya.

M. Easley: Oh, ya.

DB: Ok.

M. Easley: They now have, uh, cookouts there.

MB: Rod-and-reel and Gun Club.

M. Easley: Rod-and-reel and Gun Club, and that’s where they oyster fries, and …

M. Eastwood: That’s where the old bowling alley was.

M. Easley: Ya, in fact Robert E. Lee has their chicken fry there. They used to. Did the year before last.

DB: Oh, ok. They may have to this year. You know, they’re doing it, since they’re not.
M. Eastley: Well they didn’t ever do it at the school. When they had their fundraiser, they always did it at that ... cause they had all that [Inaudible]

MB: It’s just a big place that people go.

DB: Ok. Uh, well you’ve already answered, pretty well answered that. It says, “With Houston being so close, did you go there very often? And what did you do there?” So you’ve pretty well ...

M. Eastwood: I went every weekend, or every time I was off, because my family lived there.

MB: I went shopping.

M. Eastley: We went shopping a lot, too.

M. Eastwood: Well, we went shopping, too, but I just don’t [Inaudible]

MB: Then go to the show. Eat. Ship Ahoy was downtown, remember?

M. Eastley: Oh, I loved Ship Ahoy.

M. Eastwood: And go to One’s a Meal breakfast.

M. Eastley: One’s a Meal. They had the best breakfast in the world. Called One’s a Meal. I think there’s still one. Is there not?

[Inaudible]

MB: I don’t know. They had [Inaudible] houses, and I think they’ve kind of started those again. I don’t know.

M. Eastley: Well, you know they had that men’s dormitory, too, that was here for a lot of the young, single men that came. And they had a place to eat with that. That was real good.

MB: Ya, it wasn’t open during the war.

M. Eastwood: That was after the war.

MB: Uh-huh, uh-huh.

M. Eastwood: I believe.

MB: I think it was too.

M. Eastwood: There just weren’t any men enough to keep it open during the war.

M. Eastley: I guess not, no.

M. Eastwood: It was for single people.

DB: Ok.

M. Eastley: Very few single men for all of us girls. There were lots of girls.

[Laughter]

DB: Ok, did you attend functions that were held at the Humble Community Building, Mrs. Eastwood?
M. Eastwood: Oh ya. Uh, that’s where everything was. That was the center of the activity, ya.
M. Eastwood: Everything. All, everybody’s wedding reception was held there, and, uh ...
M. Easley: Bridge parties.
M. Eastwood: Teas, bridge parties, uh ...
M. Easley: Dances.
M. Eastwood: Dances, everything. That’s where it all was.
MB: Style shows.
M. Eastwood: Style shows.
MB: Recitals. Music recitals, they had ‘em there. They had everything at the community house.
DB: That was sort of the hubbub of the community at the time.
MB: Meetings. We had meetings there.
M. Eastwood: Meetings, ya.
M. Easley: It was a really great thing.
M. Eastwood: And they had tennis courts, and they had an archery range.
M. Easley: Archery range.
M. Eastwood: And, what, it was just really a ...
M. Easley: Um-hmm. Super area.
M. Eastwood: Ya, and the company kept it all up, of course, and ...
M. Easley: Had all the equipment. Bridge tables. I mean if you wanted to have a bridge party you could have it there, and everything.
M. Eastwood: You wouldn’t have to clean up anything.
M. Easley: No.
DB: Oh, they clean it all up? Ok, then this question: what kind of functions did the Humble Refinery put on for its employees?
MB: The only thing ...
Unidentified: Did they just ...
MB: No, that was ... they’d, we had that Humble Day every year.
M. Eastwood: Ya.
MB: Well, I guess they still have that, don’t they? Ya.
DB: Um-hmm.
M. Eastwood: But they furnished that community house free of charge, and it was a lovely place, I thought. I don’t know ...

M. Easley: I don’t think they had anything special for all employees except Humble Day.

DB: Ok.

M. Easley: Which is like Exxon Day now, but, uh ... But boy, they really did provide for anything you wanted to do. And, uh ... and, like those tennis courts, they had a handball court over there.

M. Eastwood: Ya. I never did play handball, but I ...

M. Easley: Clem did. And the tennis courts, and that archery range. And it seems to me there was ...

M. Eastwood: Ooh well, they had picnic tables [Inaudible].

M. Easley: [Inaudible].

DB: Well anybody, then, could use the Humble Community Building?

M. Easley: Um-hmm. You had to sign up. Reserve it.

DB: You didn’t have to ... you didn’t have to work for ...

M. Eastwood: No, you didn’t have to work for ‘em. It was just for the whole community.

M. Easley: Exactly. You just had to reserve it.

DB: Ok.

M. Easley: See, they had a whole housing area in there, you know, for their, some of their employees. Need a pen?

DB: My pencil lead just broke off.

M. Easley: You want to pick it up?

DB: I got it. It come out.

M. Easley: Ya.

DB: Ok. Uh. Ok, I’ve got down here you stated earlier, in ... you stated in the earlier interview, that the Humble Refinery treated you like family. How so, Mrs. Eastwood?

M. Eastwood: Well, like, the bosses and supervisors took a personal interest in you, and, uh ... I remember when, when I went over to the refinery from the rubber plant lab, uh, all the bigshots came down and welcomed me. And after a few years, after I went out to the research building, they changed them so often you didn’t even know who they were. You didn’t even recognize them in the halls. But, uh, really I remember Dr. Greggor came down, and Dave [Inaudible]...

M. Easley: Dave [Inaudible].

M. Eastwood: Oh, they just really took a personal interest of ... well, they were all local people, too. Now they’re not. Uh, but, uh. No, most ...
M. Easley: Well, they lived here, but they didn’t come from here. When they signed their ...[Inaudible] ...Houston.

M. Eastwood: No, well, what mean is, they lived in Baytown, and when they came up through the ranks, and, uh ...

M. Easley: Oh, that’s true.

M. Eastwood: They were interested in Baytown. And you, you thought they were your friends.

M. Easley: Who?

M. Eastwood: Well, it’s your bosses.

M. Easley: That’s right.

MB: Because you felt like you were as good as anybody there. Even through the head of, uh ...

M. Eastwood: You didn’t really ... ya.

M. Easley: They pass through the plant and talk to you, ya.

MB: The [Inaudible]

M. Eastwood: Well, that was part of their job to come around and talk to us.

M. Easley: They know it by name. First name.

MB: Then, the later years, you just were not as good as those bosses. At all.

M. Eastwood: Oh, it’s entirely different now. It’s a whole different world.

DB: And that’s what I was gonna ask you is: it’s different now than what it was.

MB: Oh ya.

DB: There’s sort of like a superiority ...

MB: Oh, right.

M. Eastwood: Ya.

DB: And you’re ...

M. Easley: Ya, well they’re careful about mingling with the ordinary ...

M. Eastwood: ...peons.

M. Easley: ... ordinary people.

[Laughter]


Unidentified: Does anybody want coffee?

MB: Ya, I didn’t know I wasn’t as good as they were until I went to the research center.
M. Eastwood: Well, I knew, I knew … That’s where I … But even then, when I first went to the research center. Uh, as long as Dave Sycret was the boss out there, it …

MB: He was nice.

M. Easley: He was … ya, he was nice.

M. Eastwood: Ya. But now, very few of the bosses even live in Baytown. Most of ’em live in Clear Lake, or um, Wood, uh, Kingwood, or someplace like that, and they have no interest in Baytown whatsoever.

DB: Ok, but did …

M. Eastwood: They’re just here on training assignments before they move on to something better.

DB: Ok, do you think – since you’re still working there, and y’all worked there later – do you think that change has hurt the employee really wanting to do a good job for, for the plant? Where used to I think employees used to take more pride in their work, and now they don’t. The relationship, maybe, has caused a disintegration in…

M. Eastwood: I think so.

MB: I think so, too.

M. Eastwood: There’s no doubt about it. It was … it used to be known as a family company, and it really was.

M. Easley: I think that’s the big difference between the Japanese companies and ours today. They’re back where we were … they’re where we were back then.

MB: Uh-huh.

DB: Ya, the companies seem to take, the Japanese companies seem to take a personal interest in their employees. To make sure they’re healthy, they do, uh … I think they even have exercise.

M. Easley: They do. They have it classrooms and things like that.

MB: But of course.

M. Easley: But, now I think …

M. Eastwood: They still do that. Uh, Humble … Exxon does that for their executives. They do nothing for their wage jobs, so …

MB: The young people have changed, too, I think.

M. Easley: I think that’s more kind of …

MB: Uh-huh.

DB: Ok, they do that for their executives, but not for their wage …

M. Easley: But I think, too, Donna, with the, like with the company, it depends a whole lot on what department you’re in, and it depends a whole lot on who your boss …

M. Eastwood: On your boss.
M. Easley: Some of the bosses are wonderful.

DB: Um-hmm.

M. Easley: And they really are down-to-earth. And it doesn’t matter, I mean there is no ... they never think they’re better than anybody. And then there are some that are so, just, so full of themselves that they can’t lower themselves to be friendly. But, the ones ... there are some who are really down-to-earth.

MB: Sure.

M. Eastwood: I think it came about when they started moving them so often.

MB: Uh-huh.

M. Eastwood: They’re ... when they’re migrating through, they don’t ... they’re not, and they know they’re not going to be here but a year.

M. Easley: Ya.

MB: That makes sense probably. There’s no...

[inaudible chatter]

M. Eastwood: And they don’t live in Baytown. They live somewhere else, and ... they just, uh ... I would, if I were in that position, I wouldn’t bother either probably.

M. Easley: They probably don’t have a whole lot of time to do it.

M. Eastwood: They don’t. They really don’t.

M. Easley: But there are some who are just really nice, nice people. And then there’s some ...

DB: Ok. Ok, when you went on dates, where did you go?

M. Eastwood: You mean during the World War?

[Laughter]

DB: Ya, well it, you know that’s ... you know, I think that’s probably. Well, did ... the next question would be: did the war rationing have any effects on where you were able to go on dates? So I don’t ...

M. Easley: It did, but the war effort really had a lot to do with our dates ‘cause there were so few men.

M. Eastwood: Single men.

M. Easley: Single men here. They were mostly all gone to war that, uh, very few of us dated very much. I don’t know, y’all maybe dated more than I did, but until he ...

MB: I did.

M. Eastwood: I didn’t. When I first came, I really didn’t. I didn’t date a whole lot.

M. Easley: Did you?
MB: Um-hmm.
M. Easley: I didn’t.
DB: Your date probably ... y’all just went to the movies around here?
MB: Ya, that’s ... or dances.
DB: Ya.
M. Easley: Most of your dates were with people who were in the service and visiting.
MB: And the ... they had an Elk’s Club here that some of the young men belonged to, and went to, uh, the Elk’s Club quite a bit.

[Phone ringing]
DB: Ok. Uh. Well, since they started ... they rationed the gasoline and all that. Y’all weren’t restricted, though, on where you could go here in Baytown, were you? When was that?
M. Eastwood: You were really restricted ... you couldn’t go on trips. You couldn’t drive, like ... uh, I didn’t have a car. My family had a car, but if you wanted to go, say, to New Braunfels, or San Antonio, or someplace like that, you were driving on old ragged tires.
MB: Ya.
M. Eastwood: And, uh, you had to save up your gas coupons. And it just really wasn’t any pleasure to take trips out ... except to Houston on the bus or something like that, but ... 
MB: I had a ... and shoes were rationed, too.

Unidentified: Shoes were rationed. It was terrible.
MB: But my uncle would get me shoes from some of the blacks that’d be out of their coupons, and I had a friend at home that they had a ranch, and they got a lot of the gas for, uh, for the ranch, you know, and he’d give me gasoline coupons.
M. Eastwood: Well I want to say one time we went to New Braunfels, but I think we had about three or four blowouts. Now, I know I ... I’m not sure of that, but that’s the way I remember it. And you had to stop and get your tire patched, and uh ...

[Laughter]
DB: I remember going through and seeing some of that collecting the rubber and, uh, about the rent restriction, uh ... ceiling limit. I think I caught an article that mentioned something about it. The government was gonna put a freeze on the rent.
MB: They did. I can remember we had a duplex in, uh, Goose Creek, and, uh, the lady had to come give us some money back ‘cause she had charged too much, and they got her.
DB: They got her?
MB: Uh-huh.
M. Eastwood: Well we always paid our rent, after that first summer, we paid our rent in cash, because I know that they were charging over the rent limit. Don’t you remember that, Mary? Mr. Long?

[Laughter]

M. Eastwood: I hate to start ... shouldn’t mention any names, but, uh ...

M. Easley: Ya.

MB: They did; they had it; they had a freeze on it.

M. Eastwood: That just goes to show that freezing things like that don’t work.

M. Easley: Ya, but we had an apartment in the back. And then we had all that apartment. Then we moved into that house.

M. Eastwood: The house. And there were five us in the house, and, uh... and we were paying pretty high rent. Weren’t we?

M. Easley: I don’t even remember how much.

M. Eastwood: But it was more, I think it was way over the limit.

M. Easley: Oh, I’m sure it was, ya.

DB: Well, I know I noticed, when I was going through want ads ... you know, you come across these want ad sections as it’s going. In 1941, and the early part of ’42, they had maybe three or four places for rent. And then the list for rent got longer.

MB: Ya, cause they started renting out ... ya.

DB: At a certain point, you know, rooms, [Inaudible].

MB: Of course you used to share ... I remember one room, we shared the bath with, with the people.

M. Easley: --With the family, ya. Well that’s what we did at ... on Iowa Street with the [Inaudible]. Ya.

M. Eastwood: I don’t think we had a private...our own private ...

M. Easley: No, no.

MB: They didn’t ... they weren’t fixed for that. They just rented out rooms.

M. Easley: Those houses just had one bathroom. You know, most of them.

MB: Uh-huh.

DB: Ya. Ok. Did the Humble Refinery have a policy of no dating between employees?

MB: No.

M. Easley: Not at all.

M. Eastwood: Never. Far as I knew.

DB: Ok, now this is ... Did you meet your husbands while working at the Humble Refinery together?
M. Easley: Not together, while working there.

DB: Ok, so you didn’t meet him at work.

M. Eastwood: Well I knew Harris from work. He worked in one of the refineries there but, uh ...

MB: Well I knew him, but I didn’t work with him.

M. Eastwood: I never worked in the lab with him.

DB: Well, I guess I didn’t mean that you had to work in the same area together. But if you had met him through the plant?

M. Eastwood: Ya.

DB: Or somehow.

M. Eastwood: Well, I met Harris through ... If I hadn’t worked out at the refinery, I wouldn’t have ever met him.

M. Easley: Ya, well if I hadn’t come to Baytown. But I really didn’t meet Clem at work. We used to see him, he and Bill, eating at the Waffle Shop and different things after he came back from the service. And really, I never met him. [Laughter] He just called me one day, and I knew who he was, and he knew who I was.

Unidentified: That’s all that mattered.

M. Easley: And that’s all that mattered. But, uh ... I never saw him at work. Ever.

DB: I was curious about that because I met my husband at work. He worked for Brown & Root, and I worked for Brown & Root. He was a welder; I was a painter’s helper, sandblaster. And that’s how we met. Through work.

M. Easley: But you maybe saw, maybe did know Harris at work. Through the lab.

M. Eastwood: Well, ya he worked in a different lab, but in the refinery area.

M. Easley: But Clem, he was up in the main office, and I never went up there for anything.

M. Eastwood: Ya, I knew who he was, ya. But he was just an acquaintance.

M. Easley: Ya.

M. Eastwood: He was married, and I didn’t even pay any attention to him.

M. Easley: Well, the fact that we all worked out there, though, certainly did contribute to our marrying who we did.

DB: Ok. Did you face any special problems? And I think ... Out at work? Did you face any special problems at work? That you can think of?

M. Eastwood: No, I can’t think of any. You mean during the war, or ... ?

DB: Ya, during that, that period. Ok ...
MB: You mean did any, like make passes at you or something like that?

Unidentified: Oh, is that what she means?

DB: Well, any kind of problem.

M. Eastwood: Now, I personally didn’t have any problems along those lines. I don’t know...

M. Easley: Nothing, nothing important that ... you know.

M. Eastwood: Well, ya, some of them were, you know ... pat you on the back and put their arms around you. But, no ... there was-- as far as I’m concerned, there was nothing objectionable.

DB: Ok. Did you use the same restrooms as the men? [Laughter] Or ...

MB: Oh Lord, no!

DB: Did they already have a place built for the women? Or did they have to go in and make a special place since they hadn’t hired-in women for that part of the plant?

M. Easley: They had to make a special place. I don’t think they did out at 1082 because they knew they were hiring women.

MB: No ‘cause they were doing that.

M. Eastwood: It was a new lab anyway.

M. Easley: But they had to make a place - when I went into the refinery and worked at Chem Analytical – they had to make a special one. And I remember one of the laws that was that ladies’ rooms had to have a couch.

MB: That’s right! I remember that.

M. Easley: Because they might have to lay down if they were having their period.

MB: That’s right.

M. Easley: And that was one of the rules.

M. Eastwood: And they had to furnish a chair for you to sit in if you got tired.

MB: Uh-huh.

M. Eastwood: Course I never saw a chair. [Laughter]

[Talking over each other]

M. Eastwood: ... that didn’t have a supervisor sprawled out in it...

M. Easley: They did build a ... right on the corner of that building they took part of the lab out, and made a little ladies’ room. There were only two ladies that worked in that lab where I did. It was Jenny and me.

M. Eastwood: There were some girls, though, weren’t there? Some women in the labs though?
M. Easley: Oh, lots of ’em in the PT labs.
M. Eastwood: And the [Inaudible] oil.
M. Easley: And Rinney Fuller. I remember her.
M. Eastwood: Who?
M. Easley: Rinney Fuller, Dr. Fuller’s wife. I remember her locker, she had his picture inside.
Unidentified: You’d think it was high school.
DB: My husband come up with this question. He was interested in knowing, since they had ...
M. Easley: Oh no, they never would ...
M. Eastwood: Oh goodness, not back in those days. Heavens.
M. Easley: In fact, NOBODY, you would never say, “Excuse me I’m going to the restroom.” You’d wait till nobody was looking and kind of sneak off because really and truly, that was kind of embarrassing.
DB: Oh, ok.
MB: Oh, we were ... honey, it was terrible.
M. Easley: Oh, you would die on a date before you asked somebody to stop and let you find ...
MB: To go to the bathroom, ya. Ridiculous! We were so stupid. We really were.
M. Easley: Oh no, we were real cool, ya. I can remember just being in agony.
MB: I know it.
M. Easley: And now ...
MB: False modesty is really [inaudible].
M. Easley: ... girls come in here with mine, they don’t even come in here they go straight to the bathroom, you know.
MB: Ya, uh-huh.
M. Easley: Holler, “Oh, the seat’s cold!” You know, and things like that. Oh, loud! We would never ...
MB: But they would knock on the doors, too. They didn’t figure we were ... but they knew we had a part where there were chairs near the restroom part.
M. Eastwood: That’s ‘cause they couldn’t supervise us in the [inaudible].
MB: They couldn’t get us, but they could yell for us, you know.
M. Easley: Well, and now at 1082, too, we might have been in there sneaking us a cigarette.
MB: Oh, ya.
M. Easley: So, you know, we didn’t hesitate to go in and out there. Come right out and ... there, but we sure did have that couch and a couple of chairs, and uh ... that was for the ladies.

DB: Ok. That was a ... Ok, this sort of ... were you as women treated different in your job than a man would have been?

M. Eastwood: Well, ya. I’m sure.

M. Easley: They were real polite to us and everything. Considerate.

M. Eastwood: Ya.

M. Easley: At least at the start.

MB: But it’s like I told you before, we didn’t, we couldn’t push-up as supervisors. We couldn’t uh ...

M. Eastwood: Well, ya. Uh, they wouldn’t dream of saying even, “damn,” in front of us I don’t guess.

M. Easley: No, no!

M. Eastwood: Much less any of the words they use now, good grief.

M. Easley: Gosh, isn’t that the truth.

DB: Ok, so in other words, they would probably ... ok, they would probably cuss around the other men.

M. Eastwood: Well, I don’t ... I guess.

DB: I mean men would cuss around men, I’m sure.

MB: I’m sure.

DB: Unless they’ve changed.

M. Easley: But they sure didn’t around us. They were very respectful to us.

MB: Uh-huh, they were nice.

M. Easley: And never ...

MB: I remember Pat Henderson yelling out, ‘S-H-I-T,’ and we all knew that Bailey just nearly died.

M. Easley: I probably back then didn’t even know what it meant, or that it was a bad word.

MB: I can remember her doing that, and the men just fell out ... you know, they thought that was hilarious. I could have killed her.

[Laughter]

DB: Did some of the men think that the women would not be able to do their jobs? Did you ever get the impression that maybe they thought you wouldn’t be able to handle your job?

MB: Well, when we came to work, we were mostly women. The supervisors were ...

M. Easley: It was a brand new lab, see? So, I mean, the whole idea ... fact that it was new, and that we were the ones manning it, I think, nobody could think that.
M. Eastwood: Uh-huh.
M. Easley: We set it up.
M. Eastwood: Right.
M. Easley: We set it up.
M. Eastwood: We were excellent, if you want to know the truth.
M. Easley: That's right. We were.
M. Eastwood: I thought.
MB: Shirkey was there when I came. There were very few men besides the supervisor. Remember Shirkey?
M. Eastwood: There were just the supervisors and the maintenance man, Holloway. And, uh ...
MB: He came later even. Holloway did.
M. Eastwood: Holloway? No, he was there all during the war. Was he? Until that accident. He might not even have been there when you were there. When did the accident happen?
MB: Oh, no I was here when that happened.
M. Easley: Forty-five, wasn’t it?
MB: But Shirkey was there when I came. I remember him.
M. Easley: Ya, I remember him. But I left probably a couple of months after that accident.
MB: What I remember the most about, talking about men, we had what you, maybe I told you about this last time, about compounding rubber. And we’d ... I would ... y’all probably never did.
M. Easley: I never did.
MB: They had rubber mills back there, and you’d compound, which meant you put carbon black in it, and you’d get filthy. Just black from head to toe. It was terrible. It was so ... well, they decided to make that into a ma-- , a day job, and they put all men on it. That made me so mad, I nearly died!
M. Eastwood: Well, we were discriminated against as far as raises and the good jobs.
MB: Ya, we were. We know now.
M. Eastwood: There’s no question about it.
M. Easley: Ya. But they only used us because they needed us. That was really why ...
MB: And you can see when they didn’t hire again for how many years? Thirty? Twenty-five, 30? It was ... they didn’t hire women again until they made ‘em.
DB: Civil Rights
MB: Uh-huh.
DB: Well, the equal rights...

M. Easley: In the ‘60’s I guess. When they started making them have a quota.

DB: Now days I think ...

MB: Cause Barbra Martrum was the first one they hired after.

M. Easley: Well I know, Marjorie that we set up the lab. Set up all the procedures and everything in that 1082 lab. We just kind of were in charge, we thought.

[Laughter]

DB: This stuff that you were ... it was like you were testing the chemicals, or ...?

M. Easley: Ya, analyzing samples and analyzing...

DB: What did it make? I mean, what was the product?

M. Easley: Rubber.

M. Eastwood: Butyl rubber.

M. Easley: Butyl rubber. First-time synthetic rubber. Never been made.

DB: Ok. I think it was one of you that mentioned last time when you were testing something, you had to open a valve and ...

MB: The butyl rubber.

DB: ... and it had like a sulfuric smell, or real ...

M. Eastwood: No, it was just sulfuric acid.

M. Easley: We had acid, ya.

M. Eastwood: Oh, ya. That was what they used ... we had a little lab down on the unit where they extracted the isobutylene that they made the rubber out of. It was 55 percent sulfuric acid. And we had to test the acid to be sure it was the right strength, and you know. I don’t know what all tests we ran.

DB: Well, is that sulfuric acid dangerous?

M. Easley: Oh, ya.

DB: Because I think I remember reading about some man in the paper here not too long ago ...

MB: He get burned real badly.

DB: That he had died because he got too much of it. A valve had come open and the sulfuric acid just ...

M. Easley: And when the north wind blew [Laughter], this town was solid sulfuric acid.

M. Eastwood: The leaves fell off the trees.

M. Easley: Ya. And you’d choke ...
M. Eastwood: That was from the acid plant, though. It wasn’t from our ...
M. Easley: It wasn’t from our lab, no.
M. Eastwood: They never thought anything of it. They just thought, well, that’s the way things are supposed to be.
MB: The only thing they worried about at RHB was methyl chloride, remember?
M. Eastwood: Ya.
MB: They would test for that ’cause that was supposed to harm you.
M. Easley: That’s right, we had a balloon. I remember climbing way up on the ...
M. Eastwood: Top of the unit.
M. Easley: Open the balloon, get a sample here. Open the balloon, get a sample ...
M. Eastwood: Take it over to FHB.
M. Easley: Run it. See how much green it burned.
DB: Ok, and you did know married women that worked at the refinery, right? But, were, how, were there very many of them married, or was it mostly single?
M. Eastwood: We had several married come in.
M. Easley: In our group, though, there weren’t very many. Jackie Harding, who else?
M. Eastwood: Betty and Fannie.
M. Easley: Betty and Fannie, but they came much later, didn’t they? Did they come a few years later?
M. Eastwood: No, they came at the same ... they were one year late.
[Talking over each other]
Unidentified: They came when you did.
M. Eastwood: And Pat Henderson. But she was at the other lab.
M. Easley: Betty and Fannie, though, their husbands were--
Unidentified: Curley was married...
M. Easley: --overseas and they ...
MB: Polly was from Baytown, though, and she ...
M. Eastwood: Her husband ... Roy was overseas. Somewhere.
MB: Uh-huh.
M. Easley: Was Curley at 1082?
M. Eastwood: No, she was 485.
M. Easley: Cause I never did know her now.
M. Eastwood: [Inaudible]
DB: Ok. And when they became pregnant, at a certain point of their pregnancy, they had to ...
M. Easley: Quit. Which month was it? Was it six months?
DB: Six months? Ok.
M. Easley: ’Cause I worked till I was about, I don’t know, about four months.
DB: Ok then, you mentioned something about belonging to a union. What union did you belong to? Or what union had taken you? Do you remember?
MB: What was the name of that big ...?
M. Eastwood: The Baytown Employees Federation?
M. Easley: Federation, federation, ya.
M. Eastwood: It was a ... not a national union. Or it wasn’t ...
MB: It was a local union.
M. Easley: It was a local union.
M. Eastwood: It wasn’t affiliated with any of the national unions.
M. Easley: In fact, Humble had a plant down at Ingleside, and they were affiliated with the national union, and they went on strike, and they closed it. Closed it. Walked away. Never opened it again.
DB: Ok.
MB: Ya, and then transferred ‘em here, cause that’s where a bunch of those girls came from, was Ingleside.
M. Easley: That’s where ... the Eisenhowers are the only ones I can remember [inaudible] that came from there.
MB: Uh-huh.
DB: ‘Cause I was reading through that national ... the books I have is Life and Labor [inaudible], and I was trying ... and it was telling about some of the national unions, and I was wondering if you ...
M. Easley: Baytown Employee’s Federation is what it was called. And it really was a company union, wasn’t it?
M. Eastwood: Oh, well, they were accused of that, but ... they did a ... they did some good.
MB: They did some good.
M. Easley: Did some bargaining, but I, what I meant was, the company supported them, didn’t they?
MB: Well, they were glad they were here.
M. Eastwood: Well, the company paid their salary, and the president, and ... ya, they cooperated.

M. Easley: That's what I meant. I didn't mean it was a company union in that they to ask the company, but it; the company liked it. [Laughter]

MB: Ya, they liked it.

DB: Ok, it didn’t make waves too much?

M. Easley: Uh-uh.

DB: Because I know I saw things they ...

M. Easley: But the company was so fair. Really the company was so fair then.

M. Eastwood: You really didn’t need a union back then.

DB: Ok.

M. Eastwood: At least that’s the way I felt then.

DB: Were you afraid to be out alone at night?

M. Eastwood: Uh, ya. Because – especially in Baytown – because they had a lot of ships that came here. In fact one of the girls was knocked in the head one time. Johnny, you remember?

MB: Johnny Rich? I met her in ...

M. Eastwood: And I didn’t like to walk in ... there were a lot of really rough places downtown. They had a place where the sailors came. And it wasn’t the local people you had to be afraid of, it was the sailors off the boats.

DB: Ok.

[Inaudible chatter]

MB: So I never was out by myself really, though. There was always a gang of us; two or three.

M. Easley: Well, occasionally we'd come back from Houston at night or something, and I can remember walking home. And being afraid, but I wasn’t afraid of my ...

M. Eastwood: Now I was never afraid in Houston, but I was afraid in that part – just that one little area of Baytown. By the dock.

M. Easley: But somebody was raped right in front of that old bowling alley. It wasn’t anybody I knew, but I remember...

M. Eastwood: I remember day I was ... one night I was walking, looking over my shoulder, and I fell off the curb.

[Laughter]

M. Eastwood: But at night, ya, I was afraid. You know, in east Baytown.

DB: Ok, I forgot about the ships coming in here.
M. Easley: Ya. Lot of sailors. I wish I could remember the name of that place right on that corner. You remember where Weingarten’s was? And Irene? And then that, kind of corner there? That’s where they all hung out. But really, basically ...

MB: You weren’t afraid of the locals.

M. Easley: I wouldn’t be near as afraid then as I would be now, ya.

DB: Oh, ya. It’s dangerous out there now. You know, I couldn’t think of anything at the time, whether or not it was ... I know it’s bad today, but I, you know I didn’t realize they had ships coming in here and sailors and stuff.

M. Easley: A lot of tankers.

MB: But I can remember, too, going to work at midnight, and everybody would stop at the Waffle Shop on the way to work, and just be full of every-- all kind of shift-workers, you know, drinking coffee and eating pie, and ... before you went to work.

M. Eastwood: Well, you weren’t afraid of any of the local people at all.

M. Easley: Well, and I can remember a bunch of those sailors following us home, and I don’t know who I was with, and all they did was talk to you all the ...

[End of tape]

Transcribed by: AS 1/3/18

[Tape 4 of 4]

M. Easley: I remember Johnny Rich, but I don’t remember that. She had real short hair.

MB: And I remember a Kathleen Clark running for the mail, and she hit the clothes line. She thought somebody had her, and screamed and yelled, “let go of me!” You remember that?

[Laughter]

DB: Ok, did you attend any USO dances? And if you did, where were they held?

M. Easley: Community House.

M. Eastwood: Community House had a few. I remember most of ... I’m thinking ... I don’t remember too many from Baytown. I remember more of them from Houston that Kathleen and I used to go to ‘cause she moved to Houston, too, and for a while we lived in Houston and commuted. And most of them were from Houston.

MB: I never went to a USO dance.

M. Easley: You didn’t? Well I know I did, but you know ... and I know they were at the Community House.

M. Eastwood: I did, but I don’t remember ... ya. But I remember most of the ones I went to were in Houston.
M. Easley: But, you know I went to a lot in San Antone, too. They kind of might run together, but I definitely remember them at the Community House. And I remember the ladies calling me up and asking me if I would go, you know. You didn’t have a date, you just went. And you danced every dance with a different person. And had a wonderful time.

DB: In this article here ... I want your comments on this little thing I underlined, it says, “Clifford M. Bond, Public Relations Director of the Federation,” quote, “when a woman is hired for this type of work, the company has no assurance that she will prove capable or adapt herself readily to the duties.” And he’s talking about the proper servicing and maintenance of hundreds of sensitive instruments used in the operation of a modern refinery.

M. Eastwood: He was talking about the instrument part.

DB: Do you agree that a woman would not adapt to something ...

M. Eastwood: Oh, certainly not.

M. Easley: No, we proved it. And still do.

M. Eastwood: Ya. And the truth is we did a lot better than the men.

M. Easley: Oh, ya. No question.

DB: Ok.

M. Eastwood: That’s just the male chauvinist talking.

M. Easley: But see, there was no, no reason why they couldn’t say anything like that then. They could put it in the paper. Couldn’t say anything to you [indecipherable].

M. Eastwood: In fact, then I could have read it back then – I noticed it this time – I would’ve read that article and probably never thought anything of it.

M. Easley: No, uh-uh.

DB: Because this was in November of 1942 that it came out. I need to get ...

M. Eastwood: Today when I read it, I was surprised. It jumped out at me.

M. Easley: Ya, me too.

DB: I’d had it ... but when I read through it, I mean that’s what hit me automatically was that quote, you know.

M. Easley: Ya, today it would. But see, that was before I even came.

MB: Ya.

M. Easley: We were ... I was so young. I was so naïve.

M. Eastwood: I was so young, not just in years either.
M. Easley: Ya, naïve, really. Completely. But, uh ... things like that never seemed would soak in. You know, you’d just play along. I mean, you never had to actually, well show ‘em...I didn’t show ‘em. Sookie probably did.

M. Eastwood: What?

MB: No.

M. Eastwood: Ya, Sookie was kind of a ... a rebel, ya.

M. Easley: She was kind of ... born for her time.

M. Eastwood: Ya.

MB: Uh‐huh.

DB: That’s what I was gonna say: did you realize that you had something to prove? You know, that you had to show these men that you were able to do that work. Did you have any kind of thought like that?

M. Easley: See, I never felt like that.

M. Eastwood: I never did either.

MB: No.

M. Easley: There was never any doubt in my mind I can do it, and that I can do it as good or better than anybody in there.

MB: Well I never thought about, you know the men around us.

M. Easley: But I never was worried about showing anybody up.

MB: Well I thought ... I remember this ... I thought that we were the smartest things in the world. That’s the way ...

M. Easley: We were.

M. Eastwood: Well, sure.

MB: I was, you were never any smarter than when you first got out of college, you know. You were just so smart. And when I saw that the electricians made more than we did, I was horrified to think those people that hadn’t even been to college were making more than we were. [Laughter] So I didn’t have that ...

M. Easley: Well, see, ya, you were more independent, I guess.

MB: I thought of it, you know.

M. Eastwood: Sookie wasn’t as brainwashed as I was I don’t think back in those days.

M. Easley: Well I just really didn’t ever question anything.

M. Eastwood: It seems like that just never ... me either. I accepted anything. Everything.

M. Easley: All my life I did that.
M. Eastwood: She did.

M. Easley: She’s falling off.

[Laughter]

M. Eastwood: She’s just trying to liberate women of the world.

DB: Right, right. Because I was reading on background information, it kept telling how these magazines, *The Post*, would portray the woman working in a ... out in the plant in a higher class, and a true story with the trailer woman working in a lower part. And she comes to realize that her job is a good job, and she’s doing it for the sake of her country, and she helped ...

MB: Oh, bullcrap. I was doing it for money.

DB: You know, she helps capture the find, the plant, and ... it’s really funny how they said this was the propaganda and...

[Talking over each other]

M. Eastwood: I enjoyed the work and the people. Everything.

MB: I did, too. I loved my job.

DB: ... a lot of this, and they kept impressing in ads and in stories how that, really a woman, her first concern was her family and her children, you know, that she should be married and take care of her home and stuff.

M. Eastwood: That’s true. But that’s what you were taught to believe.

M. Easley: That’s true, but oh, we were delighted with our career. And I really felt like I was so much luckier than those girls that had gotten married right out of high school that I graduated with, you know, because I ... oh, I just was seeing the whole world and how it went and everything. But I was never was worried. I was as patriotic as anybody else, you know. I’d cry when they played ...

MB: Heavens yes.

M. Easley: --“Red Sails in the Sunset” and all that, but I, um ... I really didn’t know what was going on. And I think the world’s a lot smaller now; we’re all more aware of things since we have T.V.

DB: Ya, we got news stories.

M. Easley: See it while it’s happening. Then, we didn’t know what was happening. It just all was so far away.

MB: It really was. Now isn’t that funny?

M. Easley: Just so far away.

MB: And really, it was the ... our friends were there ...

M. Easley: Ya.
MB: ... fighting, really. I can remember one sent me some candy from ... he was in the South Pacific. Said he heard that we – and some cigarettes – that we couldn’t get candy or cigarettes. He was worrying about us at home!

M. Easley: Ya.

M. Eastwood: That’s when we had all had started smoking because we saw these long lines waiting in line for cigarettes. We figured if they were that good ...

MB: Oh, we had to line up to get cigarettes ...

M. Eastwood: If they were that good, we better see what they were.

MB: ... and we all smoked.

M. Eastwood: No, well I didn’t smoke till I came here.

M. Easley: I didn’t smoke till I was here.

MB: I did. I smoked in college.

M. Easley: Well, see? You were more liberated.

M. Eastwood: I just ... for a long time I’d work out there and everybody would go in the office and burn one. But if you went in there without a cigarette, they thought you were wasting your time. I figured that was the thing to do. We don’t smoke anymore.

MB: But really, you can’t believe the long lines for cigarettes. And they wouldn’t, you didn’t have a choice. You’d get there and they’d just give you a pack of cigarettes, didn’t matter what it was.

M. Easley: Right.

MB: But we’d line up to get them.

M. Easley: We had stamps for ‘em. In fact, somewhere – I guess it was when Daddy died – I found a bunch of ra-, stamps, ration stamps for sugar, shoes, gasoline ...

M. Eastwood: Tires. You just almost couldn’t get tires.

M. Easley: You couldn’t, ya, you couldn’t get a car if you didn’t already have one.

M. Eastwood: No. They didn’t sell cars. Not even second-hand cars.

M. Easley: You could not buy a car.

MB: Margie got the first car.

M. Eastwood: First new one.

MB: New car.

M. Eastwood: Ya. And then I got one in ’47.
DB: You had to sign up to get a car?

M. Eastwood: Ya.

M. Easley: And wait in line, wait in line.

MB: See, they weren’t made.

M. Easley: They didn’t make cars. All the factories were turned over to making war carriers. And you were only allowed a few gallons a week.

M. Eastwood: By the time I got my car, gas … the war was over and gas was around.

M. Easley: Ya. But sugar was rationed. I remember Huey. You remember Huey and his sugar?

M. Eastwood: He’s the one that ti- … measured it by timing it? Timing sugar.

M. Easley: Well, and people would steal his sugar. You know, they’d … when he wasn’t looking they’d distract him and then they’d hurry up and get a spoonful of sugar. There was no artificial sweetening. No such thing.

MB: Well I can remember that, Mother saying that, the grocery at home, that they said they sold more sugar than they ever had. Cause everybody would buy their rations whether they needed it or not.

M. Easley: I remember what this fellow did to Huey. Huey would be stirring his. He stirred and stirred and stirred it, and they’d get him distracted, and they’d change cups with him.

M. Eastwood: Oh, no.

M. Easley: And he’d take a sip and he’d [Inaudible], and put a little bit more in it. He was the only one had any sugar. Nobody else had any. So they all were getting his sugar. But we all had coffee break. That was as important as the smoking. You had to learn to do that.

MB: Was coffee hard to get? I think it was.

M. Eastwood: Ya.

MB: And Spam. That’s when we ate Spam. You couldn’t, uh, get, bacon, remember?

M. Easley: Ya, there were just all kinds of things we couldn’t get.

MB: And I don’t think I’ve eaten Spam since.

M. Easley: I know shoes. I don’t know how you managed to …

MB: I was saying my uncle would …

M. Eastwood: She went around and collected everybody’s shoe coupons.

MB: … people gave me shoe, uh …

DB: Why were the shoes rationed? Was it because of the leather?

M. Eastwood: I don’t know.
MB: I guess.

M. Easley: I don’t know, probably. Something they used, or maybe the factories had to be turned into something that made something for the war effort. Made shoes for the soldiers or something. But we never questioned anything. No, never.

M. Eastwood: I remember my last two years at school, they took away all our holidays. And that was for the war effort. But I couldn’t figure out why.

MB: So you wouldn’t be on the trains. No.

M. Eastwood: Is that what it was?

MB: It was so we wouldn’t be on the trains to go home.

M. Easley: That’s right.

M. Eastwood: I never could figure that out.

M. Eastwood: [Indecipherable] be on the trains.

MB: Ya, that’s why.

M. Easley: And if we could get on standing or something, oh we thought we were so lucky. And remember that Christmas it snowed and I was trying to go home? Got up to Juanita’s. Oh, Mother and Daddy came. But, uh ... we never thought, I never thought anything of it. That was just ...

M. Eastwood: When you’re young you don’t ... now they do.

M. Easley: Well, that ... boy, the young people do now. They question everything. They really do.

M. Eastwood: There’s a lot less good in a lot of ways.

M. Easley: But they never accept anything just ‘cause you tell ‘em, like I did.

DB: They want you to prove why. They want to know why is that.

M. Easley: Want to know why I get to go on a vacation.

MB: Well, I guess our parents gave us everything they could afford. They would have done the same thing that we’ve done for our children if they could have afforded it. I think.

M. Easley: Oh, I know they would.

MB: Cause they gave us everything anyway, it’s just everybody was ... didn’t have any money.

M. Eastwood: Ya, that was pre-Depression. Oh, we were children of the Depression years.

M. Easley: We grew up during the Depression. That’s right.

DB: Well, we just finished reading, *Grapes of Wrath*.

MB: Oh that was before us. Wasn’t it?

M. Eastwood: No, it was during the Depression.
DB: It come out in 1939.
M. Eastwood: It was during the Depression, ya.
DB: The book did.
M. Easley: It was the time we were, but it was in a different part of the country. Wasn’t that in ... ?
DB: It was the Oklahoma ... the migration from Oklahoma to California where the Dust Bowl...
MB: Well, I can remember seeing that show, and I didn’t relate to it at all.
M. Eastwood: Well no, because I was the city girl, and they were out in the country, but um ...
M. Easley: We didn’t ... I couldn’t relate to it either. And I was brought up in a small town, but ... and we didn’t have much, but nobody did.
MB: Nobody did.
M. Easley: If we wanted to go play a game, we didn’t go buy a board and all that. We made a board. We made everything, you know. All of our equipment was handmade, homemade. And we had just as much fun, I think. Maybe more.
MB: But the poorest people – I was from a small town – the very poorest people in town were the farmers.
M. Eastwood: Farmers, yes. They lost their farms and they had to come to the city.
MB: Oh, it was terrible. And they were, you know, really poor. And they have more money than anybody now in the town.
M. Eastwood: That’s true. There were a lot of people down here that were land poor when we came down here. Like the Wilburns. And they rented out rooms in their houses. And they owned a bunch of land, but you couldn’t – in the Depression, it was worthless. You couldn’t sell it for anything. And now, course they’re all millionaires.
MB: Can you believe we’re gonna have another Depression?
DB: I don’t know.
MB: They keep talking about it, don’t they?
M. Easley: I think if they talk about it enough they’re going to talk ‘em into it.
M. Eastwood: Ya, I they’ll talk ‘em ...
M. Easley: I really think that’s ...

[End of tape]