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106 pages

RECORD OF INTERVIEWS
RELAY ASSEMBLY TEST ROOM
OPERATOR NO. 5
June, 1931 - February, 1932

106 pages

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Volume 5.

Record of Interviews

Operator No.5

Open
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DON'T DISCLOSE IDENTITIES

From the beginning of these studies, the identities of persons under study have been kept confidential. We ask you to carry on this trust. Please guard the privacy of the persons involved by substituting fictitious names, or code symbols for real names.

RECORD OF INTERVIEW

Relay Assembly Test Room
Recorded by: I. Rousseau

June 9, 1931.
Operator No. 5.
Interview No. 1.

Interviewer meets employee at conference room.

I: "Good morning, are you Anna? (Employee nods and smiles) Well, I am Miss X. I have a room here where we can talk.

"Don't you want to take your coat off and just be comfortable?"

E: "I guess I will. It is pretty warm out this morning."

(Discuss weather and transportation for a few minutes.
Employee is not at all spontaneous.

E: "I go down on the south side sometimes. It takes quite a while to get there. I've got a cousin that lives out at Eighty-fourth. It takes me about a half an hour after I get on the 'L' train."

I: (knowing employee is incorrect) "You say on the 'L'?"

E: "Yes, if you get one of the fast 'L' trains."

I: "Oh, you mean if you take that train that runs along the lake?"

E: "Yes, not the regular 'L'. That fast one."

I: "Oh, yes. They call that the I.C."

E: "Isn't that wonderful? It goes so fast though I am scared to sit down! (laughing).

"It is nice to live there, isn't it? It takes you such a little while to get downtown. I go out there once in a while. My cousin has a real nice place.".....

I: (to keep up conversation) "I had some friends that lived out at Seventy-ninth. They were right out on the lake."

E: "Isn't that nice? It is nice to be able to live out there, isn't it? It makes me feel bad whenever I go out there."

I: "How do you mean?"

E: "It makes you wish you had a lot of money. It makes me feel bad to see everything so nice when you haven't got money to have things like that."

I: "It makes you jealous, does it?"

E: "No, not jealous. I don't get jealous but it makes you feel like you'd like to have them too. We are not getting so much money now as we used to but we used to get Friday afternoons off."

I: "Now you don't, do you?"

E: "No, now we are working again. I don't like that so well either. You see I don't live in Chicago. My home is in DeKalb. I haven't been in this country very long."

I: "Haven't you?"

E: "No, I came over from Norway."

I: "You did?"

E: "Yes." (employee nods).....

I: "What part of Norway did you come from?"

E: "From the north."

I: "You did?"

E: "Yes, it was by the ocean. We used to go swimming in the ocean. (employee's eyes light up) All we had to do was run across the road to go swimming in the ocean but you never think anything of it. People here think it is so wonderful when you tell about it when they've never seen the ocean."

I: "You mean you get so used to it?"

E: "Yes, you go in it all the time. It is just what you're used to. I don't like to go swimming in the lake here. I am so used to salt water. I guess that is why I don't like it because we always swam in the salt water in the old country."

I: "Weren't there lakes over there?"

E: "There were lakes but we never swam in them. They were no good."

I: "Why not?"

E: "Oh, the earth around them was funny. What do you call it, you know when you sink down in?"

I: "Do you mean quicksand?"

E: "Well, it is something like that. That isn't what they call it but I can't think of the word for it. Anyway the earth is funny. You know you sink down in it. It is terrible and in some of the lakes you can see the ground around the edge of the lake but then it goes down real fast, and if you went down there you would never come up. It isn't safe. The lakes are no good. Now in the ocean you have real white sand. You can see it a long ways out under the water but with the lake it is so different. You go in there and you have an awful time getting out.".....

I: "Aren't the lakes good for anything?"

E: "No, they're no good.....Except for fishing."

I: "Oh, they're good for fishing."

E: "Yes, they have lots of fish there. They have a red fish that is about so long. (employee measures nine or ten inches) I don't know what the name of it in English would be. All I can remember is the word in Norwegian."

I: "What is that? (employee spells it) I've never heard of that before."

E: "It is real good when it is fried. They have lots of kinds of fish there.".....(Interviewer and employee compare kinds of fish in Norway and America.)

I: "I guess I'll learn a lot about Norway from you." (laughing)

E: "Oh, there's not much to tell."

I: "I used to have a very good friend who was Norwegian..... Her father and mother came over from Norway. I think they brought her over when she was ten months old."

E: "She was pretty small, wasn't she? Well, I came over seven years ago.".....

I: "I think you speak real well, Anna, for that length of time."

E: "Oh, I don't think so. Sometimes I get all mixed up. I don't speak English at home, see? I speak Norwegian. I live with some Norwegian people and we always talk Norwegian there. I have been living with them for five years now. They came from the old country too but I only saw them once there. The young

people don't speak Norwegian, just the older people do. We talk to the young people in Norwegian and they answer us in English." (laughing)

"I have to think real hard when I say anything in English and sometimes it is hard to think of the word. My husband isn't that way. He speaks perfect. He was in this country a long time before I came. I have to laugh at myself sometimes, you know, when I get all mixed up with my Norwegian and English. When I came to this country I didn't know any English at all.

"One time there was a man from Chicago came to Norway and he asked me did I know a girl who wanted to come back with him, and I was thinking of myself see, so I told him I knew a girl who wanted to come here, but I didn't know whether she wanted to come with him or not, and he said, 'Well, why not ask her?' and I said, 'Well, maybe I would come.'"

"Then he asked me why didn't I come with him and I said I didn't know whether I wanted to. I said if I went to Chicago I wouldn't know a single soul there. You see I had a relative in Detroit and a girl friend in Duluth but I didn't know anyone in Chicago. There was this man and his wife and two children there, so they came over in August and I came in September. I told them I didn't know whether I would want to stay because I might want to go to Duluth with my girl friend and he said I could go if I wanted to so I thought I would come and try it. I was with them more than two years on the northside. I went up to visit my girlfriend in Duluth. It was real pretty up there."

"I was supposed to have an uncle up here in Chicago. I did not know if he was still here or not and I didn't know the address where he might be at, but you know my girlfriend had it so she told me it, and when I came back here I went to see him. He was my father's brother. He is a doctor on Michigan Avenue.".....

I: "Is he married?"

E: "He was, but his wife died. He only has a boy but he is forty years old." (laughing)

"I've never seen his boy. He is a music professor of some kind in Florida. He teaches in a music school there. He comes up once in a while to see his father. Then he has a brother living in South Dakota, and he has a daughter that got married so she is living with this uncle on Michigan Avenue now. And then there is a sister in St. Paul. It is her daughter that lives on the south side that I go to see."

I: "Oh, that is your father's sister?"

E: "Yes, my father's.".....

I: "So that girl is your cousin?"

E: "Yes, she is my cousin. I feel out of place there, you know. They've got such nice things and they have so much money. Things are too nice.".....

I: "Is that so?"

E: "Yes, I feel that I don't belong there. They're awfully nice to me, but I don't go very often, just once in a while. She'll call me up and ask me when I'm coming out and I'll say, 'Yes, I'll come out soon,' and maybe it is half a year before I get there." (laughing)

"I don't like to go because I don't feel comfortable, even if they are so nice to me.".....

I: "So you're the only one of your family in this country."

E: "Yes, I am the only one. My husband is in this country without his family too."

I: "Oh, is he?"

E: "Yes, he came here when he was real young but none of the rest of them are here.".....

"My husband doesn't work here, you know. He lives in DeKalb. We have a little home out there and I go out there.".....

I: "Oh, you mean you stay here during the week?"

E: "Yes, I go out there on Friday afternoons. It takes quite a while. If you get a fast train you can make it quicker, but mostly it takes me over an hour. The train leaves about 6:18.(Discuss transportation routes for a few minutes)I don't like it so well now. When we didn't work in the afternoon I used to get a train about 3:10 and then I would get home about ten minutes to four.".....

"Of course we make more money now so it is all right. (lamely) We make about two or three dollars more. But what is that? I'd rather have the afternoon." (laughing)

I: "You would?"

E: "Yes, you make more money but what is the difference? I like it better to have the afternoon off.".....

"Of course we had it that way all winter.".....

"You can't expect it that way all the time. But I'd like to have the afternoon. I wouldn't care about the money.".....

I: "You'd rather have the time than the money would you?"

E: "I should say so, especially in the summer time. Now I can't get away till after six.".....And then I get the dinner.....You see the time is an hour later in DeKalb.".....

I: "I suppose he doesn't get home much before you then, does he?"

E: "No, he just gets home about six fifteen. You see he works out in the country and it takes him about an hour to get home. They stop about five or five thirty.".....

"He works in gravel in the country. He runs a steam shovel and it gravels the road. He works for the county.".....

I: "What kind of a job do you call that?"

E: "I don't know, is there a name for it?"

I: "I thought maybe he was a contractor or something like that."

E: "No, I know he is not a contractor because he works for someone else, see? He just runs the shovel, see? I guess you'd call him an engineer or something like that, wouldn't you?"

I: "Oh, he engineers the steam shovel?"

E: "Yes, that's it. I guess that's what you'd call him. He does that in the summer time. Last winter of course they did that a lot in the winter too, because there was so little snow they could work a lot of the time. Usually in the winter he runs a truck and they move things. Sometimes they do long distance hauling and they move people's furniture. Sometimes he is out on the road and then sometimes he runs the steam shovel in the winter time.".....

I: "Do they have much road work there in the winter?"

E: "They don't do road work in the winter. They dig basements and things like that for houses.".....This last winter they haven't worked so much."

I: "They haven't?"

E: (mildly) "No, some weeks he has been home two or three days, but things are not as bad as they are in Chicago.".....

I: "That is pretty good for him, isn't it?"

E: "Well, of course they don't pay as good there as they do in Chicago so he doesn't make so much, but I don't think he was ever off a whole week. It would be just two or three days.".....

"You know I didn't like the idea of coming to Chicago because I didn't know anybody. I didn't think I was going to have a good time and that man said, 'Oh, you'll meet people. That will be all right. You'll have a good time,' and then I got married."

I: "You did?"

E: "And now I have a good time too.....I had a real good time when I was single too. It does not make much difference.".....

I: "It doesn't?"

E: "No, I had a real good time when I was single.".....
(employee sighs heavily)

I: "So your husband came from Norway when he was real young."

E: "Yes, but he went back there for two years. I saw him back there."

I: "Oh, you knew him in the old country?"

E: "Oh, yes, we came from the same town and then he came to this country. When he came back there I saw him and I talked to him."
.....

"We knew each other when we were real small, just kids. We used to go together."

I: "Oh, you used to go together?"

E: "Yes, we used to go to school together. We went to the same school, but when I came to this country I thought he was still back there. I didn't know he was in this country at all and then one day I went out in the country and I met him there. I went to a party out in DeKalb. He was living out there see and I went to a party at a farm with the people I am living with now and he was there. They knew him but didn't know that I knew him. Then we got married, I don't know how it happened. When we were kids in Norway, we would be together when we were out skating and sliding you know.".....

Employee seems to be "talked out" so Interviewer and employee discuss weather in Norway and midnight sun.

I: "Well, I guess I'd better tell you something about the interviewing."

E: (laughing) "Well, I guess I won't have anything to tell you. We've said things so much up in the test room."

I: "You have?"

E: "Yes, like to Mr. Hibarger and Mr. Chipman and Miss Chambers. They all ask us things and we tell them. I don't know that I could tell you anything I haven't told them."

I: "Well, I don't know very much about the test room, you know, and I'm sure you could. Have you ever been interviewed before?"

E: "Yes, once.....Last year."

I: "Well, maybe I'd better tell you something about the interviewing since it started." (Interviewer outlines program since 1928.)

E: "Well, that is all right, but I don't think I'd have anything to tell you. Everything is all right in the test room and I haven't anything to complain about."

I: "Well, you see I want to understand all about the test room and that means I'll have to know everything about it. I'm not only going to interview you girls but I'm going to talk to Bea and Selio, Mr. Chipman, Miss Chambers, Mr. Hibarger and I'd like to have you feel that there isn't anything about the test room that is too unimportant to tell me. Maybe you'll think or something that you'll think would be foolish to tell me because it is so unimportant but I don't feel that way. You know something that seems little to you might seem important to me so I would like to hear just anything about it."

E: "It would be easier if you asked me questions. Then I would know what to talk about."

I: "Did the lady last year ask you questions?"

E: "Oh, she didn't ask so many questions. She told us we could talk about anything we wanted to."

I: "Last year we decided that it wasn't so good to ask questions. When we started out with the interviewing, you know, we had a lot of questions that we wanted to find out about. But last year we decided it would be better if we didn't ask questions because lots of times people aren't interested in talking about what you ask them about. You see if you talked about what you wanted to you'd be talking about things you were interested in, and if I asked you questions maybe you wouldn't be interested in them."

E: "Yes, I suppose that is true, but it is kind of hard just to talk. Now if you asked questions then I would know what to talk about."

I: "I know how you feel about it because I'd be the same way if somebody asked me to talk about my department. But how long have you been here now, Anna?"

E: "I've been here five years, four years in the test room."

I: "Well, of course I know that with anyone who has been here that long know an awful lot of things. They would probably know so many things about it they wouldn't know what to say first. You know that if you were to try to write down everything that has happened in the test room from the time it started that you would have a lot of things to write down."

E: (laughing) "Yes, but I couldn't remember them all. Things happen and we forget them and then you can't remember them again."

I: "Oh, sure. I know how you feel, but why don't you do this? I was telling Wanda I thought it would be a good idea if we tried this - when you come down here to talk to me, why don't you just sit down and make yourself comfortable and talk about whatever comes into your head."

E: "I am afraid I wouldn't have very much to say. If you asked me questions it would be easier."

I: "Yes, I suppose it seems that way but I'd kind of like to try out this other way. I think it would be worth trying, don't you?"

E: "Yes, I suppose it would, but I wouldn't know what to talk about."

I: "Well, there is no use trying it today I guess. We've had quite a talk already but I think it would be a good thing to try the next time you come down. You can just say the first thing that comes into your head.".....

E: (pleasantly) "Oh, I don't mind trying it.".....

"We are playing tennis now. (laughing) Well, I guess I shouldn't say playing tennis. We are just batting the balls around. I guess you can't say we are doing anything but batting the balls around till after we learn it better. Oh, was I lame after work the first day after we played. I was sore all over. My arm was so lame it was hard to work."

I: "I suppose your rate was low."

E: "How do you mean?"

I: "I mean I suppose it went down if your arm was so sore. I suppose it was kind of hard to turn out so many."

E: "I suppose it did go down. I suppose it was kind of low. I am suppose to play with Miss Chambers but she wasn't here yesterday. She has a cold. We are supposed to play Thursday night and if she isn't here then I'll play with someone else. You know we drew numbers. I like it real well."

"We were going to have a tournament or something like that but I don't think we can this year. We will have to learn to play better. (laughing until the tears come to her eyes) You should see the way we hit those balls! It is terrible the way we hit them! Why some of them even go over the fence. It is wild!"

I: "You think you're playing baseball, huh?"

E: "That is what I said to Wanda. 'Do you think you're playing baseball?' (laughing again until the tears come to her eyes.) I like to play tennis - if I could ever play it."

"If I were working in the department it would be different. There you are working among so many and you hear about so many things that I'd have more to tell you, but the way it is in the test room we are all by ourselves and I have nothing to tell. We like everybody there. We like Mr. Chipman and Miss Chambers and everybody. They're real nice and we get along all right together....."

"So what can I say?"

I: "We don't need to talk any more today. After one has talked for a while they get kind of tired anyway."

E: "Oh, that is all right but I don't know what I could say. I haven't anything to complain of."

I: "Well, I am not interested only in things to complain of but since I have to understand the test room I have to know everybody in it real well, don't I so I want to get real well acquainted with you. I want to know about you, what things you're interested in and about your home if you want to tell me and about any personal problems you may have. Oh, we will have lots of things to talk about so why don't we call this all for today and then you can tell me more next week."

E: "If I can think of things to tell you I'll try it."

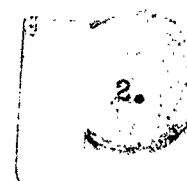
I: "I think it will work the way I suggested - for you to just talk about anything that comes into your mind. We will try that for a while and see. Of course I'll have a lot of questions to ask you when we get to talking about things. I'm sure we'll get along all right."

E: "Maybe that would be a good way. Well, I guess I might as well be getting back now. I've been gone quite a while."

I: "All right, I'll give you a ring some time next week, Anna."

Additional Material

Employee speaks of vacation plans, saying she and her husband may drive through Wisconsin: "It's real beautiful up there. We will just drive along from one place to another. we don't care where we go, we just want to see it."



RECORD OF INTERVIEW

Relay Assembly Test Room
Recorded by: I. Rousseau

July 8, 1931.
Operator No. 5.
Interview No. 2.

During first quarter of interview 05 is not spontaneous but always responds to such stimuli as "you did?", "you haven't?" "Is it?" etc. When she starts talking about the Old Country she is very enthusiastic but toward the end of the interview she "peters out."

E: "Wasn't last week terrible! Such hot days - my! It was enough to make anyone faint, wasn't it?".....

I: "It's a good thing it didn't last any longer, isn't it?"

E: "Yah, I'll say; but I haven't felt so good since. Not like I usually do, you know. When it's so hot that way you don't feel like eating and you can't sleep or anything. It makes you feel like you can't do anything.....

"Well, it won't be long now till vacation anyway, will it?"

I: "Not very long now, is it?"

E: "I'm not going anywhere. I'm just going to stay home..... But that will be a vacation.....for me. All the house cleaning is done so I won't have to do that.".....

I: "Well, that will be a help, won't it?"

E: "Yes, that will be nice.".....

I: "What are you going to do, Anna?"

E: "Nothing - I'll just stay home. I'll just have the regular cleaning and cooking to do.....and I enjoy that.".... I don't like to go out.....oh, maybe once in a while.".....

I: "But you really enjoy cooking?"

E: "Yes, I like to do it."

I: "Some people eat at home because they don't like to eat out but they don't really enjoy cooking. I was just wondering how you felt about it."

E: "Yes, I know, but I really like to cook.....I guess it was because I learned to when I was real small. I had to. (laughing) My mother was very strict with us."

I: "Oh, was she?"

E: "Yes. I had six sisters and we all had to take turns doing the cooking - you know, one week one would help and then the next and so on. In that way we learned.....My mother always had a maid but she made each one of us take turns helping her so we would learn how. I think that's a good way to do, don't you? Then you know how. When you don't learn how when you're older it doesn't - well, it just doesn't come natural. It just isn't in you. You never know how to do things, like when you're trained to do it.....And then I had two years of housework when I came to this country.I learned a lot that way.....There were so many things to learn. People do things here so differently. Like the food and everything here is so different. Like in the Old Country they don't have any pie. They never have pie over there. And I had to learn how to make pie. You should have seen the first pie I made! I put in too much lard and when I looked in the oven it was just a little piece in the middle of the pan. (laughing) So I took it out and I made another one and that was all right. You know how when you put too much shortening in it won't hold together. It just melts and runs in.

"That lady was an awfully good housekeeper. I have to say that much for her. She could cook and she did a lot of sewing. She knew how to keep things nice. I learned a lot from her. They had a big house over on the north side. There were three stories to it. Upstairs there were two rooms for the girls and a big playroom for the kids, and on the second floor there was bedrooms and on the first floor they had the living room. I liked it real well while I was there.....

"I don't think the way people eat now is as good as it used to be do you?"

I: "How do you mean?"

E: "People eat so many kinds of food nowadays. I don't think it's good for them, do you? I was talking to a doctor down on the south side - Dr. Thomas - and he said to me that people eat too many different kinds of food. If they'd eat one kind they would be all right. He has a lady, for example, who was a patient of his and he told her that she would get well if she would stop eating so many different kinds of food. He told her she should eat just one kind - she should eat fish. And now she's all right."

IF "Do you think it's eating different kinds of food that matters or is it the kind of food you eat?"

E: "I don't know. That's what he said."

I: "Well, I was just thinking if it wouldn't be different if you had, for example, pie and cake and biscuits together for a meal, than if you had three different kinds of vegetables."

E: "Oh, I don't think it makes any difference what kind of vegetables you eat - it's meat and fish, and things like that. Like if you had pie and cake and biscuits for one meal, that wouldn't be good for you, but if you had one dish it would be better."

I: "Do you mean like if you had carrots it would be better to have just carrots?"

E: "No, it wouldn't make any difference with the vegetables, but like with meat and pastry it would."

I: "You mean if you have meat or fish or pastry you should have only one kind at a meal."

E: "Yes, that would be better! I think people used to be healthier in the Old Country. Like my grandfather - he lived to be eighty-seven and my grandmother lived to be ninety-four. Both of them were sick just a little bit before they died. They ate different over there. Why my father used to tell me that he had just sour milk and bread for breakfast and they didn't get no sweets, or anything like that. The food is so different over there. Then for dinner maybe you'd get some fish and potato, and for supper you'd just get one dish again.
.....

"Of course in this country living is cheaper. It's very high over there, and fruit! Fruit is terrible! Of course they don't have much fruit over there. They have to import it and it costs a lot.".....

I: "Yes, I understand they have very little fruit in Europe."

E: "Oh, it used to cost so much! Why to get fruit was something wonderful! When we got an orange at Christmas time we used to save it so long, and then we would burn the peel.".....

I: "You mean so it would smell?"

E: "Yes. We used to put it on the stove - on top of the kitchen stove. Oh, we thought it was wonderful to get an orange! They cost so much, you see, you didn't get them very often.....

"My! Christmas is so different in Norway! There you don't have just one day like here. It doesn't mean anything here, but there it lasts for three weeks. Everybody goes around and sees their friends and it's so different than here. Here you work up to the day before and you go to the store the last minute and then you just have one day and you have to go back to work. It's nothing like that over there. Why, you have the first Christmas Day and the second Christmas Day over there. On the first Christmas Day you can't go away. You have to be all ready on 5:00 o'clock Christmas Eve - you have your clothes all changed and you're all cleaned up. Everything has to be done at 5:00.....After 5:00 o'clock you can't do anything - everything has to be ready, and then at 5:00 o'clock everybody had coffee. The stores close up at 5:00 too, and they don't open until the third day.

"Then on Christmas morning we would have coffee in bed. My mother would get up and get it for us. Usually she didn't get up early - that was the only morning she did. She would get up and make the coffee and serve it to all of us; we would have it about 6:30 in the morning. Then we would get up and we would all go to church and then we would come home, have dinner and then we couldn't go out. We'd have to stay right in. You couldn't go see your friends or anything. Then the next day you could go out. After the first day was over everybody went out and called on their friends.....It was lots of fun.

"The customs over here are so different.".....

I: "Do you hang up your stocking in Norway?"

E: "Not very much. That's mostly a German custom. We didn't used to. I used to know a German family that lived in Norway and they used to do it but we exchanged gifts. They were not gifts that you bought. They were things that you made. You'd spend a lot of time making them. Everything you gave you made by hand. Maybe you would give a tablecloth, or a doilie, or something like that. Why, you could spend a whole fall before making your Christmas presents.....

"We used to have a Christmas tree. The other people didn't have any, and we lived so far North that they didn't have Christmas trees there, but my father used to get one from his relations. Then my mother would have all the children come to see us. They would all come and they would be so excited..... We didn't have ornaments for the tree like you can buy here. We make things to put on it - out of paper, you know. My mother would hang a lot of fruit on it.".....

I: "Is that when you would get your orange - at the party?"

E: "Yes. Everyone would get one. My mother would put most all of them on the tree and we would have to wait until then for it.".....

I: "On what day would that come?"

E: "That wouldn't be until the second or third day - usually on the second. And then Christmas lasted for a long time. You went to lots of parties and dances and things like that. Everybody visited their friends; but it's so different in this country. You don't pay any attention to it.".....

I: "Did you live in a village or in the country then, Anna?"

E: "When I was a child we lived in the country. My father bought my grandfather's farm and we lived there.....

"My father and my mother were engaged for seven years."(laughing)

I: "They were?"

E: "Yes.....My grandfather didn't want my mother to marry my father."

I: "He didn't?"

E: "No.....My father was a captain - he sailed the sea, and you know how it is with farmers.....So he wouldn't let my mother marry my father.....but finally they got married anyhow.....my father got to be a captain and I guess my grandfather thought he was good enough for my mother then. (laughing)....."

I: "Did they win his consent?"

E: "I guess they must have. Then my father bought my grandfather's farm.".....

I: "Oh, he didn't continue to sail the sea after he was married?"

E: "Yes, for a while but then he bought my grandfather's farm and he settled down there. He likes farming. He likes farming as well as the sea. He learned to be a good farmer.....

"He had a friend that used to sail the sea with him and when my father settled down this friend bought a farm right next to him. Why the houses weren't any farther apart than from here to that wall over there! He bought the farm from his father. You should have heard the stories they told when they got together. We would be so scared when he came over that we wouldn't dare go to bed. All the stories they used to tell! I don't know if they were true or not. They used to tell us about the Japanese and the

Indians.They used to tell us terrible things about them.....And about the negroes.....Oh, I used to be so afraid of them. I remember when I first came to this country there was an old man about the age of my grandfather that told me 'Don't you ever let a negro carry your suitcase.' It makes me laugh to think of it! When I came to this country I was so scared and when I saw a negro I thought he must be a terrible person and I wouldn't think of letting him touch my suitcase.....Oh, we used to be so scared. They would tell us how awful those people were."

I: "What would they tell you about them?"

E: "Oh, I don't know. I can't remember what they said. I don't know if it was true or not. Maybe they just said it to scare us. They told us that they ate people and things like that.".....

"My father isn't living any more."

I: "Oh, isn't he?.....My father isn't either.....He died thirteen years ago."

E: "Oh, that long ago! My father died just last year. He was always real healthy. He was eighty-four when he died so he lived to be real old."

I: "My! They've lived to be old in your family, haven't they?"

E: "Yes, I think it's because they have lived the way they have. They live different than we do now. My father was quite old when he was married - he was thirty-two....."

"My mother was quite a bit younger - she was twenty-five. No wonder my grandfather didn't want my mother to marry my father before he was a captain! My grandfather was a wealthy farmer and he didn't think my father was good enough for her. Then my father got to be a good farmer....."

I: "Did your grandfather move off the farm?"

E: "No, he moved to a little house by himself..... I don't know what system they have here in America, but in Norway they have a system that you would give them things - like, you know, milk and meat and they would live there. I don't know if they have that system in America or not....."

"Well, it's getting late and I haven't said anything about the test room." (laughing)

I: "That's all right - we've got lots of time to do that....."

E: "A week from today we'll be having vacation, won't we?"

I: "That's right we will.".....

E: "Are you taking two weeks or a month?"

I: "I was going to take a month but I decided just to take three weeks. If I wait for a month you people will have forgotten everything that happened during vacation." (laughing)

E: (laughing) "That's right. Well, I won't be doing many things to tell you about."

I: "So you're not going to Wisconsin?"

E: "No, we're not going to get away at all. Oh, maybe if something happens to the machinery we'll get away. You know sometimes it will break down for a week and if it does that we could go. Maybe it will break down, huh?" (laughing)

I: "Maybe you can get someone to break it." (laughing)

E: "Yah; oh, you wouldn't want to do that. You wouldn't wish for that; but I almost wish something would break down." (laughing)
.....

RECORD OF INTERVIEW

Relay Assembly Test Room
Recorded by: I. Rousseau

August 18, 1931.
Operator No. 5.
Interview No. 3.

I: "Well, it's a long time since I've seen you, isn't it?"

E: "Yes, since before vacation."

I: "You must have a lot to talk about by this time."

E: "Oh, I don't know. It's the same thing all the time."

I: "How do you mean?"

E: "Oh, there's nothing new. You just do the same thing every day.....I stayed home during my vacation.But I like to just stay home and keep house. That is a real vacation to me.....I just enjoy it.....Of course the first week it was pretty hot.....I just sat around the first week, I couldn't do anything.....And I had planned to do so many things during vacation but I didn't get anything done that I planned to."

I: "Well, that's too bad."

E: "I planned to do all the little things that I can't get done at home except when I have a vacation but that first week it was so hot and then - I don't know.....We had company from Chicago.And some of them stayed all night, and I don't know, when you have company the time passes so fast you don't know where it's gone. Two weeks goes like anything, and then I had the ladies in for coffee in the afternoon and that's the way it went.....I went swimming a lot."

I: "Did you?"

E: "Yes, we went swimming a lot.".....

I: "Where did you go?"

E: "Oh, we went to Crystal Lake and Lake Geneva.....They are not far away from DeKalb, only fifty miles. We were going there last Sunday too but we didn't go. I don't know.....We had company on Saturday from Chicago and then it seemed like the next morning nobody wanted to go. One of them didn't want to go swimming and one of them had a cold.".....

I: "So you didn't get to go?"

E: "No.....My husband had a cold. We had bought a chicken out in the country and I was planning to have supper for them by five o'clock. I wasn't going to go to the lake and I found out afterwards one of the fellows thought if they went to the lake they wouldn't get any chicken so that is why he didn't want to go. I told them, 'Oh, I was planning you'd get the chicken when you came back,' and he said, 'Oh, I thought I wouldn't get it at all.'

"It was a beautiful day Sunday, wasn't it, but we didn't go anywhere. I try to get a good meal every Sunday because I am not home very much and I figure my husband will get a good meal then anyway.(laughing) I usually have chicken. You know you can get chicken awfully cheap in DeKalb." (talks for some time of comparative Chicago and DeKalb prices and farmers' small return. Very sympathetic with farmer.)

I: "I wonder why things are so high in DeKalb?"

E: "I don't know why they're so high there unless it is because they have a big school there. They have a great big school there."
.....

I: "They do?"

E: "Yes, why last year I think it was about eight hundred they had there."

I: "That is big, isn't it?"

E: "Yes, and last summer there were four hundred teachers going there.".....

I: "I never happened to have heard of that school."

E: "Oh, it is a great big school."

I: "Is it a place for teachers to study?"

E: "Yes, I've forgotten what they call it."

I: "Is it a normal school?"

E: "Yes, that's what we call it, the normal school, but I don't know what the real name of it is. Maybe it is teacher's college or something like that.....

"The lady that lives next to me went to school for a long time. She went for eight years. She is studying music. She plays the piano wonderful and then she teaches too. She used to study up here in Chicago too. I don't know what the place was where she studied but there must have been a lot of people there.

"You know it was funny. She said when she first went to that place the teachers all wanted to know how much they had practised. She had practised for three years. Well, there were some people there that said fourteen and twenty and ten years, and when she had only three to say she didn't know what to do, so when they asked her she said twelve. (laughing) Isn't that crazy? You know she didn't want to just say three when they were saying so many and you know she said she played as good as some of them that said twelve. (Employee elaborates for some time on neighbor's health and education.)

"She's got a brother who goes to the university. He had two and a half years to go when he went down there. He hasn't so much to take there because he went to school in DeKalb. He went there three and a half years first so when you do that first they say you don't have so much to take at the university. I don't know what it does. I guess you don't go down so low in your class or something. He is a real smart fellow. Their whole family is real smart. I don't know what he is taking up.".....

I: "Where does he go to school?"

E: "Down at Illinois. I don't know what he's taking up.."

E: "It must be something special, isn't it?"

E: "I don't know. I guess it must be. She never told me so I never ask her.

"You know even her father was real musical. He can play the piano himself. (laughing) You'd never think it to look at him."

I: "You wouldn't?"

E: "No, he doesn't look like he could play the piano. He is real clumsy like you know."

I: "He is?"

E: "Yes, he's not so much to look at. You know he looks all right. He is nice, but you wouldn't think he would play the piano.

"They're Finnish people and you know you can hardly understand them. I don't know why it is. The children have been in this country a long time, for twenty-three years but sometimes I have such a hard time to understand them. I don't know why that should be. There are some people living on the other side of us and they are Finnish too. But you can understand them a little better. The children were all up-grown in America and you

can understand them pretty good.

"There are a lot of Finns in DeKalb. I don't know why it is, none of them speak English very good. I can see why people who don't go to school here have a hard time with it. You don't learn it so good when you don't go to school and learn it the way you're supposed to, but with the children who grow up in this country and go to school where they learn it I don't see why they can't speak it.".....

I: "I wonder why they don't speak it better."

E: "I don't know. Of course the Finnish people all gather together there. They don't go out much and mix up with the English. When they go out they are with the Fins. They have some Finnish Clubs there and when they go out to parties and things there are other Fins there and they all speak Finnish. They don't get a chance to speak English much.....

"They taught English in the schools in Norway but I don't know, they taught it so different than they speak English in America. You know when you learned English in Norway you pronounced the word just like it was written down and you don't speak it that way in English. In Norwegian you speak a word just the way it is written and in English you don't do that, so I think people who learn to speak English in Norway can hardly make themselves understood in this country.

"I didn't study much English in schools there - I only went six months. The schools there were not high schools but they're about the same thing. I didn't like school. I never liked to study. It wasn't that I couldn't do it, you know. I wasn't dumb. All I had to do was look at my book and I knew it but I didn't like to study.

"My father wanted us all to go to high school too but I wouldn't go. My brothers and sisters went but I wouldn't go. My older sister, she went and studied music all the time. She played the piano real good. I don't know what my brothers took up. One of them has a fruit store. That is my next oldest brother. He didn't like school either but he was dumb. He just couldn't learn at school." (laughing)

"He didn't want to go to school. He said he wanted to be a brick layer, but I don't know, times were pretty bad then and he could not get a job so he thought he would sell fruit. He has a fruit store now. I guess he is doing pretty good. I think it is real good when he didn't have much education because you're supposed to go all the way through high school to run a store in Norway. It is different than it is here. There you have to have an education to run a store."

I: "You do?"

E: "Yes, because you have to do bookkeeping and everything. I do not know how he does it but I guess his wife must do the book-keeping.....You know how it is there. You have to go through some things. I don't know what you would call it in English. I know what it is in Norwegian but it is where the people are that run the city.....They have to go through it."

I: "What do you mean go through it?"

E: "Well, I don't know, like filling out papers and things like that, I guess to be sure that they knew how to run a store."

I: "Was it like an examination?"

E: "I don't know just what they had to do."

I: "I thought maybe it was like the Civil Service here."

E: "I don't know what the Civil Service is, at least I don't know it by that name."

Interviewer explains purpose of Civil Service.

E: "I don't know whether they have anything like that in Norway or not. I guess it must be like the city Hall here, anyway, it is a place where the people who run the city are. They call that the Baystadera. I know that means something about city because 'Bayen' means city and the other part means something like if there was a bunch of girls here and you were to look after them see? It would be just like that for the city."

I: "It must be something like our city council."

E: "Yes, I guess it must be that, because whenever they want to do anything like change the road they would have to get their permission first. You don't have to have anything to run a grocery store in this country, do you?"

I: "I think they have to have a license."

E: "I don't know about that. They don't have to pay in Norway. They just have to pay taxes but they don't have to pay to run a store. Maybe you have to do that in this country."

I: "I'm not sure but I know if you run a theater or a dance hall or anything like that you have to pay for a license."

E: "Yes, I suppose they have to have a license.".....My oldest brother sells fish. He doesn't have a store. He goes around and buys fish and sells them. I don't know what you would call it."

I: "You mean he buys a few and sells them himself?"

E: "No, he doesn't sell them himself. He buys a lot of them."

I: "I guess in this country they would call him a rish dealer, wouldn't they?"

E: "Yes, I guess that is what he is.....My youngest brother runs a farm.....My father wanted us all to go to school. He didn't want us to take up anything in particular but he thought we should all go to school."

I: "I wonder why he felt that way."

E: "I don't know. He didn't want us to teach or anything like that.".....

I: "I was just wondering because sometimes people want their children to go to school to take up something special and sometimes for some other reason."

E: "I don't think he wanted us to go for anything but that we should learn. He just wanted us to learn enough. He was always saying that you could never learn too much.".....How long did you take on your vacation?" (discuss vacation for a few minutes)
The only trouble with our house out there is that there is not enough room, there is not enough yard I mean. I like a house with a big yard and it has only got one lot. Oh, it has a little room, enough for the clothes and it has a garage and some of it taken out for the driveway. It's a nice little house. It's got a real big kitchen and that is what I like. The house has just been painted.....It needed it terribly bad. I was ashamed of it. The paint was all peeling off. You see we don't own that and the man that owns it doesn't live there. We rented from his sister, and you know how it is when you're not living in a place you don't care so much about it, but I kept saying to her all the time how the house needed painting and finally she had it done. My husband said I certainly must have talked to her a lot about it. I had to wait a long time though but she finally had it done.".....

I: "Did they do it the color you wanted it?"

E: "Well, they didn't want white. I like a house to be white with dark green trimming. It's going to have a cream color with dark green trimming so that will be real nice."

I: "That's pretty close, isn't it?"

E: "Yes, I think that will be real pretty.....If I was to have a house of my own I don't think I'd have one so big."

I: "You wouldn't?"

E: "No, it takes too much time to clean it. Why you know it takes every Saturday to clean it. Now I've got a kitchen and a dining room and a sitting room and a parlor and two bedrooms upstairs and then there's a hall that is almost as big as a room and it takes a lot of time to clean that. If we were to have our own house I think I would have the bedrooms downstairs, you know, have a bungalow. Of course I like the bedrooms upstairs but I could get along with less rooms. It would be easier to take care of.".....

I: "How much room would you have?"

E: "Well, I'd have a kitchen and a dining room and a sitting room and two bedrooms. You know I think the most important thing about a house is the kitchen and the bedroom. (emphatically) Some people have an idea of little bedrooms and a little kitchen, but I can't stand them. I like to have a great big kitchen because you've got to do all your work out there and if you have a little bedroom your furniture is just crowded in. I like a lot of space. I like a lot of room in the kitchen because you've got to do all your work out there."

I: "How do you mean?"

E: "Well, that's where you spend most your time working, and if anything has to be small I think it should be the other rooms, and I like a big bedroom because you have a lot of 'pla', I mean a lot of room to move around in. I think those two ~~rooms~~ are the most important. It doesn't make so much difference about the others."

I: "Do you prefer a small living room?"

E: "No, I wouldn't say I didn't want one. They're all right if you can afford to have them." (laughing)

I: "But you mean if one of the rooms has to be small you don't want it to be the kitchen or bedroom."

E: "Yes, that's it. I would rather have the sitting room be the small one.....And I would want a big yard. I would like to have lots of trees and flowers."

I: "You would?"

E: "Yes, I think flowers are beautiful. I would have lots of flowers! They have such pretty flowers where I'm living. They have them beside their walk that runs behind the house. Oh, they have lots of flowers there and trees! It is real beautiful! Most of the houses have two lots there.....My girl friend's husband's mother has a wonderful place. Oh, they've got a lot of room there. They've got three lots. It's real beautiful. They have lots of flowers.....Another thing I would want would be a little house, you know, not one that's all shut in. One that has vines on it."

I: "You mean a summer house?"

E: "Is that what they call them? I think they're real pretty. I would want to have vines on it."

I: "What kind of vines would you have?"

E: "I don't know. I think grape vines are nice, don't you?"

I: "They are nice."

E: "They have different kinds of vines though.....And another thing I would want is a swing, you know, the kind with a top with that kind of material, I've forgotten what you call it."

I: "You mean the kind with an awning over it?"

E: "Yes, that kind. I think those are real nice."

I: "They are nice, aren't they?"

E: "Yes, I would want to have one of those, and you know at my girl friend's husband's mother's place they have a long place, kind of like a driveway, only it is high on both sides and they've got vines on it."

I: "Is it covered over at the top like this?" (illustrating an arch)

E: "Yes. It's kind of rounding at the top and it's got vines all over it. It is real long, it is real shady in there. I think that's real nice."

I: "Where does it run to?"

E: "That goes to the summer house. It looks so nice. Of course They've got a lot of room there."

I: "Where does it go from?"

E: "It goes from the house to the summer house. That makes it real nice.....I saw one kind of vine out in the country the other day that I'd like to have. It's got little white and red and blue blossoms. That's the kind I'd like to have. I've seen it several times and it's real pretty. I don't know what kind it is. It's got red and blue blossoms."

I: "It isn't the morning glory?"

E: "No, it isn't morning glory. I know what that is."

I: "How are the flowers? Do they hang in clusters something like lilacs?"

E: "Yes, that's what it's like."

I: "That sounds like wistaria."

E: "Is that what they call it? I think that is real pretty. It has such pretty blossoms."

I: "Does it have a nice smell too?"

E: "Yes, it smells real nice.....But what's the use of talking about it all, (laughing) when I can't have it! When I tell my husband I want those things he tells me not to have so many foolish ideas when I can't have them. He says if I get them all he'll have to have steady work this winter, but I don't know, we may have a house. We probably will because you can pay for houses just like paying rent and we are paying rent now so we can have a house, but I don't know about the other things.....They're kind of slack out there now so I am afraid it is going to be a dead winter. He is not working all the time now so I am afraid he won't work many days this winter. They're laying off here a lot now, aren't they? Lorraine is going to be laid off. Isn't that too bad?"

I: "I heard about that. That's too bad."

E: "She may have to go. But I'm not complaining. If we only work-three days, well, we can't work any more. (laughing) If I complain I might get laid off, but if I'm laid off, well, I'm laid off and that's all. There's no use of complaining.".....

RECORD OF INTERVIEW

Relay Assembly Test Room
Recorded by: I. Rousseau

August 28, 1931.
Operator No. 5.
Interview No. 4.

E: "Say, didn't it rain last night? Oh, such a rain. I was in the city and such a rain, but when I got home the streets were all dry around where I live.".....

I: "So you were downtown in that rain?"

E: "No, not downtown really - over on the northwest side. We went over to see a girlfriend.....She is a girl who used to work here."

I: "She isn't one of those who got laid off, is she?"

E: "Oh, no, she hasn't worked here for a long time, I think it is three years. We went over to see her little baby. She has the cutest little baby." (employee's face lights up)

I: "She has?"

E: "Yes, he is just about two years old. I think they're so cute don't you, when they're learning to talk and learning to walk? My girlfriend has a baby that is just about a year old and he is so cute. He can't talk yet and he is slow walking. He is just learning to walk. I had some fur on my coat collar and last night he came up and felt it and said, 'Whoofy.'" (laughing) He was so cute. He said, 'Whoofy, whoofy.'" She has a little girl that is five now.....You should see her dance. She learned to dance when she was just three years old and she is a good little dancer. You know she is always dancing even when she was real tiny. You know what she said to her mother when she was three years old? She said, I'm going to be a dancer and I'm not going to wear anything.' Her mother said, 'Well, you'll sure get a crowd.'".....

Discuss children for some time - early learning,
etc. Exchange anecdotes.

I: "It is nice that you have a girl friend in Chicago, isn't it?"

E: "She is really the daughter of the people I stay with. I call her my girl friend but she is just like my sister. Those people are just wonderful to me. They treat me just like one of the family. You couldn't find anyone else like that." (enthusiastically).....

I: "That makes it awfully nice, doesn't it?"

E: "I met that lady when I first came to Chicago.".....

I: "She is not the lady you worked for when you first came here?"

E: "Oh, no, she is way out on the north side. This lady used to come and help us out there sometimes when we were real busy. That is how I got to know her. I met her there and then sometimes I would spend my Tuesday afternoons and other time off there. I used to spend my Sundays out there too, and then when I stopped working for that lady they asked me to come and live with them.".....

"Say, they're quite busy out here this afternoon aren't they? I'll bet they feel bad, some of them anyway.I suppose some of them don't."

I: "No, I suppose some of them have their families to take care of them."

E: "Yes, some of them would.....Say, you should have seen the test room this morning. I guess the skylight must have been left open or something because there was dirt and water all over. Why we didn't get started working until eight o'clock this morning. The jigs were all rusty and the springs had to be washed over again. Of course we didn't have to wash them. They did that but there was black all over the floor. I guess it was soot. It made a lot more work, because a lot of that had to be done over again.

"You know everything has to be clean now they're washing the parts. You have to put paper in the box and the relays have to be covered up, and there has to be a cover on the box. There has to be paper and everything. We have to put paper on the layout at night too."

I: "How do you mean the layout?"

E: "Well, that's that pan in front of us where the parts are. We have to put paper over that and our jigs have to be clean. I guess they've got too much to do. We had to wait for ----- (piece parts) this afternoon. I suppose they couldn't help it. They've got so much to do.".....

I: "You don't very often have to wait for parts in the testroom, do you?"

E: "No, not any more. We never have to wait but we used to have to wait a lot at first, and then I guess they told them we couldn't wait any more.

"Mr. Chipman went in and talked to them this afternoon. I guess he told them we couldn't wait. They're supposed to get the parts to us. They moved the washing downstairs now."

I: "Yes, I hear has.....(smiling) I guess you haven't much to say this afternoon, have you?"

E: "No, there isn't very much to say." (smiling)

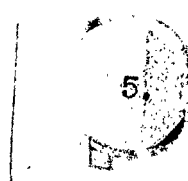
I: "I haven't had a chance to tell you yet, Anna, that now that I am going to have a chance to see you people more often that we'll probably make the interviews shorter. I think we won't make them longer than an hour."

E: "That's a good idea. If we see you once a week there won't be so much to say."

I: "That's right. I suppose sometimes you won't have very much to say, and I just want you to take it naturally, Anna. If you don't feel like talking you don't need to, and then sometimes if you feel like talking we can stay longer than an hour."

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RECORD OF INTERVIEW

Relay Assembly Test Room
Recorded by: I. Rousseau

September 8, 1931.
Operator No. 5.
Interview No. 5.

E: (Yawning) "When I don't do anything, I am tired just the same."...It seems like I am more tired when I don't do anything than when I do.".....I didn't do anything more than usual. I always clean up the house. I guess everybody feels that way today. (Tuesday after Labor Day) It is the same as Monday. They all feel that way on Monday.".....

I: "I wonder why."

E: "I don't know why it is, but it is just that way.....The production always goes down on Monday.".....

"Tuesday is the highest day. It seems like we work our best on Tuesday and then of course Wednesday is repair day and Thursday is all right and Friday is repair day again. Of course when you have repairs you don't do so much.".....

I: "This is very interesting, Anna, tell me some more."

E: "There isn't much to say. I just know we go down on Mondays."

I: "I wonder why."

E: "I couldn't say why it is. (laughing) Maybe we just have to have a day to start. It might be that because we say, 'It is Monday.' We talk about it. Maybe we don't try so hard as on other days.".....

I: "There is something in that."

E: "I think there is. (growing confidential) You know on Monday you think you have the whole week ahead of you and you have a lot of time to get things done, so you kind of take it easy. You know how you do that with things in the house. At the first of the week, sometimes if you don't feel like doing it, you just let it go because you figure you have a lot of time to get it done. It isn't that you mean to work slow, it just seems like you can't do it. Some days it just seems as though my fingers won't move fast enough.....And then sometimes you will work so hard and then you will see that you haven't done many at all.".....I don't know why it is. Of course some days you can't make so many because when you get bad parts you have to look real close and some days you just feel like working and you go right along."

I: "But you never feel that way on Monday?"

E: "Oh, sometimes. Once in a while Mondays is better than other days, but most of the time it is not.".....

I: "So you have never noticed what it is that makes you work hard some days."

E: "No, I have never heard them say. I don't know what it would be."

I: "That is some thing I would be interested in having you watch for, Anna."

E: "That is something that I don't know if I could find out. That is pretty hard."

I: "Of course it is hard, but I was just thinking if you ever got any idea about it, I would like to have you tell me. You see as we go along with the interviewing I can tell you once in a while the things that I would especially like to have you watch for."

E: "I don't know if I could find out what that is."

I: "Maybe you can't, but it is something that I am very much interested in finding out more about. Sometimes you might notice something. You might notice that there is something that you have been doing that makes you feel more or less like working, or maybe you have something on your mind that you are thinking about. If you ever notice it, let me know."

E: "All right.....(Discuss weather and layoff) Miss Chambers didn't come down to work this morning. Maybe she is looking for a job. I hope she finds one.....What would she do if she didn't? She hasn't anyone to go to.....It seems like all of my girl friends have their husbands out of work." (Employee discusses their difficulties for some time.).....

"My husband says to me that we should sell our house and board. I said, 'Nothing doing.' I wouldn't listen to him. I said that I would quit right away if he would do that. (laughing) Of course I have a nice place to stay. (employee speaks of her rooming place much less enthusiastically today.) It is nice enough.It is just like my own home.....But it is not the same. I couldn't stand to have my furniture put into storage. At least I have some place to go.....Of course my husband was kind of lonesome.....But he doesn't talk about it any more.".....

I: "Oh, you mean he suggested that so he wouldn't be alone?"

E: "Yes. It is kind of lonesome when he goes home alone every night and it wouldn't be that way if he were boarding, but I wouldn't listen to it. He hasn't said anything for a long time. I guess he is getting used to it. He can go out every evening. He has nothing to stay home for. But to board - I wouldn't do that!(yawning) My, I would like to take a little nap.... If I were home, I could do it.....I always liked to take a little nap after dinner.....Even ten minutes helps so much.Of course in the winter time my husband comes home to dinner, so I can't do it then.".....

I: "You can't?"

E: "No, because he doesn't go back to work until one o'clock, and then I have to do up the work. I don't have time.".....

I: "You have quite a while to yourself before he comes home again, don't you?"

E: "Not so much..When I get the work done, then I have to shop or something.....My husband comes home at five o'clock..... But when you are working, you have to keep on.....Some women have to work.....Well, they don't exactly have to.....My they have changed this building over so. It was just a little tiny place when I was down here.....My, how long I sat and waited that day. It took me all day. There were a lot of girls here for work and they had to talk to us and send us over to the hospital and be examined and we had to come back here and it took so long. It was four thirty before I got home.....I still see some of the girls.....There are not many of them left. Some of them got married.....Some of them got laid off.....There is only one left in 29. Every time I see her she says, 'What, you here yet?'.....Well, it is nearly twelve o'clock."

RECORD OF INTERVIEW

Relay Assembly Test Room
Recorded by: I. Rousseau

September 18, 1931.
Interview No. 8.
Operator No. 5.

The benches where employee usually sits are filled with girls so interviewer waits in booth and watches to see what employee does. She steps inside the outer door and waits there for three or four minutes, making no attempt to locate interviewer. Finally interviewer steps to the door of the booth, employee sees her and comes to booth.

E: "I didn't think you were here. I didn't see you anywhere."

(Employee seems in a buoyant mood today. She talks freely all during the interview. Discuss weather for some time.....)

E: "Sometimes we get real nice weather in October. Maybe we will get a real cold winter. We had a warm summer. Now, the winter might be cold."

I: "Is that the way they say it goes?"

E: "Oh, you never can tell. It never goes the same way. Now, we've had a warm winter and a warm summer. Maybe we'll have another warm winter. You cannot tell.".....

I: "They say we are going to get an early fall."

E: "Oh, you cannot tell."

I: "I heard someone say they had seen the birds flying south. Well, maybe they could be fooled." (laughing)

E: "Yes, maybe.....You know, that is one thing I have never seen in the city."

I: "Come to think of it, neither have I."

E: "You know in Norway - (frowning expansive) - The birds used to fly south, and we could always tell that winter was coming. Oh, we would see so many of them in the country - thousands and thousands - the air would just be black with them! And you know, there was a bird that used to come from the South to the North for the winter!"

I: "There was!"

E: "Yes. It liked to be on the ice and the snow. I guess it must have been a goose. They called it a Vilgoos in Norwegian. I guess it must have been a goose!"

I: "It sounds like it, doesn't it?"

E: (delightedly) "I guess it must have been a goose! You know so many words in Norwegian sound the same as in English! Only there are some letters we pronounce different. Like in Norwegian, we always pronounce 'i' as 'e'."

I: "Then ice would be 'ese'."

E: "Yes, that's the way it goes. Oh, English is so crazy! There are some words that you couldn't tell anything how to pronounce them, well, in Norwegian it isn't that way. A word is always spelled the way it is pronounced. You know, I know a lady that never spoke any English until she came to this country, and, oh, she is so funny. She says the craziest things. She used to come over where I was and she used to tell us the craziest things she did. The lady would ask her to get her something, and you should see all the things she'd bring her. One time she asked her what time it was, and she took the clock off the wall, and took it into the room where she was because she couldn't tell the time. (laughing) One time she asked her to get the step-ladder. She didn't know what they were talking about. You know, in Norway, ladder means leather like you have in your shoes. So when they said step-ladder, she didn't know what kind of leather it could be. And then she happened to think of an old dog-skin that was lying out in the yard, and if she didn't go and get that and take it to the lady. They nearly died laughing. And one time the lady sent her to the store. She had only been here a couple of weeks then, and the lady told her to get a chicken. Well, they didn't clean it for her, and when she brought it home it had the feathers on it, so she had to take it back. You know, she said to the men, 'The lady said to take the feathers off the kitchen.' There were two fellows there, and they nearly died laughing. She said she didn't dare go past that store for weeks. They got the biggest kick out of it....."

"You know, I didn't have any trouble! Of course, it would be funny working for a lady that talks English. I was lucky. I went with Norwegians. But I never had any trouble. I would go to the store right away and get things. I would even go for clothes, and I would always get what I wanted, and I could find my way around on the street cars. Why, I had only been here two weeks when I took five street cars! We lived on the north side, and I had to go over and see somebody on the west side that it was hard to get to by street car, and I didn't have any trouble.....I don't know, I never have any trouble finding my way around. Lots of people tell me they do when they come from the Old country. I think it's because they're not interested. They go with somebody else all the time, and they are not interested. They always have somebody with them.....But I never could see why anybody couldn't get around if they wanted to.".....

"You know, the funniest thing that ever happened to that lady was one time when the lady told her to get the sheet. Well, you know, sheet is a very bad word in Norwegian. (employee tells this story hilariously) So when the lady told her to go and take the sheet from the bed, she went and looked all over the bed and then told the lady she couldn't find any. We nearly died laughing when she told us that. When she would come over, she would tell such crazy things that she did. I guess that happens to a lot of people.".....

I: "Yes, I've heard stories of men who come over from the Old Country and work in lumber camps or some place where there are a lot of other men, and they will teach them bad things to say for things that they have to ask for."

E: "I think that is terrible. You know, (seriously) I know a girl that has only been in this country a little while and a man taught her to say something terrible. It was the worst thing you could think of. And one time at a party she said it. She couldn't have said anything worse. Then another girl told her what it meant. She would never speak to the man again. I think that is a dirty trick. That is rotten.....

"I guess this is Miss Chambers' last day."

I: "Yes, she told me.....I wonder how she feels."

E: "I wonder, too. I met her on the way over here. She had just been to the Payroll. I wonder what she will do. She hasn't anyone here.....But what can you do? I think we just have to take it.But maybe she will find another job."

I: "Yes, you can't tell.. She might get one next week.....

"I suppose you wondered why I didn't see you last week, Anna."

E: "You didn't have all the girls last week, did you?"

I: "No, I just had too much to do. And then I had trouble with my arches and I had to go to the doctor a couple of times."

E: "Oh, you're having trouble with your feet?"

I: "They feel fine now."

E: "I have trouble with my feet in the summer time. I have a lady friend who has such trouble with her feet. You know, she is quite stout, but her legs are small - well, they're not skinny, but they're not large - and she is real tall and her body is stout. And you know, there's nothing the matter with her feet. I think it must be her skin. Her feet smart so that she can hardly stand it. You know, her arch is just fine. The doctor said it must be because her body is too heavy for her feet. I have trouble with my feet just in the summer time. They smart so. It isn't my shoes. I can get them smaller and I can get them bigger, and it's just the same."

I: "Have you ever worn a shoe with any open-work in it?"

E: "No, I never had that kind. I always buy my shoes at 'O.Yee.' (O.G.) I never wear high heels any more, so it isn't that. At first I thought it was the shoes. I thought, 'Oh, these shoes are no good,' and I thought I wouldn't buy any there any more. But the next ones were just the same, so now I buy them there again. I got a pair that was just like some I got there before my feet hurt. They were the best shoes I ever had on my feet. My feet smarted in them this time, so I guess it's my feet and not the shoes. They have real good shoes there. They have good shoes at Cutler's, too, I guess.".....

"It's getting late." (4:00 o'clock).....

"Mr. Chipman passed out paper for a vote on how we liked the working day. The first vote was five days and stop at 4:15, but I voted (chuckling) for the four and a half day week. I like the Friday afternoons. If we work till 4:15 I have to hurry so to get home, but I have so much time if we stop at noon. None of the other girls wanted it, though. (4½ day week) It's different when you work in Chicago. If I lived here, I wouldn't want it either.".....

I: "Maybe you would."

E: "Maybe. But then I wouldn't have to hurry. I wouldn't have so many things to do. I have a big ironing to do tomorrow."

I: "You do?"

E: "Yes, I don't like to iron. I like wash.".....

I: "I suppose you washed last week."

E: "Yes, I wash next door. They have an electric washing machine. It is so easy; it isn't like washing at all. I don't know I'm washing. But I don't like to iron.".....

I: "Now, I like to iron, but I don't like to wash."

E: "You like to iron? I don't know why I don't like it, but I love to wash.....I suppose I could send my things to the laundry, but they wear out so quick. While now, I just soak my clothes in salt water over night, and I put them in the boiler in the morning and cook them a little, and hang them out. I don't have to rub the pillow cases or sheets or anything like that. Of course, the towels, I do."

I: "Oh, do you just take the things next door that have to be rubbed?"

E: "Well, if I only have a little, I don't take it next door. It's only if I have a big washing that I go there. Like if I have a party and I have a lot of table cloths and napkins, And then if I let the washing go a long time and a lot of things get dirty. And in the summertime you have to change things so often.".....

I: "How do you do your ironing, since you tell me you don't like to iron? Do you hurry through with it?"

E: "No, I do it decently. I can't stand it that way. Everything has to be just so. Why, some people don't iron their sheets and things of that kind. They just fold them up and put them away, but I can't stand them that way. I like them ironed. They look so much better on the bed.....And they keep better that way, too. They don't get wrinkled so fast. I have to iron everything..... It's hard work ironing.".....

I: "Do you sit down when you iron?"

E: "No, I can't do that. You can't press hard enough. And you couldn't do that for the sheets.".....

I: "I have an aunt that does everything that way."

E: "She does? I don't see how she can."

I: "She sits on a high stool so she can press hard enough."

I.R. 9/18/31 Cont'd.

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E: "Yes, of course, you'd have to. An ordinary chair would be too hard.".....

I: "She says it saves a lot of energy."

E: "I'll bet it does."

I: "Well, I guess we had better be going, Anna. We might get to talking about something and forget if we wait any longer."

RECORD OF INTERVIEW

Relay Assembly Test Room
Recorded by: I. Rousseau

September 25, 1931.
Operator No. 5.
Interview No.7.

Employee arrives with wraps and parcels.

I: "Oh, you brought your things with you."

E: "Yes, I am not going back. I am going right home from here."

I: "How are you going to fix that up? Did you bring your card with you?"

E: "No, the girls will punch for me. It will be all right just for once. I didn't want to go back. Mr. Chipman doesn't like to have us do that. Miss Chambers asked him to do it for her once, and he said, 'That is one thing that I cannot do for you.' He doesn't like to have us do that. That is all right once in a while. We just do it when nobody is around. If you get caught at it, they will lay you off."

I: "Will they?"

E: "Yes."

I: "Did you ever know anybody that got laid off for it?"

E: "No, I never knew anyone.".....

I: "Well, I only heard of one case." (tells story.)

E: "Yes, I think that was all right. That was different when they would stay away that way."

I: "Yes, of course they were cheating."

E: "Yes, and we never cheat. We just punch for each other once in a while. We couldn't do it very often.....Did you get wet this morning?"

I: "Did I?"

E: "Oh, did you? That is too bad. I guess everybody had their shoes and stockings a little wet, but I got a ride this morning. My girl friend's husband brought us down.".....

I: "Does he work here?"

E: "No, he doesn't work here, but he brought us down.".....

I: "Say, you were lucky, weren't you?"

E: "I'll say. Of course my shoes and stockings were a little wet because she lives three doors down the street and I had to run down there. I didn't change my stockings either because I borrowed them to Theresa. She forgot hers. I had some, but I let her take them.....You know some of the men got their trouser legs wet up to their knees. You know it was coming down so and then when it came down it came up so. You know it does come up again."

I: "It does, doesn't it?".....

E: (rubbing her neck) "I have such a headache today. I had it all day long. My neck is so stiff I can hardly move it."

I: "That's too bad."

E: "I think that is because I caught a cold last night. I left everything wide open and I didn't cover myself up."

I: "And I put on an extra blanket! You see how cold blooded I am."

E: "Not me. Especially when I go to bed. I lie there just like toast and in the morning I wake up without any covers on. That is how I got it.....I should get Hi to rub it for me. He did that once. He knows just a certain spot to rub it on. You know he said the heart has to beat awfully hard to make the blood go through lumps. That is what gives you a headache, so he would rub the lump and you know my headache went right away. He used to do that for me lots of times. I would just say, 'Hi, I have a headache' and he would rub it for me. It helps a lot. Only that one time it went right away, but the other times it helped. Oh, I used to get such terrible headaches. I had headaches all the time. That was before I got my glasses. I would have one in the morning, and it would last all day and I would go to bed with it and I would get up with it in the morning. Lots of times he rubs my head. He knows just the right spot to rub in.".....

I: "I have a friend who does that too. He cracks my neck too."

E: "Hi can do that too. He used to do that to me. He doesn't come up very much. He didn't come up today, so I couldn't ask him. We get real lonesome for him. He only comes around once in a while now."

I: "Do you mean just lately or since he was up there all the time?"

E: "Well, you know he used to be there all the time and we got used to him.....He is such a funny guy. It is fun to have him around. He makes me laugh. He says such funny things..... You know we got so used to having him around. I suppose it is because he started there when we did. You know how you get used to somebody.....He didn't come up today. If he had, I would have told him about my headache."

I: "Say, let me rub your head for a few minutes.....I probably can't do it as good as he could, but I think I can help it."
(massages back of neck.)

E: "Oh, that is nice of you.....That is the spot right there..... Oh, that feels better.....I am afraid my neck is dirty."

I: "It looks perfectly clean to me."

E: "I am always putting my dirty hands on it.".....I think that is enough, Miss R. That feels better and my neck isn't stiff any more. I can move my neck and I couldn't before. It was so stiff. My headache feels better too. There is still a little there but it feels better. I can turn my head like this now."

I: "I am sorry I couldn't do it as good as he could."

E: "Well, that helped, thank you. You will have to get Hi to give you one some day!"

I: "Say, that's an idea.".....

E: "Say, I will have to tell you something. It is my birthday today."

I: "It is?"

E: "Well, not exactly today, it is really tomorrow. We celebrated it today."

I: "You did?"

E: "Yes. I got a wonderful purse from the girls. They went together and got it for me. It is a nice black one."

I: "Did you bring it with you?"

E: "Yes, I have it here." (getting parcel.)

I: "Oh, I'd like to see it."

(Employee shows purse. Interviewer examines it and comments on it.)

E: "I got these socks too. Here is the card. (It is a very impressive birthday card - really a folder of cards with the names Bea, Wanda, Theresa, and Mary written on them. Jennie's name is not there. Interviewer reads names aloud but employee says nothing about omission of Jennie's name.) They went together and got it." (She opens a box of Fannie May chocolates and offers interviewer one.)

I: "Oh, how nice. I shouldn't take one. You were probably going to take them home."

E: "Oh, that is all right. I brought them down to give to the girls and I gave Mr. Chipman and Seilio one."

I: "Thank you. This is awfully nice."

E: "I don't like Fannie May chocolates."

I: "Don't you?"

E: "No, I don't like candy. I hardly ever eat it. It can sit around the house for two or three weeks and I will never touch it, but the girls like Fannie May's candy."

I: "You mean that you don't like Fannie May's candy, or any candy?"

E: "Well, I never go for candy much, but I don't like Fannie May's. I think Mrs. Snyder's candy is the best."

I: "Do you like that too?"

E: "Oh, I'll say. I like her candy best of all. When I go down town I always go in there for some."

I: "What kind do you like best?"

E: "Oh, I get all kinds. Sometimes I get them mixed. I usually get hard candy though. I don't like the creams.".....
I'll tell you what I like though. You know those candies of hers with the nuts around?"

I: "And the fudge inside?"

E: "Yes. Oh, boy! Do I like those."

I: "That is my favorite candy too."

E: "I think that is the best candy I ever tasted. Where I used to work when I did house work, the man used to get her candy all the time and bring it home, and when he got some of those, he always got a pound for me too. My husband is just crazy about candy.".....

RECORD OF INTERVIEW

Relay Assembly Test Room
Recorded by: I. Rousseau

October 2, 1931.
Operator No. 5.
Interview No.8.

Discuss transportation to DeKalb for some time.
Employee complains of difficulty of keeping clothes clean on train to DeKalb.

I: "They don't always have those white covers on the train, do they?"

E: "They never do on the five o'clock train. In the summer time they used to have it on the three o'clock train, but they have them on the five.....I don't think I ever seen them there once.".....

I: "I wonder why they have them on the three and not on the five."

E: "I don't know why.".....

I: "What is the destination of the five o'clock train?"

(Employee, evidently misunderstanding, recites all of Chicago Stations.)

E: "Then it stops at Wheaton. Then there are a couple little stops between there and DeKalb, but I don't remember just what they are.".....

I: "Where do they go from DeKalb?"

E: "Well, they go to Clinton. That is in Iowa. I think that is the last place it stops.".....

I: "Where does the three o'clock train go?"

E: "Oh, that's a fast train. That goes a long ways away. I think it goes to the coast. That only stops at the biggest places. That doesn't stop until it gets to DeKalb, and then it doesn't stop until it gets to Clinton. That's one of the fast trains. I would get home real quick when I went on that.".....

I: "I suppose they figure that's a more important train."

E: "Yes. That's the way it is. That's one of the big trains.".....

I: "I suppose they don't care so much if they have white covers on the smaller trains."

E: "No. The five o'clock train is just a local."

E: "My husband was sick for three or four days in August and he had to stay home. He was coughing and sneezing and I thought he had hay fever. So he stayed in bed a whole day and then I said to him, 'Are you taking me down or don't you feel well enough to?' He said, 'Oh, sure I'm taking you down because I'm going to a doctor.' We know a doctor down here and he went to him and you know what he had - a fever of a hundred and three. The doctor said he had the walking flu. You know I didn't have any pajamas up here so the lady I'm staying with gave him a heavy union suit to wear, and you know when he woke up in the morning it was soaking wet and you could see where it had gone through the sheet and the mattress even. But he felt a lot better. He stayed in bed all that day, and the next day too."

I: "Oh, he stayed up here with you?"

E: "Oh, yes. If he had stayed down in DeKalb, I would have had to stay down there with him. I couldn't let him there by himself.....Men are so helpless when they're sick. They can't do nearly as much as women can for themselves." (laughing)
.....

I: "Yes, they are that way, aren't they?"

E: "My husband is hardly ever sick. I think that is the only time he has been sick since we got married, but when he has a cold it's always this and that."

I: "How do you mean?"

E: "Oh, it hurts him here and it hurts him there." (smiling)

I: (Smiling) "I suppose he wants some sympathy."

E: "I suppose that's what he wants. That's what he says it for, (smiling) but it (the sympathy) wouldn't do him any good.".....

I: "Maybe it would."

E: "I don't know. Maybe it would.".....

I: "So he stayed up here with you."

E: "Yes. That's why I was out all day that Monday."

I: "Oh, that was the reason."

E: "Yes, I didn't like to go and leave him alone.".....

I: "But Tuesday you came down."

E: "Yes.....He just stayed in bed the rest of that day.
He's all right now. He still coughs a little bit.....Say, I'll
be sure to make my train, today won't I?"

I: "Say, this helps you out, doesn't it?" (Interview at end of day)

E: "I'll say.....I don't have any too much time to make my
train now that it leaves at five.....(smiling) I'll be sure to
make it now.".....

I: "How was your headache last week?"

E: "It was just fine. I guess that must have helped because it
didn't bother me any more, so you must have helped it. (smiling)

"I didn't like tea when we first had it for lunch in the test
room, but now I've gotten so that I like it. I didn't used to
could drink it at all but it tastes good now. I like coffee
better.".....

I: "That's right the Norwegians are great for coffee, aren't they?"

E: "I'll say. Some of them drink so much of it.".....

I: "Yes. I remember there was a family lived across the street
from us. They had a coffee pot on the stove all the time."

E: "Yes. Some of them drink it all the time. Why, there is
some people that have coffee for breakfast, then they have a little
lunch in the morning about ten thirty and they have coffee again,
then at noon they have coffee again and about five o'clock they
have some more. It's just a little lunch you know, and then for
supper they'll have it again. We never had it that way in our
house. We never drank much coffee.. We had it in the morning
and sometimes we would have a little in the morning for lunch,
but we never had it at noon. We always had milk or something
else to drink. Sometimes we would have a little coffee and
lunch in the afternoon, but we never had it for supper.".....

I: "And I thought all Norwegians drank a lot of coffee!" (laughing)

E: "Oh, some of them do. Some of them drink it all the time, but we never did at home. My husband doesn't like coffee. Oh, he'll have some for breakfast, but he doesn't like it....."

"I'm getting fat. I'm going to have to stop eating so much. Oh, how I'm eating! It's the cool weather I think. Whenever I lose anything it is not where I want it. (indicating hips) I always lose it in my face and arms.".....

I: "You don't look overweight."

E: "Oh, I weigh a lot more than I'm supposed to."

I: "How much are you supposed to weigh?"

E: "Well, it would be all right if I were a hundred and thirty-five, but I'm a hundred and forty-one. I'm supposed to be a hundred and thirty-three, but a hundred thirty-five would be all right. I don't eat very much for lunch. I just bring a sandwich and some fruit and sometimes I eat my sandwich in the morning so then I don't have anything left.".....

I: "You mean you don't eat any lunch."

E: "Well, then I will just eat my fruit." (looking at clock.)

I: "It's time for you to get ready, isn't it? Don't you want to go in the washroom and fix up, Anna?"

E: "No, I will just put my hat on here." (arranging mirror on desk and putting on her hat.)

I: "Oh, you have a Eugenie, haven't you?"

E: "I don't like it. I just bought it, but I don't like to wear it.".....

I: "Your husband hasn't seen it yet, has he?"

E: "I had it home last time, but he didn't see it on me. I had it on when we went in the house, but it was dark and I took it off before we got the lights on. I didn't want him to see it. I let him see the hat afterwards, but not on me. I said, 'How do you like it?' He says: (in indifferent tone) 'Oh, it's all right.'"

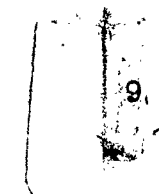
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RECORD OF INTERVIEW

Relay Assembly Test Room
Recorded by: I. Rousseau

October 9, 1931.
Operator No. 5.
Interview No. 9.

E: "These shoes (looking at her shoes) are real clumsy."
(Employee is wearing low-heeled but attractive oxfords)

I: "I think they're nice looking."

E: "They're real comfortable. The only trouble is that they kind of gap on the side here. I guess I'll have to take them back. (asserting herself confidently) It shows when I walk. I think I'll see if they can do something about it. Maybe they could raise it in here. (under the instep.) I'm going to ask them anyway.".....

"I missed my train anyway, last week! I missed it by just two minutes.".....

I: "How soon does the next train go?"

E: "I had to wait until 6:21, and there isn't enough time to go home.".....

I: "That sure makes a lot of difference, doesn't it?"

E: "I'll say. I don't get home till so late. It was about quarter to eight when I got home. (Employee goes into detailed account of exact routing.)

"You know I had to laugh at Hi. When he came up last time he said, 'How's your neck?' I said it was all right, but he felt it and he said I had some lumps there. But it didn't hurt me at all.....

"I kind of thought I was going to get a cold this morning. My throat felt kind of scratchy, but it went away as soon as I washed out my mouth.....You know, they say a little wine is good for colds. You know, you warm it up and it's good for you. But I don't like whiskey. I think it tastes terrible. I never could drink it. You know, in Norway - that's a wet country - they used to have it there, but I never liked it..... The only thing I like is a glass of wine once in a while. I don't mind that.

"I have a girl friend that was quite sick, and the doctor told her to get all the wine and drink it that she could get her hands on. I guess she didn't have enough blood. They say it makes more blood. She did that and she's getting better. I guess it's supposed to be good for you when you're sick."

I: "I wonder if it would be always."

E: "Well, the doctor told her to take that."

I: "Well, I was thinking of people who have too much acid. I know a doctor that will hardly let people touch even tea or coffee when they are that way."

E: "Yes, something like that would be different. I suppose it would be bad for some people. I know a lady that couldn't drink coffee without a lot of milk in it.....That's one thing I wouldn't want to drink. Milk in my coffee! (disgustedly) If I couldn't have cream in my coffee I wouldn't want any at all.".....

I: "I like cream in mine too.But if I couldn't have it, I could drink it black."

E: "We used to have bread with that dark brown cheese they have in Norway on it with our tea in the afternoon. I liked that. It's a dark brown cheese."

I: "What is it they call that?" (Employee tries to think of it) Oh, it's yettost and premost, isn't it?"

E: "Yes, that's it!" (smiling).....

I: "How do you spell them?"

E: "Let me see. I will have to think. (she painfully spells out, 'y-e-t-t-o-s-t.') You know, it is hard for me to spell in English. In Norwegian it is nothing, but when I spell in American, I have to first think of it in Norwegian and then think what it is in American. I never learned how to spell in American, but that's what makes it hard. But in Norwegian it is easy." (laughing)

I: "And how is premost spelled?"

E: (spells it with difficulty) "It takes me a long time. There are lots of things they have to eat in Norway that are different from here.".....

I: "What's that dried, white fish that you eat?"

E: (Beaming) "Oh, luttafist?"

I: "Yes, that's it."

E: "Oh yes, that's a good Norwegian dish! Everybody eats that. Especially at Christmas time."

I: "It's supposed to be a special treat, isn't it?"

E: "Yes, but it isn't as good here as what you get in Norway! It is not nearly as good!"

I: "Why is that?"

E: "Well, you can't make it the same here. (explaining process but not clearly. In this conversation and in further discussion of "yettost" and "premost" Employee unconsciously uses Norwegian words three or four times. She laughs at this but does not seem embarrassed.) You know, it is funny the way I get my words mixed at home. I get my English and my Norwegian mixed. My husband laughs at me. He says, 'Why don't you talk Norwegian or English? Why do you have to mix them?' And I say, 'Well, what difference does it make? You can understand me.' He never does that. He speaks English real good. He can speak German as well as he can speak Norwegian, too. He used to work up in Minnesota, and he lived with some German people up there. He can speak Swedish real good, too. You know, it is funny. The Norwegians can understand the Swedes, but the Swedes can't understand the Norwegians. Their language is quite a bit alike, only the Swedes can hardly understand what the Norwegians are saying. I don't know what there is about it; the Norwegians can't talk Swedish, but they can understand what the Swedes are saying.....Oh, we have so much fun. (laughing) I mean about me mixing my English and my Norwegian.".....

"You know the lady that I stay with works two days. She works on Monday and Tuesday, so she doesn't get home until late. Those two nights I cook dinner. Do you ever cook?"

I: "I like to, but right now I'm just rooming.....Didn't I tell you that I gave up my apartment?"

E: "Oh, did you?"

I: "Yes, the girl I was living with went to Europe for the winter. She's going to be in Switzer land."

E: (beaming) "She is! Won't that be nice?"

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RECORD OF INTERVIEW

Relay Assembly Test Room
Recorded by: I. Rousseau

October 18, 1931.
Operator No. 5.
Interview No.10.

(Employee seems very quiet today. Discuss weather.)

I: "Say, how did you get the train last time, Anna?"

E: "Oh, say. I didn't have to catch it at all. My husband came up here for me. When I got to Twenty-second and Cicero, he was standing there waiting for me. I didn't know he was going to come, and I wasn't even looking for anyone, but I just happened to look that way and I saw him standing there. Wasn't that funny? I don't know yet if I can make my train in time or not. I didn't have a chance to see. He didn't know I was going to be down here (being interviewed) see? He was standing at Twenty-second and Cicero, and the man where I am staying, was standing over at Gate 10 to see me if I came out that way."..... I couldn't get out where I saw him because they couldn't stop. I had to wait until they got to the L and there was a train going by so he had to stop, so I told the conductor that I wanted to get out. He must have thought I was crazy, (laughing) riding such a little ways.".....

I: "It is a good thing you happened to see your husband, wasn't it?"

E: "Yes, but he said if they hadn't gotten me there, they would have gone over to the station and they could have gotten there quick.

"But he won't be up tonight. He came last week because work is awfully slack. They are only working two and three days a week now. That is how he happened to come up. Well, he worked every day last week, but it was only for a couple of hours. It came to about two days for the whole week.....Of course if he has to go on a long haul, like when they have to move furniture for someone, then they may be gone two and three days at a time."

I: "Doesn't he work on the highway in the summertime?"

E: "Yes, he works on the country road.".....

I: "I don't suppose he does any hauling in the summertime then, does he?"

E: "No, some other fellow has to go in the summer time, but most of the hauling comes in the fall. Sometimes there will be a long haul in the winter time, but not very often. Then he will be gone for two or three days.".....

I: "How do they count their time then?"

E: "Well, he pays them for overtime now. He didn't use to do it. He used to pay them for a full week even if they only worked two or three days, but then for the last year he hasn't done that. He pays them for what they work now. If they just work a few hours, they just get paid for that."

I: "How do they fix it on the haul?"

E: "Well, he pays them for that. They drive as long as they can. Usually they stop about ten o'clock and go to bed. Of course if they come to a town before that, sometimes they got to bed before that.".....

I: "And they pay them overtime for the extra driving?"

E: "Yes, he pays them overtime for all that now.".....

I: "How about their traveling expenses?"

E: "Oh, he pays for all that too. He pays for their meals and their beds when they are gone. He only has two men to do the long hauling, so if my husband doesn't go, the other fellow has to go.He said if he had any work to do or not, he wouldn't come up this week."

I: "So you don't have to watch for him this week?"

E: "No, he won't come anyway this week.....I stopped at the hospital and got weighed on the way up and I gained two pounds. Isn't that terrible? I will have to stop eating like I said I would. I weigh one hundred and forty two now."

I: "You weighed one hundred and forty last time, didn't you?"

E: "Yes, I don't know how I do it. I don't eat very much. I only eat a good meal for dinner. Of course sometimes things taste pretty good. Like the other night we had sweet potatoes and I ate four of them they were so good. (laughing) They weren't little ones either. They were great big ones. They were so good, I couldn't help it, but I don't eat too much for dinner. Maybe it is because I eat lunch in the morning at nine thirty. I guess I will have to stop that."

I: "Weren't you telling me you didn't eat breakfast?"

E: "Yes, and I will have to stop eating that sandwich in the morning."

I: "Well, if you don't eat it at nine thirty, don't you eat it at noon?"

E: "Yes, but it does you more good when you feel like eating it don't you think? I am so hungry at nine thirty, so when I eat that sandwich it does me a lot of good. You know I think if you just don't feel for something, it doesn't do you so much good, don't you?"

I: "Do you mean that if you ate the sandwich at noon, it wouldn't make you gain so?"

E: "Yes, I would be eating the sandwich but at noon I don't feel like eating and in the morning I can hardly wait to get it. I don't think it would make me get fat at noon the way it does in the morning, do you?"

I: "How do you know you wouldn't be more hungry at noon if you didn't eat anything at the lunch period?"

E: "Oh, I am never hungry at noon. Don't you think if you are awfully hungry and don't eat something, it kind of wears off and then you don't feel like eating later? I think if I didn't eat anything in the morning, that it would kind of wear off by noon. I wouldn't feel so much like eating."

I: "But you would eat the sandwich anyway?"

E: "Yes, but I don't think it would do me so much good then. I can't figure out how I gain so much. I don't care much for sweets. I don't eat much sweets.".....(interviewer laughing)

I: "Except sweet potatoes." (laughing)

E: "Yes, they were sweet, weren't they? (laughing) You know they weren't little ones either. They were great big fellows. On top of that I had soup. I like potatoes. I eat the skins and everything on the other kind, but with the sweet potatoes I don't. They are too loog."

I: "Is that a Norwegian word?"

E: "Yes, it means.....(hesitating)

I: "Does it mean loggy?"

E: "Yes, that is what it means. You know, kind of sticky. It is tough."

I: "Say, I will be learning Norwegian yet, won't I? Yett means goat and loog means loggy, and lutt means lye."

E: (laughing) "That is right, only lutt isn't lye. It is the strong stuff they put in to make it get soft. It is a special kind of ashes. They take a big chunk of wood and burn it until there is nothing but white ashes left. I don't know what kind of wood it is. In Norwegian it is a berge tree, but I don't know what it is in English. It has a heavy, oh, what do you call it on the outside of a tree?"

I: "Bark?"

E: "Yes, I was afraid to say it but it is the same in Norwegian."

I: "Don't be afraid to say things in Norwegian. Maybe I will learn something about it then."

E: (laughing) "Yes, it is easy."

I: "That isn't a birch tree, is it?"

E: "Maybe it is, I don't know."

I: "What color was the bark?"

E: "It was dark."

I: "Well, a birch tree has white bark."

E: "It wasn't that kind. I don't know what it is. I have never seen it here. Luttafist doesn't taste nearly as good in this country.....I can still see that big barrel that we used to keep it in when I was a little girl, but I never made it in the old country, so I didn't know how to make it. That is why I don't know just what was in it.....We have it where I stay. They like it too.".....

"I didn't eat very much last night. Everybody went out, so I was alone. I just had some bread and butter and tea, but I didn't have anything to do so I went to bed at nine thirty. I don't know why I am sleepy today.".....

I: "How do you like to be alone, Anna?"

E: "How do I like to be alone? I like it. You know they have company there all the time where I stay. There is always somebody there. You don't get a chance to be alone very often, so I like it when I can.....I have always liked to be alone. When I was a little girl I liked to be alone even. My father used to like to get up early, so I used to get up early too. Oh, I would get up at four or five o'clock in the morning because my father got up then. Nobody else had come up yet. Then when my mother and sister would come up, I would go to bed again. (laughing) They would come up about seven and then I would go back to bed again. They would

laugh at me because I would go back for more sleep."

I: "Would you sleep long the second time?"

E: "Not long. I would stay there about an hour."

I: "Would you get undressed again?"

E: "No, I wouldn't get dressed the first time. I would just put something on to keep me warm. I just liked to be up early so I could be alone.....Sometimes It would be as light as day then too."

I: "That is right. You have the midnight sun there, don't you?"

E: "Yes. Sometimes the moon is as bright as that here though. The last time there was a full moon when I got up and when I went out into the kitchen, it was just like day out there from the moon....."

"Say, there are more people being laid off, aren't there?"
I thought they would lay off a lot and then be through.".....

I: "It is too bad."

E: "That's how I feel. It makes you wonder if they have anything to eat at home."

I: "Yes, you know there are some of them that have it pretty bad."

E: "Then I suppose some of them have it all right."

RECORD OF INTERVIEW

Relay Assembly Test Room
Recorded by: I. Rousseau

October 23, 1931.
Operator No. 5.
Interview No. 11.

Employee is very quiet today. Much of the interview time is spent in silence or in comments on the weather or yawning.

Interesting Remarks

I: "Those are cute beads you have on Anna."

E: "They're ten cent store beads."

I: "They are?"

E: "Yes.....I don't usually wear beads. I don't like the feeling of them. I didn't buy these. I had some others but my girlfriend's little boy broke them so she told me to take these. They only cost ten cents."

I: "They don't look it.....So your girlfriend's little boy broke them."

E: "Yes, he's so rough. I've never seen a kid like him. He wants to see everything and you have to give it to him and the first thing he does is tear it up. I never have saw a kid like him before."

I: "Is he mean?"

E: "No, He isn't mean. He just has to break everything up. That is why I say I've never seen a baby like him before..... And he can't even talk yet."

I: "He can't?"

E: "No, he is slow. He was one year old in June. Don't you think he is kind of slow."

I: "That makes him a year and a half doesn't it?"

E: "Yes, and he wets his pants and then when he does he'll come and say, 'Same.' I told him he should come first and not afterwards. He will come and say, 'Same, same,' and pull his wet diapers and go 'Ugh, ugh,' and you know I never saw a kid so old go after the bottle the way he does. He will take his blanket and put it on the floor and then say, 'Boto, boto.' When he gets his bottle he will lie down and drink it and then he will get up again. I never saw a kid like him. He wants it

every five minutes, and at his age he ought to be getting over it but he is getting worse all the time. He is always going around hollering for a bottle, and you know he won't sleep more than a half an hour during the day. He won't go to sleep. Why when we were little we used to sleep two or three hours but not him. He is such a funny kid. Why one time we went to the store and we saw some bottles and he started screaming, 'Boto, boto,' and they were great big ones you know, not little ones like his.".....

"When my husband comes over he always picks him up and carries him around and gives him everything he wants, so you should see the kid scream when he sees my husband coming. Why you know he won't go to anyone else when my husband is around, not even to his father or mother. You can't get him away. I guess it is because he gives him everything he wants. I tell him he shouldn't give him everything but he says oh, he'll forget about it, but I don't think he does forget about it. She has her hands full. She has a girl who is six years old and she has to take her to school and go for her at noon and bring her back again because they live so far away. It keeps her jumping."

E: "Say, what do you think of the charity plan?"

I: "I think it is pretty good, what do you think?"

E: "I think it is too. This way nobody will miss a few cents. I'd just as soon do it. You would spend the money anyway and you'll never notice it this way."

I: "Did everyone sign up?"

E: "Yes, they all did. I think it is a good idea.".....

I: "Did they make you feel that you ought to?"

E: "No, I would just as soon give twenty-five cents." They told us if we couldn't afford it we shouldn't do that but what's a few cents."

Interviewing Relationship

E: "Say, how long is this going to last?"

I: "I don't know. Why, do you wish it would stop?"

E: "No, I don't care and it helps me out anyway because I can get out quicker."

I: "That's right. Did you catch your train last time?"

E: "I just made it. I just had a minute."

I: "Could you make it if you were up in the test room?"

E: "Yes, I think so but this way I don't have to hurry."

I: "I was afraid I'd have to have you down this morning instead of this afternoon. I thought I would have to be gone this afternoon."

E: "Well, if I would have to stay there I would have to, that's all." (smiling)

RECORD OF INTERVIEW

Relay Assembly Test Room
Recorded by: I. Rousseau

October 30, 1931.
Operator No. 5.
Interview No. 12.

Discuss weather.

E: "Yes....."

"I wonder why it is so many people have to wear glasses in this country. In the old country nobody but old people wore glasses. You never saw anybody but real old people, never young people. Here so many people wear glasses. I wonder why it is. Do you think it is the air? I don't know what it could be. Maybe it is that."

I: "You mean you think maybe the air affects the eyes."

E: "Yes, maybe it did that. I don't know though.....I don't know what it is, but in the old country nobody wears glasses. My father was real old before he wore them. He was seventy years old. I have a girl friend that has to wear her glasses all the time, so she doesn't feel right unless she has them on all the time. She stumbles back and forth over everything, (laughing hilariously) if she doesn't have them on. I suppose that is because she wears them all the time, huh. Then you can't get along without them."

I: "I suppose it depends on what is the matter with your eyes, don't you think?"

E: "Maybe. I know a girl that wears glasses for when she looks faraway, and then she has another pair that she puts on when she has to work or read. (laughing) She has to wear two pairs.".....
So many people wear glasses in this country."

I: "Did you live in the country in Norway?"

E: "I lived in the city too. It was just a little city though."

I: "Do you know how big it was?"

E: "I don't exactly remember how many thousand. Maybe twenty thousand?"

I: "Did you notice if more people wore glasses in the city than in the country?"

E: (laughing) "In the country nobody wears glasses. You never see glasses in the country. I don't know why they don't have anything the matter with their eyes in the country."

I: "I wonder if it is the different kind of life they live in the country and city has anything to do with it."

E: "Oh, yes. In the country you are out of doors all the time. Maybe it is because you have fresh air, or maybe you don't use your eyes so much in the country. You don't have to look at so many things."

I: "You mean like walls, and trees and things? You would have those to look at in the country, wouldn't you?"

E: "Yes, that is right, but in the city there are so many things we are looking at all the time. The city is full of so many things. Maybe we kind of wear them out. That is funny, to wear out your eyes, isn't it? (laughing) You are born with them and you think they would stay with you as long as you live, but they get weak.".....

I: "I wonder if some of the things people do in the city aren't harder on the eyes than in the country."

E: "I think so. Now I never had trouble with my eyes until I worked here, but you can't help getting it when you have to sit and look at one spot all day. Of course I used to sew at home.".....

I: "I suppose you talked while you sewed, didn't you?"

E: "Yes, we would talk to each other a lot and then we wouldn't sew very long. We would have lots of other things to do."

I: "I suppose you wouldn't be apt to sew more than a couple of hours at a time, would you?"

E: "No, we never sewed for a whole day at a time and besides we weren't looking at one place all the time, but everybody working in the factory here is looking at one thing all the time. They can't help but get trouble with their eyes.".....

I: "I was thinking of that sort of thing when I asked you if there wasn't some difference in the way country people and city people live."

E: "Oh, I think so. In the country some of the things you do you can do with your eyes shut. You are looking up in the sky a lot. I think that must be what makes a difference.".....

I: "And think of all the stenographers in the offices downtown."

E: "Yes, they have to look right at what they are writing all day long.".....

I: "And the people in clothing factories."

E: "Yes, they have to watch what they are doing real closely all the time, but in the country you are outside most of the time.".....

I: "I wonder if there are some people in the country who have trouble with their eyes, that don't see a doctor about it."

E: "I imagine there must be. You hardly ever go to the doctor in the country. Sometimes the doctor is miles and miles away. I know one time when I was real young - I must have been about fifteen or sixteen - and I went to visit my girl friend. She lived way up in the mountains. It was five miles from us, but there are seven . American miles in one Norwegian mile, so it is really thirty-five English miles. The doctor lived I don't know how many miles away, but one day her little brother was out on the field and what is that thing they cut hay with?"

I: "A scythe?"

E: "Yes, a scythe. Well, he cut it here. (Pointing to shin) You know there is not much meat there and he had a terrible cut. It was about so long. (Measuring four inches) You know his mother was crying and saying, 'What shall we do?' So I took and sewed it up. What else could we do? I just took some white thread and a needle and you know that healed up just as nice as could be. When you think of it now, it is a wonder he didn't get blood poisoning or something. His father was out in the field. He was crippled and he had to ride a horse. He walked so slow. He came in and found out what we had done for the boy. What could they do? They couldn't get him to a doctor. I didn't think, but I had to run and get a drink afterwards. I don't think I could do it now."

I: "I don't think I could either."

E: "Just a needle and white thread. My it was so beautiful up there. Right behind their house, there was a place where water came down over..... What do you call that?"

I: "A waterfall?"

E: "Yes, that is what you call them. When there was much water coming over, it made so much noise you couldn't hear yourself talk in the house. They were so used to it they didn't even notice it.".....

I: "Yes, I suppose so.....I suppose there were lots of waterfalls around there?"

E: "I'll say. They are all over Norway and lots of rivers. They run down to the sea. I think the water must come from the ground in the mountains, because it keeps running all the time."

I: "Wasn't there snow in the mountains?"

E: "Yes, but I think some of it must have come from the ground some way.....cause it kept running all the time."

I: "Were those the mountains in the north or the south of Norway?"

E: "That was in the south of Norway. I lived with my sister there for a while."

I: "Didn't you used to live in the north of Norway?"

E: "Yes, I was brought up in northern Norway, but I used to go down and visit my sister. That is how I met this girl friend, and then when I went down there later, I saw her again."

I: "And your sister lived in the mountains too?"

E: "Well, she really wasn't in the mountains. We would have to go in a boat to go from there to my girl friends and then her brother would meet us with a horse and buggy. It was such a long ways that we couldn't walk."

I: "Was that on a Fiord?"

E: "Yes, there are Fiords all over Norway. There was one where I lived too.".....

I: "Was your farm right on a fiord?"

E: "Yes.".....

I: "I have always wanted to see a fiord."

E: "They are very beautiful. We didn't used to think so when we lived there though. It is when you get away from it.".....

I: "I wonder why it is that you think more of it when you get away from it."

E: "I guess it is because you think of it more."

I: "But I wonder why that would make you think it was more beautiful."

E: "I guess it is because when you don't have it, then you want it. Like when I lived over there, we didn't think anything of the midnight sun, but when other people would go up there, they would think it was wonderful. When I tell people about it, they think they would like to see it. I would like to see it now too. When we were there, we didn't think it was different than an ordinary

sunset. I think it is the same, only that the sun sets in the ocean there and doesn't stay down so long and then comes up right away again."

I: "How do you mean?"

E: "Well, it doesn't go way down like the sun does here. It just goes down a little ways. It sets right in the ocean there and stays there a couple of hours and while it is there, everything is real beautiful. The mountains are all purple, and the sky is so bright. It is not like it is here. Just for a little while you know, and then pretty soon it starts going up again."

I: "Do you mean the sun stays right where you can see it at the edge of the water?"

E: "Yes. That is the way it is. I suppose that is what makes it beautiful. Here you just see the sunsets for a few minutes and there it lasts for a long time....."

"My husband wants to go back there to stay.....I don't know if I do or not.....Oh, is it time to go already? My, the time has passed so quickly."

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RECORD OF INTERVIEW

Relay Assembly Test Room
Recorded by: I. Rousseau

November 6, 1931.
Operator No. 5.
Interview No. 13.

Employee is absent because of illness.

RECORD OF INTERVIEW

Relay Assembly Test Room
Recorded by: I. Rousseau

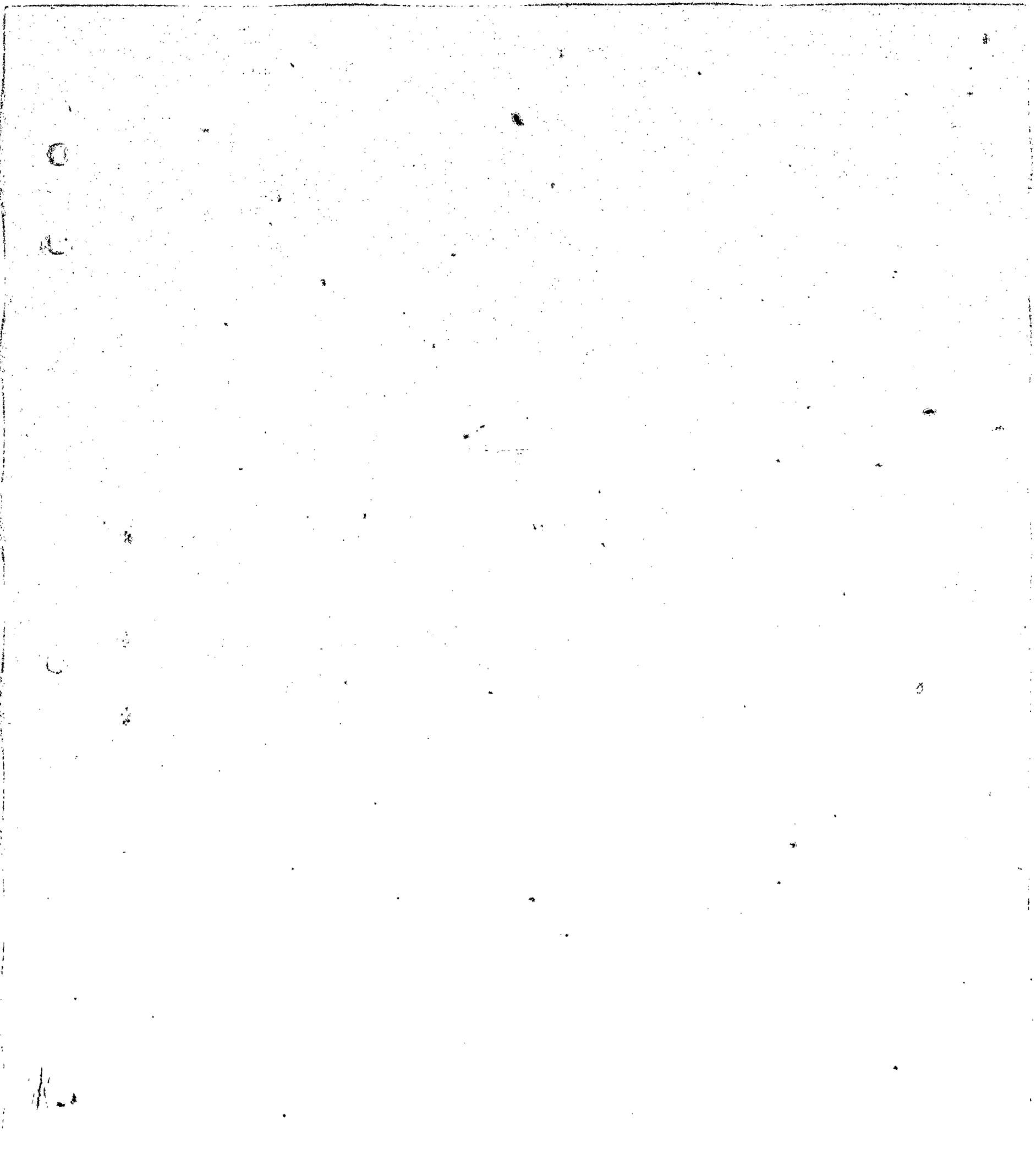
November 25, 1931.
Operator No. 5.
Interview No. 14.

Employee has been absent for two weeks with the flu. Interview is spent discussing the weather and the details of her illness - especially the latter.

Significant Remarks

E: "I don't know what was the matter with me. I couldn't look at food. It just made me sick to look at it. But I only lost three pounds!"

E: "My husband came up here the first Friday and I went to DeKalb on the second Friday."



RECORD OF INTERVIEW

Relay Assembly Test Room
Recorded by: I. Rousseau

December 11, 1931.
Operator No. 5.
Interview No. 15.

Attitude toward Supervisors

Both going in and out of room, employee stopped and looked at pictures of Hawthorne Works Staff. Before supervisor has left the room after bringing her down, she wipes off the glass over Mr. Pennock's picture and says,

"There is our good boss."

I: (laughing) "I wonder if Chip heard you say that."

E: "Oh, he wouldn't care.".....

I: "Say, (referring to fact that at Employment Office, employee brought her wraps with her and left for the train) this isn't going to be so good for you to get to the train, is it?"

E: "No, I just have time to get out and go to the other platform. The train is changed now. It is four minutes earlier yet."

I: "Can you make it all right?"

E: "Yes, I made it every time so far. I am already to punch. We used to have the clock all to ourselves after that gang way down at the end of forty-seven got another clock, but now there is a small gang that has to use it. Sometimes they get out there even before we do, but I just go up in the front. I don't care what he says. Sometimes the Gang Boss hollers at me and says, 'Get in line.' I don't pay any attention to him and he doesn't say it any more."

Leisure Time: Singing

Discuss carnival of nations program for this evening.

E: "I will have to listen to it on the radio. I haven't anything special to do, so I might as well stay home and listen to the radio.".....

"Some of the ladies from my lodge are singing tonight."....

I: "Is that a regular fraternal lodge?"

E: "That is what they call the Daughters of Norway. They have what they call the Sons of Norway too, and they have the Daughters of Sweden and the Sons of Sweden. The Swedes have wonderful voices. I love to hear a Swedish man sing.".....

I: "I heard the Swedish men's chorus down at the Aragon the other night."

E: "Oh, did you?"

I: "Yes, and they had fine voices."

E: "I like to listen to singing.".....

I: "You mean people singing together or in solors?"

E: "Well, I like them both, only when some people sing alone, they just screech. Some of them have good voices and then some of them don't. Last year I heard a lady that had a wonderful voice. She had the most wonderful voice I ever heard. She was quite an old lady too. She had gray hair. I heard her once in DeKalb and once in Chicago. I went to the show and she was telling some of the girls that she taught to sing that people in America have good enough voices, only some of them don't have a chance to study because it costs too much money,, so she was helping some of them. She said, 'We don't need to send to Europe for singers any more.' I thought that was real nice of her. Last year there was a lady that got the prize for being poplar - I don't know what you call it."

I: "You mean popular?"

E: "Yes, that's it. Popular. Well, they took a vote and she was supposed to be the most popular. She had a beautiful voice. I liked her real well. She is quite old too. She has a lot of children. Her name was Homan."

I: "Homan. Is she a Chicago woman, or is she known outside of Chicago?"

E: "Oh, I think she is well known all over the world. She is one of the biggest women singers. Her name was Homan."

I: "You don't mean Homer, do you? Louise Homer?"

E: "Yes, that is it. Louise Homer. I just can't remember names. When I meet someone and turn around I don't remember it any more."

I: "I am that way too. When I come from a movie or when I finish a book, I can't tell you the names of anybody in it."

E: "I am that way too. When I come from the movie I can't tell you the names of anybody in it. I guess lots of people must think I am dumb."

I: "Well, some of us are dumb in that way. (laughing) Other people may be dumb in other ways."

E: "Yes, that is right.....I thought she was the most wonderful singer I ever heard....I would like to hear her again, even if she is old.".....

I: "When did you hear her?"

E: "It was only three weeks ago on the radio. I saw the other lady at a show."

I: "You mean she sang at the movie house?"

E: "No, it was just a little show. They just showed her."

Leisure Time - Movies

E: "I don't go to the movies very much. They have such awful movies on Saturday nights in DeKalb. They are crazy things. All Wild West, but they show some wonderful movies during the week. Sometimes they get them before they do here in Chicago in some theatres. Did you see Greta Garbo in her last picture?"

I: "No, I missed that."

Interviewer and employee try to think of name of it.

E: "Susan....." (laughing)

I: (laughing) "Lennox. Between us, we will get it, won't we?"

E: "Yes, between us. You know that last picture they had of Joan Crawford, well they had that in DeKalb one week when it was still here in Chicago."

I: "You mean downtown?"

E: "Yes, still downtown. But that was in the middle of the week. I couldn't go to it. I don't know why they show such crazy shows on Saturday night. Maybe it is because so many people go on Saturday nights."

I: "Yes, maybe they will go anyway then.....Then they can drag them in in the middle of the week for the good pictures."

E: "Yes, I guess that is why they do it." (laughing)

Home

E: "I won't get home until a quarter of seven.".....

I: "Then do you have to get dinner?"

E: "Yes, then I have to make supper, but my husband has the potatoes peeled and everything done."

I: "Well, that is different, isn't it?"

E: "Yes, I just have to stop and get some meat. It doesn't take long to get things ready.....My husband doesn't like to cook."
(emphatically but laughing)

I: "He doesn't?"

E: "No, he can't stand it. Some men really like it, but he doesn't like it. I guess it is because he is so clumsy. I guess that is because he never did any of it, don't you think so?"

I: "I suppose so."

E: "Now, my girl friend's husband just loves to cook. He can cook lots better than some women.".....

I: "But your husband doesn't ever cook at home?"

E: "No, he eats at the restaurant. He always has to eat dinner anyway at the restaurant. Sometimes he will get supper at home."

Neighbors

E: "One of our neighbors has been out of work for a long time. He works for the piano factory, and I don't know what they do. Sometimes he won't work for weeks. Then he may work two days and be out of work for weeks again, but I see they are running nights now. Things seem to be picking up a little bit before Christmas.I don't see how they can pay their taxes. They must have had to pay them by now. Maybe they had to take a mortgage on the house. I don't see what else they could have done with him not working. He is so skinny. He looks so little and dried up. And they have had so much sickness in the last year and it doesn't take very long to go through your savings. Her husband had a nervous breakdown last year, and the wife was in the hospital and the year before that one of the boys had one of those things behind his ear. What do you call them?"

I: "Mastoid?"

E: "Yes, that was it and then the year before that, she had to go to the hospital again too.".....

I: "What was the matter?"

E: "She had a miscarriage last year. I don't know what was the matter the year before. She was two months when she slipped. (employee appears a bit self-conscious) Her husband was just like he was crazy when he had those spells and when the boy was sick, he was all winter doctoring. Look at the doctor bills they must have! I don't see how they can have any money, but they never told me."

I: "What do they do?"

E: "I don't know. Sometimes I wonder what they do. (employee seems cold hearted in telling about her neighbors. Seems just mildly curious as to what they were doing and not much concerned with their welfare.)

I: "Don't they have a charity organization taking care of them?"

E: "They must have.....But you know Norwegians are proud."

I: "They are?"

E: "Yes, especially the Norwegians of the older generation. They think it is terrible to have to ask for anything. I think they would rather go without.....I think that is foolish. What can you do?"

I: "It seems to be a matter of life or death, doesn't it?"

E: "Yes, I think it is silly not to go and ask if you have to have it.".....

I: "Of course, you can see how they might feel that way when they have been independent all their life and worked hard and saved their money and maybe bought a home."

E: "Yes, that is what my neighbor says. He says it is hard to go and ask for things. I don't know how much they paid on their house, but they couldn't have had very much left. They must have a mortgage on it now though, or how could they live. I know lots of Norwegians that way. They just won't say anything about it. They haven't anything. I wouldn't do that.....Norwegians are funny. They would rather starve than ask for anything."

Sociability

E: "If you have any Christmas shopping to do, you had better do it in the morning. Several times I went for my Christmas shopping on Saturday afternoon and it was terrible. I don't like to go with my friends when I go Christmas shopping. You just never get through that way. It is awful. When I go to get a coat or shoes or something like that, I like to have somebody with me, but not for Christmas shopping."

I: "Do you always take somebody with you when you go shopping otherwise?"

E: "Oh, yes. I always have somebody with me then." (emphatically)

I: "Do you like to have them help you pick things out?"

E: "Yes, I have to have them with me. Otherwise I worry so. Once I had to get a coat alone and I was so worried, I didn't know what to do, but it is a nice coat."

RECORD OF INTERVIEW

Relay Assembly Test Room
Recorded by: I. Rousseau

December 24, 1931.
Operator No. 5.
Interview No. 16.

Employee is very quiet this morning. Finally Interviewer introduces topic.

Christmas

I: "Well, I suppose you are going out to DeKalb today."

E: "No, I am not going out there for Christmas.".....

I: "Oh, your husband is coming in, is he?"

E: "Yes.".....

I: "Will he be home when you get there?"

E: "I don't know. If he is working, he won't drive in until later, maybe about seven o'clock he will get here. Maybe he will be there when I get home. I don't know."

I: "Do you make much of Christmas eve?"

E: "We are going to the house of the mother of the daughter of the woman I am living with. How do you say that?"

I: "You mean her mother-in-law?"

E: "Yes. It is her husband's mother. We are going over there tonight. We always do on Christmas Eve."

I: "Do they have a Christmas tree?"

E: "Oh, yes. They have a big Christmas tree.".....

I: "Will there be many children there?"

E: "Oh, yes. There are always lots of kids. (laughing) We won't have a Christmas tree where we are going for dinner, but we will tonight.....We are going to have dinner at the lady's where I stay. We always have Christmas dinner there.".....We never stay in DeKalb in Christmas but I always have a Christmas tree down there. (laughing) They don't have one where I stay so I have one in DeKalb. I don't think it is Christmas without a Christmas tree.".....

(Also discuss weather.)

RECORD OF INTERVIEW

Relay Assembly Test Room
Recorded by: I. Rousseau

January 12, 1932.
Operator No. 5.
Interview No. 17.

Employee is very quiet at first. They talk about Christmas and interviewer has to draw employee out with many comments and questions.

E: "I had a very quiet Christmas and New Year's too. I didn't do anything.....But I had a cold and I couldn't eat. I had a sore underneath my tongue and I couldn't chew anything. My throat hurt and my ears hurt and my whole head hurt.".....I think it was just from that sore under my tongue. I guess there was poison in my blood and it came out that way. I got that way the Monday before Christmas. But it didn't hurt me much until Christmas. I could hardly eat my Christmas dinner.....Wasn't that terrible, but my tongue was all blisters.

"My mouth used to get that way when I ate figs. They always poisoned my mouth and I had a fig on that Monday that it started to get that way so maybe it was from the fig."

"And that turkey was just wonderful. It only took three hours to cook it.....That lady is a wonderful cook.".....

Attitude Toward Norway

E: "They have things a lot better in Norway. You can't get things to eat here like you can there. Why the cakes that you buy in the shop there are better than you can make yourself.".....

I: "They are terrible here, aren't they?"

E: "Yes, it tastes like they put flour and water together, but there you couldn't make them good.".....

I: "In Europe the bread is a lot better too, isn't it?"

E: "They have wonderful bread. It's mostly the vegetables though. Everybody says they are different in this country than in Norway. I guess it is because they grow them too fast here."

I: "How do you mean?"

E: "Well, the sun is so hot here. It makes the things grow a lot faster.".....

I: "Isn't it as hot there?"

E: "You don't feel it so much. It is so dry.".....

I: "Does the thermometer run as high as here?"

E: "Oh, higher, but you don't feel it. Sometimes they have a hundred twenty in Norway."

I: "I should think the sun rays would beat down as hot on vegetables there as here."

E: "Oh, but you don't feel it. It doesn't make them grow so fast. When I first came here, the lady I stayed with said, 'You won't get vegetables here like you did in Norway.' Everyone says the same thing. They taste so different. They haven't the same taste at all."

I: "I wonder why that is?"

E: "I think it is just that they have more time to grow in Norway."
.....

I: "How about vegetables like carrots and potatoes?"

E: "Oh, they are the same but everything else is so different."

I: "You mean like green peas."

E: "Yes, and all the other vegetables. It is the green vegetables that don't taste the same. Cauliflower doesn't taste the same at all here. You can't take a whole head and cook it here."

I: "Why not?"

E: "Because it doesn't grow like it does in Norway. You always have to cut part of it off."

I: "Oh, you mean it has spots on it."

E: "Yes, you can't cook it whole like you can in Norway."

I: "You have been on a farm here, haven't you?"

E: "Yes."

I: "Well, how about the vegetables on the farms here compared with the vegetables of Norway or is it just the vegetables that you get in the city that are different?"

E: "Well, of course the vegetables you get in the country are more fresh, but even then they are not the same."

I: "They aren't?"

E: "No, everyone tells you that. They are just not the same at all. Oh, they taste so much better over there." (enthusiastically)

I: (laughing) "You're stuck on Norway, aren't you?"

E: "Sure." (laughing)

Attitude Toward Children

E: "I have a friend that had some twins. I would like to have twins." (enthusiastically)

I: "Would you?"

E: "Yes, I think they are so cute. There is a lady right behind me in DeKalb that has twins, but she is real poor. She can't dress them up. I wish they were mine.".....

I: "Well, if she gets so poor she has to give them away, you'll have to speak for them."

E: "Oh, she wouldn't give them away. You know one thing I wouldn't like to have is triplets though, would you?"

I: "It would be pretty hard, wouldn't it?"

E: "Yes, two are bad enough, but three is too much.I am crazy about children."

I: "Are you? so am I."

E: "I tease my husband and tell him maybe we will have triplets. My husband's grandmother had twins and his mother had twins and my mother's mother had twins, but none of her children did."

I: "You mean none of your mother's sisters or brothers?"

E: "Yes. Gee, we had a big family."

Early Life in Norway

E: (continuing from above conversation) "I can remember what a good time we used to have in the winter time when we would go to school. We were a mile and a half from school and we walked every day. Of course when it was too cold, they drove us in, but we

usually walked. There were a lot of us and we did a lot of fighting so we kept warm. You know how kids are. (laughing) There were ten of us. Well, one of my sisters died when she was real small, but there were a lot of us left." (laughing).....

I: "Were you all in school at once?"

E: "Yes, we were about two years apart and so there was somebody about in every grade. There would be one in the second and one in the third and one in the fourth and one in the fifth."

"I remember how mad we used to get at my youngest sister. She was always crying. Even when she was grown up she would cry.....

I: "How old was she when you left?"

E: "Twenty. Whenever you would want her to do something, she would say, 'I won't do it.' We would get so mad at her and then she would start to cry and my dad would say, 'Now don't you make my baby cry.' You know how everybody pays attention to the youngest. He always stuck up for her. We used to get so mad..... Then when we got her alone sometime we would slap her. She never wanted to do anything. We always had to do it instead.".....

"She is married now and has three children. I guess she has three now. She was having another one and I guess it has come by now. She has a little boy about five and a little girl about two."

18.

RECORD OF INTERVIEW

Relay Assembly Test Room
Recorded by: I. Rousseau

January 22, 1932.
Operator No. 5.
Interview No. 18.

Employee is very quiet today and yawns a good deal.

I: "Well, how do you like the weather we are having?"

E: "Oh, I don't like it. I don't like this rain. It's all right - the air, but I don't like it wet. It would be nice, wouldn't it if it wasn't for the wet."

I: "You mean you would like the air the way it is, but cut out the rain."

E: "Yes, wouldn't it be nice that way. It's just like April out. Maybe we are getting warmer weather. You know in Norway it is that way. In the northern part of Norway they used to have very cold winters and now for three or four winters they haven't had any. Maybe it is really going to get warmer in the winters now, huh? Maybe we won't have any more cold weather. Well, that is all right with me. (making a face) I don't like the snow."

I: "Don't you?"

E: "No, I can't stand the snow!.....It's so cold..... And the snow gets so dirty. It looks terrible.....And then the snow never lasts more than a few days and then the sun comes out and it melts and it is so wet to walk. It is so nasty."

I: "Oh, that is what you don't like about it?"

E: "Yes, it would be all right if it would lay all winter. I don't mind it at all when it comes in the fall and lays all winter and doesn't go away until spring. That's all right. This way it is always melting and it is so dirty."

I: "Do you mind it as much in DeKalb as you do in Chicago?"

E: "Yes, it's the same there. It doesn't stay on the ground any longer."

I: "Does it get as dirty there?"

E: "Oh, from all the trucks and automobiles going by, it gets real dirty, of course not as dirty as Chicago, but....."

I: "Bad enough?"

E: "Yes. Oh how I hate to wear those old galoshes! I can't stand to wear them."

I: "Why don't you like them?"

E: "Oh, I don't know why! I think that is terrible. I won't wear them unless I just have to. This winter I went and got me a pair of oxfords so I wouldn't have to wear them at all. Then I wear two pairs of hose and I take one off. I hate those things. The other day when it was wet and the girls came in with them, I said, 'Why do they have to wear those things?'".....

I: "I wonder why you hate them so."

E: "I don't know. I just know I don't like them.".....

I: "Did you dislike wearing them in Norway when you were a kid?"
(Referring to woolen leggings with leather soles worn there.)

E: "No, I don't think so. I don't know why it is I hate them so.".....

I: (Smiling) "You just know you do, huh?"

E: "Yes, I can't figure out why I don't like them.....I don't know why it is.".....

I: "It is kind of hard to tell why we don't like things, isn't it?"

E: "I'll say. You just know you don't like it, that's all. I am always that way.".....

I: "Are you that way about people too?"

E: "Yes, I have always been that way. If I don't like somebody at first, I never like them and then if I like them at first, I keep on liking them."

I: "You never change your mind?"

E: "No, it seems like if I don't like someone, I just don't like them, that's all.....Those galoshes are such dirty things to wear."

I: "How do you mean?"

E: "Oh, you walk in the moosh with them and they get so dirty."
.....

I: "Don't you have to walk in the ^umoosh with your oxford's?"

E: "(laughing).....But you have to wash off those galoshes. I can't stand them so dirty. If there is snow outside, I wipe them in the snow."

I: "Is that any harder than cleaning your shoes?"

E: (laughing at her own inconsistency) "No, it really isn't. I guess I don't like those galoshes, that is all. I guess I can't figure out why."

I: (Laughing) "I guess there are a lot of things we can't figure out the reason for."

E: "Yes, lots of times you don't know why....."

"Say, what do they have gas in this office for?" (looking at automatic sprinklers)

Interviewer explains what they are.

E: "Say, that is a pretty good idea. I never heard of them before....."

"Say, I had the funniest dream the other night. I dreamed that a chinaman and a negroe were chasing me. It was in the awfulest places. I don't know why I dreamed that. Do you know what makes people dream?"

I: "Did they make you think of anything you've known?"

E: "No, that's why it was so funny. I've never known a chinaman or a negroe so why should I dream about them?"

I: "They didn't remind you of anyone you knew?"

E: "No, I had never seen them before. They were chasing me in such awful places."

I: "How do you mean?"

E: "Oh, the houses were so old and they weren't painted. It was terrible."

I: "You mean like in some of the poorer districts in the city?"

E: "Yes, it was terrible and I was so afraid. You never think of those things in the day time. What do you suppose it is in your mind that makes you think that way at night? What makes you dream anyway?"

I: "I've heard about some people dreaming things because something happened to them in the night. For instance if their arm hung over the edge of the bed and went to sleep, they might dream that their arm was cut off or that they were being tortured."

E: "Isn't that funny? I know a lady that whenever she has stomach trouble she dreams a lot. She says that whenever she eats something she shouldn't, she has a lot of dreams. Dreams are such funny things, aren't they?"

I: "Aren't they funny?.....Do you remember many of your dreams?"

E: "I only dream once in a while. Sometimes I dream a man is chasing me, but I usually forget them right away. You know, maybe something has happened before you go to bed and you will dream about that - just some little thing.".....
(Employee is quiet for some time and gazes around the room.)

I: "Say, that fan will come in handy in the summer time, won't it?"

E: "Yes, but you know we have fans up in the test room and it doesn't help any. It blows right on you and you get so you don't feel it any more. It used to blow lower down and it blew right on my hair. I looked terrible all the time so they raised it a little.

"That test room is terrible in the summer time. It is so hot and the fans don't help at all. Sometimes we go out in the department and there is a nice breeze blowing out there and we are nearly dying in the test room. Sometimes we open the door but they always close it."

I: "They do?"

E: "Yes, we used to open the door into the department but they always closed it right away. Then we opened the one by the stairway and they said that too many people were going by. They were afraid it would disturb us, so we couldn't open that one any more.".....

I: "I suppose there are a lot of people going by, aren't there?"

E: "Yes, because they have to go down the stairs there."

I: "But they closed the other one too?"

E: "Yes, they don't want it open. I think they could take down the wall. It would be a lot cooler."

I: "Then you would be right out in the department again, wouldn't you?"

E: "Oh, I don't mean that. I mean if they would cut it down a little."

I: "Oh, I thought you meant take down the whole thing."

E: "Oh, no, but it is so high, you know. They would cut off some of that ~~way~~ easy. I didn't mean take it all down."

I: "How would you like that?" (Referring to removing the wall.)

E: "Oh, we wouldn't like that, but you know if they cut the wall down so that nobody could see you when they were passing, we could get the breeze from the department.".....

I: "Why didn't you suggest it?"

E: "I said that at first, but they didn't pay any attention to it.".....We've all said it so many times, but I guess it will never happen. We all told them to do it.".....

"So we don't say anything any more. That's what I always say. If you don't like something, you just have to get to like it, that's all."

I: "Can you always do that?"

E: "Yes, if you don't like it you've got to like it that's all." What can you do about it? You've just got to stand it."

I: "I mean, can you really make yourself like it, or do you sometimes just say so when you really don't feel that way underneath."

E: "Oh, yes. Lots of times you really don't like it, but you just have to say so. I don't like it but I say I do because I have to.....Well, I guess it is time to be getting back."

RECORD OF INTERVIEW

Relay Assembly Test Room
Recorded by: I. Rousseau

February 12, 1932.
Operator No. 5.
Interview No. 19.

Some time was spent in conversation about the weather, and the new policy of working four days a week in the shop. Several openings are given during the conversation for employee to mention the possibility of her lay off on March 1, but for over half the interview she seems to avoid it.

Attitude Toward Days Off

E: "I shouldn't be yawning, I've been doing it all day. I suppose I'm thinking of going to DeKalb tonight."

I: (laughing) "Is that the way it makes you feel?"

E: (laughing) "Oh, I didn't mean it that way. It's nice to get home.".....

I: "What do you do with your days off?"

E: "Oh, I work. There are always lots of things to do around the house. Now that I have Monday off, I do all the washing. Before, I used to send the big pieces to the laundry."

Attitude Toward Leave of Absence

Has employee been avoiding this subject - or is she saving it for conversation at the end of the interview?

E: "Maybe I am going to take a leave of absence."

I: "Is that so?"

E: "Well, he asked me to say yes or no, and what could I say? I couldn't say 'no' because I knew we could get along if we had to. It's all right. I don't mind. It would be easier for me than it would be for a lot of people. He told me they were asking the married ladies to say 'yes' or 'no' if they could take a leave and when they ask you a question like that, what can you say?"

I: "Did you have to answer right away?"

E: "No, he gave me a little time to think about it, so I said 'yes.' I figured if I said 'yes' I would have a better chance of staying, (Smiling Craftily) than if I said 'no' because if I said 'no' he wouldn't like it."

I.R. 2-12-32 Cont'd.

2.

05-19.

I: "Say, you're smart, aren't you?"

E: "Well, I figured that was the best way to do. He asked me so I said 'yes' but I don't think I'll have to go now." (smiling)

I: "You don't?"

E: "No, I think they just wanted to find out what you would say.
.....My husband works three or four days a week, so we could
get along and then in the summer time he will have more to do."