MILL WORKERS ORAL HISTORY PROJECT:
LEWISTON-AUBURN, MAINE

Danny Fitzsimmons **MWOH# 020**
(*Interviewer: Andrea L'Hommedieu*) February 7, 2006

Andrea L'Hommedieu: This is an interview for the Mill Workers Oral History project. The date is February 6th, the year 2006, and we're at Maine Heritage Weavers in Lewiston, Maine, and I'm interviewing Danny Fitzsimmons, and this is Andrea L'Hommedieu. Could you start just by giving me your full name?

Danny Fitzsimmons: Danny E. Fitzsimmons, E stands for Edward.

AL: And what's your date of birth?

DF: October 25th, 1957.

AL: And where were you born?

DF: Lewiston.

AL: Did you grow up in Lewiston as well?

DF: Yes.

AL: What was the Lewiston community like when you were growing up, in terms of looking at it, at the way it is today?

DF: More, a little bit more on the rough side. The taverns and the bars that lined Lisbon Street, one of the being the Manoir which was a really rough and tough hole, barroom that was on Lisbon Street. The mills, both Bates and Libby's, and the shoe shops, and everything was really running a lot, very, a lot of activity. I remember the railroad tracks and the train that would come down and load off there, there were bales of yarn and stuff and a big (*unintelligible word*) like a station down where the Number 8 mill is, where the bank is now. Actually there used to be like railroad tracks running across there, and you would always see locomotives down there and stuff, so that was, that was when I was a kid. And I remember we once borrowed the hand trolley (*unintelligible phrase*), we wasn't supposed to but somebody forgot to lock it up and we took for a spin.

But the, it was more laid back I think in a ways, because you know, you didn't have a lot of the pressure that you have today. And the jobs were a lot easier to come by. If you got done in one place, you would be hired the next, you know, the next mill would hire you. And, you know, some people would just keep bouncing in between the mills.

Lisbon Street was bustling. I remember all the stores, there was Woolworth, W.T. Grant's, there was five and dime, there was quite a bit of stores on Lisbon Street, and a lot of movement.

AL: Was this in the '70s did you say?

DF: Yeah, yeah, early '70s. I used to have a small paper route with a friend of mine, and we would get

our papers, we would always order like twenty-five to fifty more papers than our paper route. And we would always get (*unintelligible word*) we'd go down to the, a bus station, where the bus stops, because there was people all over the place, because they were using the bus a lot. And we, every day, we'd sell our newspapers and we made more of a profit on that in a week's time than the paper route ever gave us. So it worked out pretty good for us.

But there was a lot of, a lot of activity on Lisbon Street, whereas now there's not hardly any. People liked to go down Lisbon Street, they enjoyed shopping, you know, on Lisbon Street. And then they turned the street into a disaster that they have now where they, you're on one side, then you got to the next side, and then you got to go to the next side. By the time you get down to Main Street, you've changed lanes about four or five times. That was supposed to alleviate the traffic on Lisbon Street. Well, it did manage to alleviate the traffic, but it also managed to alleviate the businesses on there, too, because, you know, they needed the traffic in order to have the business. And when the city decided that they were going to beautify it, they made a big mistake there. The people were much more friendlier I think, you know.

AL: Did either of your parents work in the mill or the shoe shop?

DF: Oh yes, it goes, it goes way, way back.

AL: Can you talk about how far back it goes in your family, and who they were?

DF: Let's see, it would have to be my, I know my grandfather did, and my mother, and my father. My mother was a spinner, my father had been a weaver. My uncle worked in the fringe department, my cousin worked in the complex, I don't know quite where. My uncles both worked, one of my uncles worked in the card room for a, quite a few years. He worked in the Hill Mill, which was a division of the Bates. Bates had two divisions, there was the Bates Fabrics, and then there was Hill, and then there was the Edwards complex in Augusta.

My uncle worked at the Hill Mill for, I'm going to say about twenty some odd years, I think twenty, twenty-one, twenty-two, somewhere around that area. And the Hill Mill closed, and he ended up transferring. They, they had a, a problem because the Hill Mill was closing. They were a part of the Bates Mill, but the seniority wouldn't transfer and they were going to lose all their seniority and they wouldn't accept that, and they allowed them to bring their seniority for such things as the vacation pay and stuff like that. But not to, and for job bidding, like the, do like the job bidding, but not the seniority purpose of the, to be on the job.

AL: Like the management?

DF: No, it was like, if you were a weaver and you had twenty years in Hill Mill and you transferred over to the Bates, another person that was at Bates only had seventeen years, your seniority wouldn't rule over his. Their seniority had more leeway, and, but mostly their seniority was just given for their benefits more than anything else, their vacation pay, their pensions, stuff like that, mostly for the benefits.

AL: Now, your uncle was one that was at Hill Mill and then transferred over?

DF: Yup.

AL: How did he feel about losing the seniority piece?

DF: Well, he, nobody could be happy about that, you know, you, and he had to start all over again, as far as being a low man on the totem pole again, you know.

AL: Was there any, did he ever talk about there being tension between the workers, all put together from the two mills?

DF: No, he got along pretty much with everybody. Everybody got along pretty much with everybody else. It was a work environment and you wanted to work, you know. People pretty much got along with everybody, and they had banquets every year, they had a banquet every year, Bates Mill banquet. At one of the banquets they had, this was before my time, but they had Maurice Chevalier at one of their banquets. And then (*unintelligible word*) would fill the entire Lewiston Armory, and it was a big, big thing. I think they had Rudy Vallee at one time also, I'm not sure about that.

One of the major parts of the union I can remember is union of the Bates. The Bates was one part, but I'm sure that part of that Bates was the union part. Without, you know, including the union into the history of Bates is doing it a disservice, because it is a big part of it. Whether it's good or bad, it was a big, big part of Bates. And people were, more in the weave rooms than anything else, were very strict on their union. They wanted things done a certain way, and sometimes it was a little bit too much but sometimes, you know, it had to be done.

AL: Now, was the union already in place when you started working?

DF: Oh yes, yes, the union was there in the, I think the 1950s, yeah, about -

AL: Late '40s, early '50s?

DF: Yes, yeah.

AL: And did you work with Denny Blais at all, did you know -?

DF: I knew Denny, I was just a young peon at the time, you know, wise guy, you know, really young (*unintelligible word*). But I did go to the union meetings, I did meet Denny Blais. And there was a few (*unintelligible word*) after him, Oliver, Mr. Oliver, and he was a business agent for a while. Then after Mr. Oliver we had Michael Cavanaugh, and from Michael Cavanaugh we had, a woman, I never remember her name.

AL: Lucille Barrett?

DF: No, she would be a pres-, she was the president of the union, of the local.

AL: Oh, okay, but this was the higher up person, at the top of the mill.

DF: Right, the, initially when they first started the unions were, the union was the United Textile Workers Association. Then they changed over to AFL-CIO, because they merged then and it had business agents as time went by.

AL: Did you ever hear of Rose Gilman? Does that name sound familiar? She, I know she was in the union, but I wasn't sure how she might have connected, so. No?

DF: It's not ringing no bells.

AL: Now you mentioned both your mother and father worked in the mills. What were their names?

DF: My mother's name was Elizabeth Turcotte, and my father's name, well he's actually my stepfather, and his, he was working as a weaver, his name was Rene Turcotte.

AL: And was it your mom's father that also worked in the mill, you said, you had a grandparent?

DF: Yes, yes. And I can't even remember his name, but he worked in the mill. Her mother, it's hard to remember what she was doing. I think she was disabled with a (*unintelligible word*) if I remember right, when I was just a little kid. But he had worked in the mill. And I think some of the pictures of, that I've seen, it was a backdrop of the mill, in some of the pictures I've seen in the (*unintelligible word*) gone by. But just about everybody I think that worked in, that's been in the family worked at the Bates at one time or another.

AL: So it was something that connected your family.

DF: Yes, you know, it's not like I wouldn't say it's a good life long tradition, but it was a good place to work. You got a good wage, not the best in the world, but you got a good wage. You made an honest wage, you were treated with respect for the most part. Sometimes you had to fight for the respect. But you knew what you were expected to, or what was expected of you when you went in to work and you did what you was expected of and then you went home and you got your paycheck every week. And, you know, a lot of people depended on that.

And of course when imports started making a direct impact on the mills and people losing their jobs, that hit Lewiston hard in the later '70s, when they started shutting parts of the mill off and laying off people, and having huge layoffs. At that time, Libby was experiencing problems as well, and their payroll had gone down. And the unemployment office was packed to the gills with people (*unintelligible phrase*) somebody down at unemployment.

And it was difficult for a lot of people at the time. Because I remember when I was a kid, the police officer would stop the traffic on Canal Street to let the people out, and they had to stop the traffic for at least ten, fifteen minutes because it would take that long just for the line of people to get from the door out, you know. And they'd be going up Ash Street, and all would you see is from the bottom of the gates all the way up, all you would see is just mass of people walking up, you know, because there were so many people, there were thousands of people that used to work in these mills. And when they let them out, it was, they would just have to stop traffic, there was no way around it. And they would stop it for about ten, fifteen, I think it was ten minutes before the line was enough where they could hold the people back and let the cars go, you know. But it was something else, all you'd see was this block of people coming out, you know.

And you had three ways that they'd be coming out. You had the one right across the street here, which some would come out there. And the most, the main entrance and exit, they'd mostly come out of there, but they would come out two doors and all you could see is a mass of people coming through those doors and going across the bridge, and there was a lot of people. It used to be, you know, it used to be nice to see that (*unintelligible word*) amount of people. They were all on their way home and, you know, a lot of them would stop at, shop on Lisbon Street or, they were all heading home and going on the buses, and taking their bus.

Not a lot, it wasn't, I have to say, you know, back then there wasn't a lot of people that drove to work. Most of the people walked to work, so I don't think you had, maybe twenty five percent commuters were actually drive in, the rest of them were all just people that lived around the neighborhood. Whereas today, it would be an operation (*unintelligible phrase*), you know, people are driving, you have to have cars, you got to have a lot of parking areas, you know. Back then mostly everybody walked to work. They don't do that no more. We got lazy I guess.

AL: Now, at the time you worked there, were there always three shifts running, or did that change over the years?

DF: When I started, everything was three shifts. But the shifts were varied from, depending on where you worked. If you worked in the main area, which was Bates, the shifts there was three shifts. If you worked on the security, those shifts were different, the security guards kept totally different shifts. I worked at the Pepperill Mill, where we used to have a swing print operation at the Pepperill Mill, which is the Bleachery.

I don't know if you, when you come down Lisbon Street hill, right on the right hand side there, there's a big mill complex there? Well, that's the old Bleachery, and that there used to have a screen print where we print the background on the bedspreads, not woven in but painted on, whatever. Then they would make the designs on the spread. There they worked two shifts, and their shifts started from six to two, and from two to ten. It was a little different than the other one there. The watchmen there would vary greatly, on the watch, so I can't really give an definite schedule in there.

AL: No, that's okay, yeah. Well let's talk about, you had several different positions in the mill over the years. Do you remember them in order, or should we just talk about the different, a weave room and -?

DF: Let's see, I'll try to remember, I'll try to get them in order. Let's see, I was seventeen years old?

AL: Because I'm interested to know what the jobs were, and describing how you did them.

DF: Okay, well the first job I started on was a slasher helper, which was in the slashing room. And what I would do there is, they had the beams, which was long pipes with yarn wrapped around it, and they weighed approximately a ton. And they would be on rails, they were stacked about three high, and we had this machine, which you would go in with the machine, and it was on hydraulics and it would lift it up, and you would have to get the hooks into these beams and pull it up and then out, and then down and put it on the truck for the weave room to use. And they would give you a sheet each day of what was to come out, and you would have all these beams ready for the weave rooms to be taken.

Okay, you had two different weave rooms, they had One and Two Weave, and they had No. 5 Weave, and so you had to keep, One and Two Weave was the green trucks, and the No. 5 Weave was yellow trucks, so you always had to make sure you kept the right trucks on the right warps (*unintelligible phrase*), and that was part of it.

The other part was, about twice a night we had to piece up this sla-, one of the slashers that made the terry beams. And by piecing up, I mean they would take, it would run out the spool, and then you manually had to tie another spool in for that one. And most of them are running, well, between three fifty and four eighty, somewhere around there, ends, to that warp. So it would take, you know, two people a little while, about a half hour, forty five minutes you were there to piece it all back up together, so that slasher would keep it going.

And the other part would be to pick up all the waste and bring it over to the waste house where, they used to have a waste house where they'd compress (*unintelligible phrase*) all the waste yarn, and then they would re pick it again and reprocess the whole thing again, and then it would be back into yarn again. So they didn't waste a lot back then. Today we tend to have more waste.

And after the slashing room, what happened there was I ended up getting bumped there because the job was only temporary. So, because they had another one that was, he got laid off in his job, he had department seniority and I, since I had just started I didn't have any, and I hadn't had a posted job and all, so I had lost the seniority for the (*unintelligible phrase*). And I went, from there I went up to One and Two Weave and I became a cloth doffer, which basically just takes off the finished, after it's finished woven they run it to a roll, at that point we would just take off the rolls and put them in the storage where they would be processed after. And that was on third shift, which really sucked.

But it wasn't too bad, you know, you had, you had a job to do, you knew exactly how much you had to do and once you did that, that was all that was expected of you. And we could go in there and basically start up at eleven o'clock and we, the first thing we'd do is go around to all the looms and measure the rolls, and then we'd mark them down on paper. And then we'd just go out and we'd go through them. And a lot of nights we got done like three o'clock, four o'clock in the morning, and our job was done. And all we did after that was just sit around, drink coffee or whatever, and so it wasn't a bad job.

You know, the bosses didn't hassle you. As long as you got your work done, that was their main thing, get your work done, you know, and so we made sure, some nights you have a fixer or a changeover that needed to get to the loom, you know, and they needed to have the doff roll doffed so they could get to work on it. And they would just ask us, and you know, we just, no problem, we'd go over and doff it. Even though it was over and above our normal, because I think it used to be sixty five (*unintelligible word*) a night.

But of course the idea was, one hand washes the other, you know they're not going to complain if you're sitting around doing nothing and smoking cigarettes, or if you're drinking coffee, you know, if you do a nice thing when they need it. And it's, people worked together like that a lot. You may not have that in the workplace today, but back then it was nice. The people, the bosses and everybody pretty much worked together. Sometimes they had their problems, who don't? But on the most part it (*unintelligible word*) pretty good.

From the weave room, I went to screen print and I was there for approximately three years. I was a screen printer, and what that entails is setting the machine up, the repeats, in order for, to make a design on a bedspread. There may be two screens, there may be four screens, there may be eight screens, and each screen has got a design, and which also coincides to a color of the dye. So when the belt would move over, you had to make sure that the design would intertwine with the other design so that when it came out it would look like one complete design.

AL: Did you work closely with the design department on that?

DF: No, they just made the screens and we just set up the machines that ran them. And the length of the machine was probably, I don't know, sixty feet, seventy feet, it was a long, long machine, and you had a dryer at one end, and they had the roll, the screen on the front end and you had the dryer in the rear. And it would go through and it would make the screens, and the different colors would be used, and you'd do that. And then you had style changes so you had to bring them over into the wash room, those screens had to be all washed by hose. Then you put your next ones down, and you would turn around and have to reset your repeat and stuff. That's what I used to do.

Also, you know, part of that job was color. We had a dye ware that would make the colors, but sometimes the colors wouldn't be right. And the supervisor and the printer, the screen printer, would take the swatch out to the dryer, would cut a piece out, and then we had a master sample that we had to match and both the supervisor and the screen printer had to agree that the (*unintelligible word*) were dead matched. The supervisor could not just okay it unless the screen print operator also agreed, and vice versa. So those two had to agree that there was nothing wrong with that color, and the dye ware was always the person that would get a little upset because, you know, some, everybody sees a little color differently, and because these will be out in hotels, they have to be dead on all the time. And so that was why you had to have three people and why, you know, that way (*unintelligible phrase*), I'm going to have to go over this, I got to go back and read this, (*unintelligible phrase*). But that was the way it was, you know, and, but he understood at the end, that's what (*unintelligible phrase*), and that was the job. I was there about three years.

From there I went on to security, because it looked like they were going to have layoffs at the

screen print. I liked the job, I really did enjoy it. But when push comes to shove we saw the writing was on the wall and it wouldn't be that long before that would at least drop one shift, where we'd be down to one shift, where I'd be out of work. So at that point a job on the board came up for security. I said, well, I'll try that, so I went over there and did security about a year.

And basically the security was just take care of making sure people don't try and steal bedspreads, make sure the fire rules that were, and how to react to fires. One of the main things was don't call the fire department. And most of the times, they caused more damage than the fire does. You know, they start hacking away at the roof, and it's a lot of money to repair the roof. There's been a few bad fires over at the mill, but on the most part the people were able to put fires out. The firemen end up causing more damage than they did, but.

The other thing we had to work out is water. They had, we had a serious problem with the roof leaking, and so we would have barrels and the water would drip from the ceilings and they, we'd have to empty the barrels all the time. It was one of the (*unintelligible word*) when it hadn't rained. When it was raining, you know, the watchmen would dread going in there because they'd know they'd have, the whole night long they'd be emptying buckets and buckets of water.

And some night, you'd have a, one watchman would go out and do the drive while the other one would go in, and each drive took about an hour. And then you'd come in, and then the other one would go out on his drive for an hour. And then he, all night long you'd be swapping that was. But sometimes when it was raining, you know, you just couldn't get it done in an hour, and you'd get back and then he'd have to go out a little bit off schedule. Sometimes he'd totally miss his drive because the water was so bad. And then he'd come back with the same problem, he'd have the same problem.
Mostly it was No. 5 and No. 3 spinning had the most problems with the roof leaking. And that was a, that was a headache.

And we had to worry about people trying to break in.

AL: Did you have a lot of problem with that?

DF: One time there was a couple guys that broke in and they were armed with a shotgun. There was a watchman that was working, doing his run down by the dye house when he come upon them, they were on the canteen area, the vending machines, they were breaking into the vending machines. And when the watchman came up to the, around the corner, they grabbed him and they put their gun to his head and they threatened to shoot him and everything. And they did let him go, and then they took off. They threw the gun down in a little ravine down there, and they, the cops ended up catching them anyway. But that watchman soon left, the watchman, he signed up for another job. (*Unintelligible phrase*) enough of that. And I don't blame him. But there was commotion at times, you know, people not just breaking in but people trying to break out.

AL: Now, what were they trying to break out for?

DF: Well, you know, they, you were there and you had, you didn't have a punch card. Everything was driven by lights. You had a red light, in different places all over the mill you had the red light. Red light meaning that it was time to leave, it was three o'clock, or it was the shift change (*unintelligible phrase*). And so, you know, the boss would come over, see if you were working, if you wasn't, he'd more or less take a roll call. And, you know, some guys would turn around and, soon as they were nervous, they'd try and take off, go down to the Holly, which was a strip joint there on Main Street.

AL: Oh, the Holly, yes, I've heard of that.

DF: Or they'd go down to the barrooms down Lisbon Street. Some of them came in intoxicated before

even starting their job. For the most part, the bosses would usually tell them to leave, and they wouldn't do too much to them. Unless it was a continual habit. But some of them would sneak out, and if they get caught, you know, they'd get writ up and, you know, things could happen to them that weren't very nice. So, that was the security.

AL: And then was it on to the card room? Or finishing?

DF: For the card, I was only at the card room for about a month. And I started it, and you had like, I think it was like a week or two to try out the job and decide whether to go back or not. And I remember being in the card room and just beginning this, to learn how to run the cards, and we had a supervisor there that was not very nice and not very well liked at all. And for some reason he decided to pick on me, and I just told him that I was too young for this shit and I didn't need it. And so I went in and I said, I want to go back to my job. So I ended up going back on the watch for, oh, I ended up getting, I did another month before another job came up that I wanted to try, and I was on the washers in the finishing room.

But I didn't stay very long in the card room, but I got to know a lot of the guys and they, you know, they were really nice guys. And my Uncle Harper, he worked in the picking room which was part of the card room area, and so.

And when I was in the watch I would see my mother, I would see my uncle, you know, they would be working in different parts of the mill but you might get to see all these people. It was nice.

But when I went onto the wash, I ended up staying there for six years I think, six or seven years, and it was very, very busy at the beginning. When I started, they told me I'd have to go to third shift, even though I signed for second, and that's where the union came in and said, you know, I signed for second. And they had a guy that they had taken off the street and trained him, well, this job is, and they said, well, no, he's going on the second shift. And I said, no, I'm going on second, I got a union here, I'm paying my union dues. And so we had to fight it out, and because the other guy said he would quit if he had to go on the third shift. And I said, well that's tough because, you know, I signed up for the job, I got to order the job, I have a union. And so that's what happened, he ended up quitting and I ended up being on the second shift.

But we ended up, it was a very difficult job, very, very difficult. Very strenuous. There was a man there name of Leon Auger (*SP?*), and he was just a tiny little guy and, but he was built up with that, you know, that's what he did. And he went right through that with no problem. But, I mean, for like a month and a half all I had was pain where I never thought pain existed. But after I got over there, my muscles became adapted to it and it was fine, and I enjoyed working there.

But we would have people come in to learn because they needed the third shift on that, and me and Leon was running twelve and sixteen hour shifts all the time, just to try and get by. The money was good, you know, time and a half. We were working Saturdays and Sundays, so it was time and a half, double time on Sunday, making all kinds of money. No life to yourself, but all kinds of money. So they kept trying to get somebody on third shift, and because the job was so strenuous they wouldn't last a couple days. Some of them wouldn't even last a couple hours, and we'd go on.

But then after a while, because of the imports, you know, we started losing a lot of orders. We had J.C. Penney's, we dealt with Sears', we had a lot of big, big customers. And when we (*unintelligible phrase*) in the afternoon, when I started I was working second shift, there was no way you were going to get caught up on all the baskets of bedspreads that was there (*unintelligible phrase*), as far as I could see. And so later one that wasn't happening, you could actually see where you were going to finish that night.

So you could see the amount of product was not what it used to be, that we had lost a lot of

orders. Some of that was because they were not getting the orders out on time and being efficient, and some of it of course being imports being much cheaper.

AL: Did you stay at the mill all the way until 2000?

DF: In 2001.

AL: Two thousand and one, and then?

DF: Was it 2000? No, it was 2001, yeah, that's when they closed the (*unintelligible word*).

AL: And now you're working with Fred Lebel at Maine Heritage Weavers. How did that come about, did he give you a call one day?

DF: Yup, he called me out, well, what happened there was when the mill closed they had a (*unintelligible word*), which is a state, the state comes in with all the programs, they try to tell everybody what the programs are available and get them squared away on unemployment on the quick and that. One part of the system is if you have like large companies closing they had (*name*) programs, which are called peer support, and they contacted me to be their peer support counselor, which I worked under the state, I was working at the career center between 2000-2001.

We had TRA, so it was a matter of getting people into their schooling, trying to get them either on a job training, whatever jobs we could get them, any education that we needed. So I had to funnel that through so, you know, because people at that end was, you know, a lot of them had not had the high school education. Even some didn't know how to read and write, so you had some illiteracy there. You had some other problems that we had to get over and to get them into some kind of job, and get them, hopefully it wasn't going to be anything like they had but it was, you know, a job. And mostly, it was mostly successful. I wish we could have done more, but you always want to do more, you know.

But I was getting done because it only last a year, for the peer support, and I was going to school, I already had my schooling papers all filled out, and it was time, I started at the school, Fred contacted me and said he wanted to start another company and asked me if I'd be willing to help him do it. And he basically told me (*unintelligible phrase*) like you're the only one left, you know. There wasn't anything about those (*unintelligible phrase*) and send him up (*unintelligible phrase*). There was another person, Leonard, at that time he was working someplace else so he was out of the loop, and he wouldn't be able to help. And the others didn't have the knowledge of the (*unintelligible phrase*).

Here we have not only looms but we have heads, we have jacquards, so you have to know the knowledge of the head, and you have to know the knowledge of the loom. And so there's quite a bit of knowledge about the mechanical to deal with these machines. And so he just said, you know, if you don't want to do it, well, I'm not even going to go any further. Because he was looking into rental, and he was looking into this and stuff, but he was like, if I refuse that would be the end of that because there's no way, because just he doesn't have the people with the knowledge out there to get this part back up.

And I said, yeah, you know, I enjoy what I do. I had offer, job offers in the tech industry, you know, with my degree in computer science, and I'm actually very good on computers. So I've had job offers on the tech end, but I'm not a person that likes to sit in an office, you know. I love working with my hands, this is what I like to do and I've always been that way since I was a kid. And this is what I do today, and I'm happy with it. And it may even pay less (*unintelligible phrase*) I would probably get in the tech sector, but I probably would not be as happy as I am (*unintelligible phrase*).

AL: Is there anything that I haven't asked you today that you feel is very important to add before we end? Don't want to miss anything that was in your mind as something important.

DF: Just the weave room, I can tell you about the weave room. The weave room when I first started, my very beginnings, I was learning with Andy Langois, which was a, the head weaver and technician. And when I started, they had just had six new looms installed, they were Selsa looms, and they were running on projectile, and, but everything else was all shuttle looms. And the shuttle looms were, C & K, Crompton and Knowles, there was C-4s, the model number, and C-9s, and the shuttle would go floppy-flop-floppy-flop, because it would shoot it from one end and shoot the shuttle with the yarn inside to the other end, and back and forth. But every once in a while the shuttle would come out, and I've gotten hit by it a few times, and that hurts.

But that, it was loud, much, much louder. I mean, when you went into the weave room, my God, the sound was deafening, when you had over a hundred machines running in that room. And the shuttle looms had, the Selsa was noisy, but you get all those C-4s together and it was massive loud. But, you know, after, the funny thing is, after you're working there after a few months, you start getting used to it and it actually starts putting you to sleep. You know, if you work on third shift you can actually go to sleep in such a loud area, you can do it, believe me. And I'm falling asleep there at late nights, so. But it was very loud.

People got together, though, you know, and people would retire they would get, they would have a party for them, a little get together at the lunch break. Now, first shift had different lunch break than the second and third, but every shift would have basically a little lunch break. And for whoever was retiring on that shift, they would have, during that lunch break they would have a little cake probably or something, you know, well wishing that they were retiring. And that happened right until near the end, I'd say about early '90s it started, you know, being passed over and people just retired, you know, it wasn't thought of any more. They just got happy they got there before it closed, you know. (*Unintelligible phrase*) get there, but I don't know. We're like, well, you're lucky, you know, we're not. (*Unintelligible phrase*). But, you know, the people were great, the people were great.

AL: Thank you very much.

End of Interview
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