

OPERATOR INTERVIEWS - MICA TEST ROOM

50 pages

1930

Opr.1

DON'T DISCLOSE IDENTITIES

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

April 1, 1930.

Operating Branch-W.

4-20116-2KB-205D.

4321-281-21B.

Program explained.

E: "I have been off since November and since I am back I am only working part time. The doctor at the Company says I am all right to work full time but really I'm not. My own doctor says I have no business working at all but I'm just trying. Since I am back part time I think I feel a little better but a half a day is just as much as I can stand. I don't know where they get the idea over here that I could work all day. I am just so weak I can hardly stand. When I go home at noon, I go right to bed and take a rest and by the time the children come home I get up and give them a little attention."

I: "How many children have you?"

E: "I have two children, a boy and a girl. They are both in high school. My boy don't do as well as he should. Of course, we had a great deal of trouble with him when he was a youngster. We never did think we could raise him. It was pitiful the way that child looked. His little legs were just like spindles."

I: "Is he a big boy now?"

E: "Oh, you'd never know him. He is a great big fellow but he don't care so much about studies. I often think how wonderful the nurse was to me when she used to come out and see my husband when he was sick. She got me interested in Christian Science and I think that helped him a lot. I think it is the only thing that saved him."

"I'm going to try and get the boy in here for the summer and make him learn what it is to earn money. I tried to get him started last summer but they wouldn't take him here. He was too young. There is a lad right across the street from our house that is just as young as he is and he got a job down here. That is one thing I can't understand about the Western. If you have somebody to speak for you, they seem to be able to place the children, but if you haven't, you are just out of luck, but I am going to talk to somebody and see if I can't get him placed this year. I've always worked hard for my children and gave them everything they needed so naturally they don't know how hard it was for me. They've always gotten things and they expect them, but they don't realize how their poor mother had to slave to keep things together. I never got much out of my husband at all and I have been sick myself."

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I: "Was this your first illness?"

E: "My, no."

I: "What's your trouble?"

E: "My stomach. They don't make much of it here at the hospital but my doctor tells me he thinks it's cancer but I'm not worrying about it. I'm watching my diet very closely and I am trying to carry out orders to cure myself."

I: "Christian Science?"

E: "That is what it is, I guess, but in all my illness I never felt as good as I do now. I feel like I want to live now and before I prayed to die. My husband got me so discouraged the way he drank himself to death. He had no ambition and we were just about to lose our home. This Company saved it for us. I often tell the children that they can be thankful there is such a place as the Western Electric because they sure did enough for them. No one realizes how thankful I am for it. The Company is wonderful but they have got some people in the Service Organization and you would think it was them that was paying out benefits and there are others there that are just as nice and sweet as can be."

I: "Have you worked for the Company long?"

E: "Yes, I have. I worked here four years before I was married. This is where I met my husband. I married him in haste and regretted it afterwards. I had been keeping company with a man that was in a higher station in life than I was, in fact, he was a college man and he had a good job here at the Western now, but I turned him down for my husband."

I: "Do you think you made a mistake?"

E: "I'm afraid I did, but I was a little leary about marrying that man because I thought we wouldn't be happy together and I just called it off and married my husband in a hurry and I picked the wrong one. My life was misery ever since I did get married. As the children came, he got so careless he didn't care if we ate or not and I'm telling you we were just about to lose our home and I got so desperate I came down here to get a job. I was so worried. I weighed less than a hundred pounds. When my doctor found out I was coming down here he said, 'They'll never take you' and I said, 'Well, I am going to try.' I came over and had a talk with Miss C in the Employment Department and I asked her for night work and she gave me a job over in the Merchandise Building on

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nights when one of the men that I used to work for before I was married met me and asked me what in the world I was doing here again and I told him I was working. You see I didn't want anyone to know that I had worked here when I was single and I didn't tell Miss C that in the Employment Department. That man that I used to work for went back and told my old Department Chief that I was working here nights and before I knew a thing about it, they had a transfer arranged for me and I was put over here in this department."

I: "That was mighty fine of him, wasn't it?"

E: "Oh, they were good to me. After I came back to work I used to see that man I told you about. I don't see him now but that was in the big department and I am glad of it. He would come and would look at me so strangely as if he wanted to talk to me but I never let on. I have never spoken to him since. After I had that trouble with my husband, for a long time I hated men. I didn't want to talk to anyone. When my little boy grew up and began to look mannish I even got to dislike him. That is the way you get when you see a man dissipate the way he did. I got so I would do things for him and I would never know he was in the house. I paid so little attention to him. I would cook his meals for him and do his laundry but he never was allowed to come near me or the children."

I: "Was he sick?"

E: "Yes, he had T.B., but he brought it all on himself. He would carrouse around all night. Sometimes he wouldn't get in until three and four in the morning and we would spend so much money trying to get him well and the first thing you know he would go out again and be worse off than he was before."

I: "How long was he sick?"

E: "He was out of work for about two and one-half years before he died."

I: "Was he working here at the time he got sick?"

E: "Yes, the Company paid him for about a year until his benefits run out. I don't know what on earth I would have done if it wasn't for that."

I: "Did you keep him home all the time?"

E: "I kept him home as long as I could and I had to take him to the County Hospital and he wanted me there every night and I used to go right from work and sometimes I would get over there only to find out

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that he had left during the day. That is just what is the matter with me these days. I think my stomach is just ruined. I would be so nervous hurrying and trying to catch trains to be over there with him. I didn't even take a bite of supper. Then I would come home and take care of the kids. No one knows what I went through and I always tried to shield him. I think I would be better off today if I didn't try to cover up the terrible things he did. I wanted my children to respect their father. I didn't want them to ever know he was the unfit person that he was to be father of a family."

I: "Did he die in the County Hospital?"

E: "Yes, that is where he died. I had him over at St. Lukes for a while. The social workers got him a bed there. It was the nicest place he ever had but his mother wouldn't let him stay there because it was too far for her to go to visit him and when I think of how nice they used to keep him there and he got such good attention, but they insisted on him being moved to the County Hospital and it isn't nearly as clean there. He didn't get good care at all. He was so mean that all the nurses and doctors got sick and tired of him. I know what he was myself when he used to get sick because I used to take care of him. He was so hateful and not a bit considerate for the people taking care of him. In the end I think they killed him."

I: "What makes you think that?"

E: "Well, I had an old doctor for him and he understood what was the matter with him and he tried to prolong his life and he told me he could prolong it for seven more years if he would only do what he was told but he advised me never to let anyone tap him, so that is what killed him. One of the internes in the County Hospital tapped him and gangreen set in and that killed him."

I: "Did your husband have complications?"

E: "Yes, it was T.B. and it was in the family. They all had that but worse than that he was diseased. Of course, the Company doctors here don't know that. They just think he had T.B. I'm telling you that is the kind of a person I had to live with and I think that is what is the trouble was with my little boy. His people didn't like me either. They were very queer. They all died just like he did. They drank and lived a fast life and died young. All there is left of that family is one aunt and she is very different. Not so long ago she had a birthday and wrote to the children and asked them to come and see her and bring me along and I got better acquainted with her then than I ever did before. I guess she can see that I am trying to do the right thing and she complimented me on my children and

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said she thought my children would bring our name back where it should be. She said she saw the other generation go down and thinks she will see this one go up. That made me feel good to think she noticed how well my children were being brought up. Many of the people criticize the Company because they were so good to me but they do it for other people so I don't know why they shouldn't do it for me."

I: "In what way were they good to you?"

E: "Oh, at the time my husband died, I got his insurance in a lump and I can't tell you how much sickness I have and they gave my husband all of his disability. Of course, I think they did that on account of the children."

I: "Did your husband work here long?"

E: "Oh, he worked here for years. This is where I met him. I just felt sorry for him. His folks weren't good and half the time he was away from his folks. I didn't think it was his fault at the time but I guess it was."

I: "Were you sick when you worked here before you were married?"

E: "No, I wasn't sick before but after his death I came down with a nervous breakdown and since then I have never been the same. I wasn't so well before I came back to work either. I used to get headaches and some doctors prescribed something for me. I guess it was dope but I didn't know it at the time and you know I kept on taking that dope until I became a fiend and I didn't know it. One day a woman came to my house and we got talking and she came right up to me and said, 'I think I know something about you' and I said, 'What do you know about me?' She said, 'I think you are a dope fiend.' I didn't know if I was or not. She says, 'Do you take any kind of medicine?' I said, 'I always take pills for my headache.' Well, she says, 'The pills you take are nothing but coke. You just try to stop taking those pills and see if you can' and sure enough it was a terrible battle for me to stop and after I did, I realized it was nothing else but imaginary headaches and I didn't need to take them at all."

I: "Do you think you cured yourself of the habit?"

E: "Yes, I don't take them any more."

I: "Is that very long ago?"

E: "Oh, not so very long ago. The week before I came back to work. Employee shifted subject quickly."

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"The week before I came back to work a group of girls came out to my home. I don't know if I should call them friends or not. They told me if I wanted to get back in the Western, I better be getting back as soon as I could because the Western was going to be through with me. That is really the reason I came back. I'm not fit to be working now at all. I just looked at those girls and I was thinking how glad I would be if I was only able to work everyday and do as they are doing. I guess they don't think I am sick and I am just trying to get out of work. There is an under-current of jealousy in the big department especially since the Mica job is going away. They are all pretty sore because that was the best paying job in the department."

I: "Have you always been in the test room?"

E: "Yes, ever since it started and it was the funniest thing about me getting in there. It was just by chance. I was so discouraged in the department at that time. I thought I would take a chance in the test room. Girls all tried to say they were just going to get us in there and time us and then cut the rates but I thought the other girls were going and they were all nice girls and it would at least be quiet in there. It was terribly hard for me to work in the department with all that noise, people walking up and down and the girls weren't nice to one another either. Here in the test room, there are all different types but they are all nice, quiet girls and when they think you don't feel good they won't sing or make any noise. Before they do start, they ask if we want them to, if we all feel like it so it is real nice and I think it is an advantage to the Company to keep it if they are going to make a study on human beings. They've got different types to study on."

I: "Do you like to work on Mica?"

E: "Yes, it is about the best job in the Western Electric. Of course, since I am back I haven't got the speed that I had before and it will take quite a while before I get it back because I haven't got the strength to work like I should."

I: "Why do you think those girls came out and told you what they did?"

E: "I guess they just wanted to scare me. Oh, they brought a lot of gossip out there. They told me that my Forelady I used to work for told a lot of stories about me."

I: "Is she in the test room?"

E: "Yes, I have known her for years. She used to help me out a great deal. We were very good friends, but since I have come back there is a

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little feeling there that I don't like. She is very cool and I know there is something wrong but she will just have to get over it. She hasn't come out with a word yet."

I: "Are you glad to be back to work?"

E: "If I can just keep on as I am now I think I will be. I am going to try to stay a whole day one day this week and do my best to get in my full time again because it is pretty hard getting along on such little money. I always do try to keep a little money in the bank. The biggest mistake I ever made is when I sold my home. I would at least have a roof over my head and not have to pay rent now."

I: "You sold your home?"

E: "Yes, I listened too much to other people. It was a little frame cottage and it stood on posts and people used to come in and tell me that the house was going to rot. I'd better sell it as soon as I could and get what I could out of it. That began to worry me and I thought I might just as well so I sold that and bought another place and there was no clear title on it so I lost the money I put in it. If I had known as much as I do now I could have lived on there until I lived out my equity in rent but I didn't know it at that time. And every week I was served a notice to get out, they were going to put me out on the street if I didn't, so finally I moved. Now, I have a little flat. It is a cheap little place and I rent out one room so that helps me a little bit. I don't know what I would do if I would ever lose out here at the Western. I think we would go to the poor house. They have always helped me so much and I feel very grateful for that."

I: "Is this the first place you worked?"

E: "It is about the only place I worked. I didn't have it very good at home and I was raised by strangers, in fact, my school teacher kept me after my mother re-married and as soon as I was old enough I came out here to work so I don't know much of anything else and I only had an eighth grade education. When I came to work here I moved out to Brookfield and boarded out there and I have lived out there ever since. My husband's folks all lived in Brookfield and everyone in town knew me and they would sort of look after my children, too. They always call me the sick woman. That hurts me because no one tries to be well as much as I do."

I: "You do mighty well to get along and keep your children in school, don't you?"

E: "Yes, but I make them take care of everything. Just the minute they come in the house they've got to take off their school clothes and put

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on old clothes and I do the same thing myself. I've only got this one winter dress to my name and I've been wearing it for four years but we always take care of our clothes. I was raised that way and I am raising my children to do the same thing and when you keep your clothes cleaned and pressed they always look nice. People have been good to me, too. A friend of mine just made a present to my daughter of three dresses for the spring, so that is going to help her out. One of them didn't fit her so she gave it to me, so I have one dress to start in with.

"That is just the way I have to get along. I think we all have our crosses and this is my cross and I will have to carry it the best I can. I often think of my old friend that worked down in the big department. She had trouble, too. She was with the Company for eighteen years. It was very hard to work in the big department. If they knew anything bothered you, they would do it to annoy you."

I: "Did they annoy her?"

E: "Yes, the girl was sick. Her nerves were in bad shape and I guess she had other ailments, too, and if things were managed poorly in the department it wasn't for her to criticize them. By doing that she had the whole department down on her and any time they knew she didn't feel good they would make as much noise as they could and bang the scissors down on the table and talk and sing as loud as they could. They would do anything at all to annoy her and many times she had it out with the Section Chief. I did, too, for that matter but she made it hot for him one day and he had the Division Chief come down and have a talk to her. After that she went home and was home a long time sick and then she came back and worked for a little while and left the Company. I understand they pensioned her, but believe me, she was sicker than anyone knew she was. You see, people try to keep those things to themselves instead of being out with things. I felt sorry for her. I was the only friend she had in the department, but when everyone else is down on a person I feel sorry for them. I never did hear from her since she left.

"No one knows what I have had to live down in that old department. It was a happy day when I got out. You see, my husband was known pretty well by the boys and they all knew what was wrong with him and would come right up to me and tell me and I would have to swallow those insults. One man even had the nerve to tell me I couldn't be any better than he was because I lived with him so all those things have made it hard for me and many times I do think a lot about that. I am always going to the doctors to get blood tests and I am watching the children closely, too. That is where some of my money goes."

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I: "Are the children healthy?"

E: "They seem to be quite healthy. They attend to school every day. The little girl is very industrious and I think she will finish her high school before the boy does. She always did watch over him as they were children. When I think back when I had the hardest time bringing them up as babies that was the happiest time of my life. I was at least well then.

"Well, I have just been thinking these things over and over in my mind. Everyday it is the same thing over. Maybe since I have talked it over with you I won't think about it so often. It seems like a load off of my chest."

The twelve o'clock whistle blew.

E: "Well, we've just been talking over all my affairs and you didn't ask me any questions at all. Is there anything that you want to ask me?"

I: "No, have you anything else you want to tell me?"

E: "No, I think I have told you plenty."

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Opr. 2

February 11, 1930.
Operating Branch-W.

4-20052-218-205D.

4411-212-22B.

When the employee was introduced to the interviewer she told the supervisor she was acquainted with [REDACTED] When we were seated the employee said:

E: "Although I don't know you I'll always remember you as my Health Course teacher."

I: "That was quite a while ago, wasn't it?"

E: "Yes. I have had some experience since then. I taught the Health classes twice after that and I also took up the First Aid but I never finished."

I: "Why didn't you finish?"

E: "Well, I was taking the First Aid Course while I was teaching the Health classes and on my last day I came down with diptheria. I went home that day never dreaming I had anything like diptheria. I walked home and believe me, that was the longest five blocks I ever walked in my life and I didn't realize how sick I was.

"My mother was visiting me and she put me to bed and I was in bed sixteen days, quarantined. I was lucky to have my mother with me. I have a sister and some of the time my mother is with her, but fortunately she was with me that time. And Saturday night when I made no improvement she called the doctor. When he came he pronounced my sickness 'diptheria'. I'm going back to my childhood days I guess. But I pulled through all right."

I: "Weren't you lucky your mother was there to take care of you."

E: "Yes, and all I did was to send my daughter away. They had to give me twenty thousand units of anti-toxin."

I: "Is that supposed to be a great deal?"

E: "Yes, I suppose it is. It all depends upon how badly you have it. You see the anti-toxin has got to fight the sickness. I was out for five weeks altogether and I was pretty sick."

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February 11, 1930.
Operating Branch-W.

4-20052-228-205D.

4411-212-22E.

I: "Do you know anything about the interviewing program?"

E: "I heard quite a bit about it last year when they started it in the Operating Branches, and [redacted] told us yesterday that we were going to be interviewed. He didn't say anything else about it though. We asked about it last year and [redacted] said he guessed we didn't need any interviewing."

I: "Do you think you did?"

E: "Well - no, but as long as they were interviewing we just asked about it."

Interviewer explains program.

E: "Yes, I have heard several of the girls talking about it. You know, you come in contact with so many and one tells you one thing and the other tells you something else. Well, right now I couldn't ask for anything better than I have got. I just can't explain what it is but I sure like it in the test room."

I: "What do you like about it?"

E: "I don't know. It is just being alone I suppose, and there is nothing that distracts us from our work. In the department there are so many people walking up and down it takes your attention away from your work, but since we have been here it seems we are more to ourselves. We keep our heads down all day. At least that is the way I find it."

I: "Have you been here long?"

E: "We were over in another building for quite a while and they moved some heavy machines in that building and the vibration from them affected our gauges. (Employee shakes her hand showing the way the gauges would quiver). So then they moved us over here in this little room. It was cold up there in that other room and down here it is so nice and cozy, it is just like a little office and no one bothers us at all. It couldn't be any better. It will be hard on us if they ever decide to put us back in the department, and it is hard to say just why we like it so well."

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February 11, 1930.
Operating Branch-W.

4-20052-2KS-205D.

4411-212-222.

I: "Have you always worked on this work?"

E: "Oh no. I worked on it about a year and a half altogether before I came in here.

"I think we work for the most wonderful man in the Western Electric Company. We have no boss. [redacted] simply waits on us. I heard one of the girls mention that she didn't get a 'Microphone' yesterday and today I noticed he brought some in. They won't let us out of anything. We have privileges that a lot of the other girls don't have. We are allowed to go down and lie on the couch when we are tired or don't feel good, and the matron was told not to say anything to us. Of course, none of us have done that yet because we always feel pretty good and we have rest periods where we can do anything we want to for those ten minutes. We have ten minutes in the morning and ten in the afternoon."

I: "What do you usually do?"

E: "I just lay my head on the table and forget everything for those ten minutes and relax.

"We have all kinds of company coming in here to watch us. Anyone that is connected with research work; in fact, there are people that come in here from all over the world. They talk a great deal about the other test room. I guess it has been in existence longer than ours and they try out all different things on those girls. I guess they will try out different things on us too, and when they try anything they give it a good trial.

"I don't know just how long they expect to make a study of this work. When they originated the other test room they told the girls they thought it would be for three or four months and I think they are in that test room for over three years or more. Doctor M. and Doctor T., have been in here often looking at things. Do you know Doctor M? He is a professor of some university in the east. He is a cousin to the M. brothers. We get lots of attention here."

I: "Do you mind that?"

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February 11, 1930.
Operating Branch-W.

4-20052-2K8-2C5D.

4411-212-22B.

E: "No, not at all; in fact, Mr. X. told us when we first came in here that we would have lots of visitors; so we expect that.

"I don't know what was the matter with the first three girls that were chosen for this job. They were called up to Mr. X.'s office but they didn't want to take the chance; but I think they didn't fully understand what it was, so I was one of the girls that was called."

I: "Did they explain it all to you?"

E: "Yes. Mr. X. went into details and told us everything they were going to do and told us that we were to do no different and he explained about the study they were going to make."

I: "What is the object of this study?"

E: "Just to see how people act when they have trouble, or the different conditions they are working under. They have a big chart (employee shows size of chart on table) about this long and they keep a record of all our work and when we have a high output our curves go up; and when our output drops the curves go down. We are always anxious to look at them and when they go down [redacted] wants to know what is the trouble, and if we are sick or anything I suppose they lay it to that, or if we have any trouble."

I: "Do you think those things make much difference in your output?"

E: "I suppose they do, although I have never had any trouble. I better knock on wood. So far everything is running along pretty nice since I have been in here.

"It is the funniest thing how I got this job. At one time when I was changed I had to go to the Employment Office to get my transfer and Miss Z. told me that she was going to put me on the 'mica' job. I didn't know what it was at the time and when I came over into the department, I don't even think I got into the department she assigned me to. However, I was given different work and I have thought of this so often since. Nine years later I landed the 'mica' job."

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February 11, 1930.
Operating Branch-W.

4-20052-2K8-2C5D.

4411-212-22B.

I: "That is interesting work, isn't it?"

E: "Yes, it is very interesting work. I became quite discouraged when I was first put in here. When you look at a girl splitting mica it doesn't seem hard but it is very tedious and it took me quite a while to get onto it. Many of the girls come in and do well after the first two or three weeks but it took me about three months before I could make any money on it. But they were fair. They allow you a certain amount of day work every day until you reach a thousand, and when you can make a thousand that is a pretty fair wage. It amounts to \$4.20 a day. After you reach that they won't give you any more day work, but as soon as a girl does it it seems like she keeps on increasing.

"Of course, we have some work that is better than other. The India mica is the best. They get it from all over; some from Brazil and some from Africa, but that isn't so good. And they get it from Canada and Carolina, but they don't do much changing. Our work is brought in to us and we do what we get."

I: "How do you know that the mica from India is the best?"

E: "We get it in boxes and it is always marked on the boxes."

I: "Isn't that interesting?"

E: "Yes. When [redacted] came in here I don't think he knew much about mica but he sure does now. I think he reads lots of books and he knows everything about mica now."

I: "Does he ever tell you anything about it?"

E: "Yes, sometimes he does. He is in and out of here all day. Sometimes we don't see him for hours. As I said before, he isn't like a boss at all.

"I think we still work for the same department. We really belong over in the Merchandise Building. That's where they transferred this job. I guess they have sent a lot of it to Kearny. We work the same hours as the regular department does and we work

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February 11, 1930.
Operating Branch-W.

4-20052-2K8-2C5D.

4411-212-22B.

overtime when they work overtime. One other time when they worked they didn't have us work but we were just as well satisfied. "

I: "Do you like overtime?"

E: "Well, I have plenty to do at home. You know I keep house and there is always a great deal to do at home. You know I am a widow and keep house for my daughter and myself, and now she has her girl friend living with us. My daughter works here too and so does her girl friend. When she first started to work she didn't like her place at all. She couldn't stand the typewriter all day and she was quitting every day. Whenever she came home she would tell me, 'This is my last day mother, I can't go back to that place any more. I can't put another day in there.' I hated to see her leave because she did so nicely. She came out and got her job on her own merits, so I told her before she quit to ask for a transfer. She did and finally they transferred her.

"She is in the Installation now and I have never heard a word out of her in the way of complaining since then. That's where her girl friend works, right with her. That kid is overly ambitious. She is going some place every night. I don't like to have her take so much part in the athletics; I am afraid it isn't so good for her, but she liked it. I often go over there and watch them.

"The Hawthorne Club was my salvation. If it wasn't for them I don't know how things would have been. I joined their Building & Loan and when I had it paid out I bought a home and last December I made my last payment. It seemed like a great undertaking but I bought that when my husband was living and he only lived a few months afterward. But it wasn't so hard. You know the Building & Loan takes care of that and they deducted so much from my pay every week so I didn't have much bother."

I: "Did you work here before your husband died?"

E: "Yes. He was sick at one time. He was a painter and that work isn't very healthy, and he would get sick off and on, and during one of those sick spells I had to get out and work. We

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February 11, 1950.
Operating Branch-W.

4-20052-2K8-2C5D.

4411-212-22B.

lived close by to this plant and I suppose that's why I came out here. I never worked in a factory before. I did a little house-work, but after I got started I was afraid to leave. I didn't know just what would happen next and I realized I was getting older and knew it wouldn't be easy for me to get another job, so I just stayed.

"The only time I felt discouraged was when I was changed from Department Blank to another department. I was earning such good pay at that time and I needed the money so badly. My daughter was in her last nine months of high school and it was a struggle. I had to take a drop of \$10.00 a week and believe me, it was hard. I didn't get over that for a long time. It made me feel so badly. Of course, I couldn't blame the Company; they replaced us girls with men. That was very heavy work, but in the department I got into I did almost the same kind of work, but it was hard to go from one department to another. They treated us just like new girls and while the work was about the same we didn't get the best work."

I: "Was that the last department you were in before you came into the test room?"

E: "Yes. I don't know what happened at one time but they needed some girls on mica and Miss Z. asked me if I cared to learn the job and I told her I would try. That was a lucky day for me."

I: "Sometimes things do seem hard."

E: "If it had happened after my daughter finished school I would not have cared, but I made up my mind to let her have high school if she was interested in it. She was always interested in school so it would have been a terrible thing for me to take her out. But since she is working we are getting along so nicely. I have been saving my pennies for a long long time and last year we bought a new car and we spent a lovely vacation together; she, her girl friend and myself. We took a trip east."

I: "What kind of car have you?"

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E: "Our new car is a Nash. My husband always had a little Ford so I kept that until we got the Nash."

I: "Do you drive?"

E: "Yes. Both of us drive. We had a lovely trip last year. We went from here to Detroit and then over to Canada and then to Niagara Falls and New York and we also went over to Kearny. I was on the grounds of Kearny but I did not go into the building. My girl had a friend working there so she went up to see her. Then we went over to Washington, D. C., and into Pittsburgh and visited a friend of ours over there and brought a friend back with us to Chicago."

I: "My! You had a wonderful trip."

E: "Well I certainly did. We get an awful lot of good out of that Nash car."

I: "It is wonderful that you are both able to drive."

E: "Oh yes. My daughter is as good a driver as I am. She would not learn to drive the Ford but you can't keep her away from the Nash, so I let her have her fun. This girl that lives with us is a wonderful girl and I let them have a good time. I am kept pretty busy at home keeping our four rooms up and there is always quite a bit of work to do around the house."

"Whenever I talk of my home I always think of the Building & Loan. I had A. T. & T. stock but I had to cancel them. It was a little too much for me to keep up, but lately I have subscribed for stock again."

I: "I think you have done remarkably well."

E: "Well I am satisfied. I have nothing in the world to bother me now, and the way I feel, my curves should be high all the time. I must say my daughter has never given me one day's trouble all during her life."

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I: "You have been very fortunate."

(The 12:00 o'clock whistle had blown and employee still sat and was willing to talk).

I: "I see they have brought your coffee into your little room."

E: "Yes. We sit in there and have our lunch. The girl goes out a couple of minutes before 12:00 and brings coffee in."

I: "Is there anything else you would like to talk about?"

E: "No, but I sure did enjoy this interview."

I: "I did also."

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2341-113-22B.

Program explained.

E: "Right now I am very satisfied. I couldn't ask for anything better than I have now; in fact, I would be very unreasonable if I did. I hope I am kept in the test room as long as I am working at the Western."

I: "You must like it there, don't you?"

E: "Yes. It is the best break I got since I am here."

I: "Did you do the same work as you are doing now when you were in the department?"

E: "Sometimes I did but I was taken off so often. I know if I was in the department now I would be taken off again as they are going to lay off ten thousand people throughout the Western. That means there is a drop in all the departments, especially on mica. They have taken that work to Kearny and I believe there are only thirty-five girls on that work in the department."

I: "Why were you always taken off when they were slack?"

E: "Some of those girls are on that job for so long that ten years isn't anything. Once they get on that work they like it. I think this last time they got busy on mica they were busier longer than any other time since I am here."

I: "Is that why you didn't like it in the department, because you were changed off the mica?"

E: "That was one part I didn't like, and there was so much disturbance. I am quiet and don't like all that noise around me. I would sit all day and not say a word to anyone. Somehow I felt as though I didn't belong there. I didn't intend to start in the shop when I came to the Western to work but my aunt thought it would be better for me."

I: "Did she know anything about the Western Electric?"

E: "Oh yes. We have relatives working here and I guess she

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thought it would be better for me to work in the shop; so that's why I started there. I like to do work where I can use my mind a little more. I have been wondering if it was worth that or not."

I: "What do you mean?"

E: "Of course, you earn more in the shop than you would in the office, but there is so much in liking your work, and in the office the environment is so different and you meet different people than you do in the shop."

I: "After you were there a while did you get more used to it?"

E: "No, I was always thinking of changing."

I: "Did you ever ask to be changed?"

E: "I didn't ask our Department Chief but I know one of the men who has a pretty good position here. I talked it over with him and he told me how it would be and just what I had to expect, and I was thinking the matter over when this proposition came up. I was so anxious for a change that I took this chance and I think it was lucky for me that I did."

I: "What do you like so well about the test room?"

E: "I don't know but I guess that can be answered easy enough. They are giving us so much consideration I think that tells the story."

I: "In what way do they give you consideration?"

E: "Since we are in here we have been doing the same kind of work all the time and if we were in the department we wouldn't get the same kind."

I: "Do you mean there are different kinds of mica?"

E: "Yes. We work on the same rate all the time and on the same dimensions."

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I: "What do you mean by dimensions?"

E: "Some day when you come in there I would like to explain it to you. You really have to see it before you can understand. All the mica we split we have to gauge and in the department we had different dimensions probably every day, but here we don't change and we have no changing to do on our gauge, and doing that you get so used to it when you pick up a piece of mica you can almost tell by the feel of it whether you have to split it or not, whether it is undersize or oversize."

I: "Do you get some that you don't have to split?"

E: "If it is undersize we can tell that and we don't have to gauge it. You see, handling that every day you get used to it."

I: "That must be very interesting work."

E: "Oh just the work itself isn't interesting. When you think where the material came from and hear little things about it you think a little bit further. [REDACTED] was telling us that in Africa some of those people that work on mica work for from three to six cents a day. I often imagine I can see those people working on that."

I: "It does give you something to think about, doesn't it?"

E: "Oh yes, and I think being alone has something to do with it too. I like to sit and think and I can do that here. There isn't so much noise, and keeping a record of yourself makes it that much more interesting."

I: "In what way do you keep a record of yourself?"

E: "Like your output, and if you lose a certain amount of rest during the night you see the effect it has on your next day's output."

I: "Do you keep track of that too?"

E: "Oh yes, that is part of the study. I guess the test rooms

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were the first ones that tried out the rest periods also and they must have proved successful because now they have them in many of the different departments."

I: "Do you like the rest period?"

E: "Oh yes. We look forward to it. My day is broken and I don't get tired of my work now. That ten minutes in the morning and then at a quarter to twelve I go over to the restaurant and stay till 2:00; so the day really seems short to me."

I: "What do you do in the restaurant?"

E: "I take cash now. I used to wait on the tables for a while and that's a hard job. The way the girls have to run around for that little while gets you all excited."

I: "Did you do that very long?"

E: "Yes, I did for quite a while but I don't think I was much of a success although I had nice men to wait on and they were satisfied with me. I guess that is because I was on the job every day. I hardly ever miss any time and if I was a little slow they knew I would be there anyway. I was glad to make the change and take cash though, and I didn't lose anything by coming over here, and getting that nice walk every day makes one feel better too."

I: "And the hot lunch means something too, doesn't it?"

E: "Yes it does in my case because I don't live at home and I make this my main meal."

I: "Do you board?"

E: "I have done everything. Right now another girl and I are 'backing' it. We have a little apartment. Sometimes she is there and sometimes I am alone."

I: "You share that apartment together, don't you?"

E: "Well, I pay more than she does because she travels quite a

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bit and it wouldn't be fair for her to pay half the expenses because I am there all the time although I would rather be alone."

I: "Have you been living that way for quite a while?"

E: "No, I usually just took a room and got my meals out. Sometimes I work in the evening and I get my meals here, so I just have to bother with my breakfast. I like to be able to cook my own meals in case I want to, and I love home privileges. You can't get them by rooming. I was disgusted going from one place to another although I always found nice places. When you live out with families you can't have your associates visit you. I don't like to do much entertaining but I like to be able to ask friends up in case I want to and treat them as they treat me when I go out to visit them, and even if it is just a small flat, it is a home. I don't spend much time at home during the summer. We go riding nearly every evening."

I: "Do you drive?"

E: "No, my boy friend wants to teach me. He gave me three lessons but he has no patience. He said I can have the old Chevrolet if I wanted it. He is going to get a new car. I told him not to dispose of the Chev, I would try to learn to drive, but he won't teach me."

I: "Then you will have to get someone else to teach you. Won't you?"

E: "Yes, but I am going to learn."

I: "Is your little flat far from the Western?"

E: "No, it is over on Jackson near Cicero. I don't know if I am going to be there so much longer. He is charging \$40.00 for that small flat and now he wants to increase it \$5.00 more. Of course, \$5.00 more on the month don't mean much but it is the principle of it. It isn't worth it. I think he is getting too much for it now. The only things that were in the flat were the stove and ice-box; I had to buy the furniture. Of course, I didn't buy new furniture. A friend of mine was disposing of her home and I got some nice

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pieces at a very reasonable price. I always wanted to have a little apartment so I took that chance when she was selling out."

I: "You are close enough to walk to work, aren't you?"

E: "I have walked a couple of times but I have to leave the house too early. Believe me that Cicero Avenue car is a thorn in my side."

I: "Why?"

E: "It is terribly hard to get on at Jackson Boulevard. Sometimes they don't even open the door. I am glad if I can just stick my nose in."

I: "I'll bet if you walked a few times you wouldn't notice that walk. You could do it in half an hour."

E: "It is hard on your shoes and stockings though. You wear out so many stockings and run your heels down. I do a great deal of walking, but in the evening. I put on my old stockings and walking shoes and I am prepared for it. I love to walk. I walk west on Jackson a great deal, out as far as the park, and you know that is a lovely walk. Of course, I have a girl friend that lives close by and we meet often and go together. I haven't so many friends in Chicago. I came from a small town in Wisconsin."

I: "Did you come here alone?"

E: "Yes, I came here alone but I had an aunt living here so I came to live with her. I had to make my own way. There was a big family of us and one left after another; so that's how I happened to come to Chicago.

"My father was here for a while too but he didn't stay.

"Do you know [redacted] He is the one that is really in charge of the test room. He is a wonderful fellow. He just got married lately. We don't see so much of him any more. Mr. X. is in with us and his desk is up in the other test room and he spends most of

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his time up there. Once in a while he comes down. They pay so much attention to us I guess we are getting spoiled."

I: "Do you like attention?"

E: "I think to a certain extent we all do. If it wasn't for this test room we girls would never have met the men we have."

I: "Whom have you met?"

E: "There are a great many people that come in this test room and they talk to the girls. Mr. Y., I believe he is the superintendent, has talked to us girls. At Christmas time he came in to wish us a merry Christmas. You know the Western Electric is so large they don't have time to notice the people; especially in the shop departments."

I: "It is that way in the offices, too; in fact, there isn't very much difference in the office than there is in the shop, only the work is a little different."

E: "Oh yes, but you meet different people in the office and you can use your brain a little better. That's how it appears to me. You know there are all classes of people in the shop departments."

"I love this little test room. It seems to be just the turning part in my life because I was thinking that something would have to happen; I was so dissatisfied. I don't do anything different here than I did in the department. I just sit and work away and have more of a chance to think; in fact, I dream during the day."

I: "What do you dream about?"

E: "Oh I don't know, first one thing and then another. I would rather sit and think than talk. I don't talk much. I believe I am too quiet. Where I used to room the woman told me she never knew when I was in or out, I would be so quiet."

I: "Do you read a great deal?"

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E: "I don't have so much time. I read magazines. I used to take books from the library. Sometimes I would get a chance to read them and then I wouldn't. A girl has so many little things to do at home, keeping her clothes in condition and shopping once in a while, and when you go to a show that's your evening gone, and I am one that has to get my rest. I should have eight hours to feel good. There are plenty of times I don't get that and I feel it the next day.".....

I: "Is there anything else you would like to tell me?"

It was close to 12:00 o'clock.

E: "No, I don't think so. I am so well satisfied now. As I said before, I hope they don't change me as long as I want to work here."

I: "Well I hope not either."

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4-20054-2K8-205D.

3321-211-21B.

Employee was introduced to the interviewer and while they were walking to the locker room where the interview was to take place, the following conversation took place:

E: "I have seen you around here before. The minute you came in the room yesterday I said to the girls, 'I've seen her around here'."

I: "Your face looks a little familiar to me too. I think I have seen you too."

E: "Yes, I suppose we have seen one another. I have been around here a long time."

After we were seated employee said:

E: "Yes, I would have had twenty years service at the Western Electric Company if I hadn't broken it, but I am back here around nine years. The time goes so fast you can hardly realize where it goes. I, like many other happy girls, left and got married and had hard luck and had to come back again."

I: "How long were you out?"

E: "I was out about five years. I had more trouble than you can shake a stick at. I don't know what ever happened to my husband. He just disappeared. I have gone around to so many morgues looking the bodies over trying to identify them that I always look like a corpse myself, so in the end I just gave it up. I don't know if he is dead or not but he has been gone so long I think he must be."

I: "My! That is too bad."

E: "Sometimes when I think it over I wonder if he got himself into trouble and just went away, but there is something peculiar about it."

I: "Do you worry about it?"

E: "No. I don't think about it any more. I think he had a good

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3321-211-21N.

chance to come back if he was living, and if he is dead there is no use worrying about it, I can't help it. I was facing starvation and had to come back to work as I had two little children on my hands and nothing for them to eat. I had to give up my flat and go to live with my sister, and then when I went with her she met with an accident and I had to take care of her for a while. She was burned very badly and when she got better I came out here and left the children with her to take care of. She had one child herself. I never will forget how glad I was when they took me back. Of course, I had to tell what the trouble was but I was willing to do that. If it wasn't for this place I don't know what would have become of me."

I: "Did you get back in the same department?"

E: "Yes, it was Mr. X. that took me back. He was my Foreman when I left before. We had worked together for years. He had a gang of girls; in fact, they were the nice girls before he left. I supervised them. So without question they put me right back to work. I was very thankful for that and I have thought of it many times. Of course I had my ups and downs in the department but I am not any different from anyone else and have to take the bitter with the sweet."

I: "Are you still home with your sister?"

E: "Not now. I haven't been with her for quite a while. I went home to live with my mother and my sister went home to my mother also. My mother kept me and wouldn't take a cent for board for my children and myself for a long time, and finally she got sick and our family doctor raised Cain with us for piling so much work on her with my sister and her family and myself and children and my brother and dad. Of course, we girls helped at home but still it was a big responsibility on my mother. We thought we would lose her for a while. She got a paralytic stroke and she is still helpless, so when we realized how overtaxed she was my sister bought her own place and I got a little two-by-four."

I: "Yourself and your two children?"

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E: "No, I was just about ready to leave when my boy took sick and died. He took sick on Wednesday and was buried on Saturday. He had diphtheria. They sure gave me a break in the department at that time. I had no idea he was that sick and after we buried him the Health Department was at the house and had me locked up for four weeks. They plastered a white card on the front door and locked me in the room for all that while.

"I didn't want to lose my job down here and I didn't know what to do so I called up our instructor and told her all about it and told her I couldn't possibly get out and yet I didn't want to lose my job and I wasn't there long enough to get a leave of absence. She said, 'Don't worry about it. Just stay home and take good care of yourself and when they take that card off your door you call me up. I'll take care of your job for you'. But it was my service that I was thinking about too.

"Well, the day they took the card off the door I called her up and told her. She laughed and said, 'You are out of jail now, aren't you?' As strict as she is she has a sense of humor, and then she asked, 'When do you want to come back?' That was Friday and she asked if I wanted to come in tomorrow or Monday. I was so anxious to come back to work I said I thought it would be better for me to start on Saturday. So I came in the following morning and she told me not to bother or pay any attention to anyone. While I was out the report got around the department that I had black diphtheria, and I wasn't sick a day while I was off, so I didn't pay any attention to any of them. However, she fixed up my service so I didn't lose it."

I: "My, that was wonderful!"

E: "Yes, she was like that. They don't realize what a good scout she is down there and I don't suppose I would have realized it either if I didn't have the understanding I have now. Many girls come in and things are done for them and they think it should be like that and they don't appreciate the things an instructor or a Department Chief does for them. In that department they sure treat you good. They take so much interest in all of the girls."

I: "Then, did you move from your mother?"

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E: "Yes, after that I did. I found a little flat. It is nothing to brag about because I have to use my living room as a bedroom and I have a little kitchenette, but it is big enough for my daughter and myself. She is thirteen years old now and is so much company for me and helps me with quite a bit of the work. I pay \$11.00 a week for those rooms, but they are heated and comfortable and plenty good enough for us.

"I don't overwork myself. I send my laundry out and I figure I am ahead of the game in the end. I have to look out for my health and I figure having my health and a job at the Western Electric Company I am a millionaire. I suppose if this landlord wasn't a friend of my dad's I would have to pay more. I have electric light, gas and telephone all included in that \$11.00, and I think that is pretty reasonable. I never want to live beyond my means. I want to live nice and decent and bring up my girl right and have enough to educate her when it is time."

I: "Is she in high school now?"

E: "Oh no, not yet. In our moves around she lost about one year of school changing from one school to another, but she is quite an ambitious girl and will probably make that year up and I suppose some day I will bring her down to work here too. I have brought nearly all of my family down here to work. My sister works here a long time. I got her a job here and I got a job for my brother a couple of times but he doesn't have such good luck here. He has been laid off a few times whenever they get slack, but it is his own fault. A funny thing though, whenever they send for him he always comes back. We all think a lot of the Western Electric."

I: "Did you ever work anywhere else before?"

E: "When I first started out I spent three years learning to make cases. I was an apprentice and when I was full-fledged I decided the work was too messy."

I: "What kind of cases did you make?"

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E: "Those little cases that the doctors carry their instruments in. The Western was paying such good wages then I thought I would come out here and try for a job, and once I got out here and started I liked it very well and made such good money I just stayed on and I was never sorry either. I'll tell you, Miss A., there are very few places that pay the money as the Western Electric does to their shop girls. When I came in here I didn't know a thing about this work and I made big money, and I have found everyone that I have dealt with so agreeable and fair. Of course, I am no different from anyone else. I have had my bad days and good days too, but if I was to sit down and complain to you about anybody or any treatment that wasn't right I would be telling you a lie. Of course, there may be others that don't see things the way I do, but I can't complain. Things seem to be getting better for me right along."

I: "Have you heard anything of this program that I represent?"

E: "Not so very much. I knew they were interviewing down in the department. I heard lots of the girls talking about it, but they didn't interview our little gang last year."

I: "Did you mind being left out?"

E: "No, we are different in the test room. They are making a close watch on us. They know everything we do anyway since they are making a study on this work."

I: "Have you always worked on the work you are on now?"

E: "Oh no. I have had several different jobs. We have many different kinds of work down in Department Blank. I have always done assembly work. Mica was considered the best paying job and the lightest work in the department so when the girls got on that work they thought they had the best job. Sometimes there wasn't enough to keep the girls on all the while and we had to be changed. There used to be a great deal of dishonesty on the mica job."

I: "How could that be?"

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E: "Well, we get the mica in different sizes and we get paid by pieces, so when the girls would get them in large sizes they would just cut them in half and if they had 100 pieces, by cutting them they would have 200 and get double credit for that. There was an awful lot of that done at one time but Mr. Z. has that pretty well under control now. Once in a while when the new operators come in they will take a chance but the old girls would never do anything like that. They have this work down pat and they can usually tell how fast an operator gets along on it, and if her credit is too high he will just investigate and watch her for a little while. He can usually straighten a girl out but they have discharged girls for that already.

"At one time it was hard to get girls to stay on the mica job. Some say it affected the lungs. You can see this little fine glittering dust that you would get into your lungs easily. (Employee shakes her sweater and smock) See all of that dust? Well naturally we must inhale some of that too but it never bothers me. You can see how I look and I have worked on it for years. There was one girl in the department that contracted tuberculosis and she blamed the job for it.

"I made fairly good money any place they put me. I always worked straight piece work. I think I did everything in the department only the press. I never worked on the presses. Did you ever see the annealing machines?"

I: "I may have seen them but I didn't know what they were called."

E: "Well, they are located down in the old department. The girls didn't like that job. It is pretty hard to work on. I worked on that some time too when the mica job was low, and I worked on armatures for quite a while. I made fairly good money on the armature job and I was always willing to take whatever they had for me and do the best I could and I am not sorry. We come here to work and can't kick at the kind of work we have to do. They have been so fair in our department that I always want to cooperate with them."

I: "How did it happen you were selected for the test room?"

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E: "I think it was a game of chance. I never dreamed it was going to be as good as it is but when I was asked I thought I would take a chance."

I: "Were you one of the first ones to be asked?"

E: "No. There were three others asked but they foolishly didn't take it. They thought they would rather stay down in the department with the crowd, but another girl and I said we would, and believe me we have never been sorry, and now that the work is dropping off every time the other girls meet us they ask, 'Are you still on mica?' and we tell them yes. I can see that they are sorry although they don't say it."

"There is another little girl in our group and she has only been with the Western around two years. She came in too and I am sure she is better off because so many girls have been changed off the mica with more service than she has. I am sure she would have been one of them or perhaps laid off by this time. You know they have transferred so much of this work to Kearny and they are getting slack, so this girl is just shivering. When you came in the room yesterday she said, 'I'll bet it is my turn now'."

I: "What did she mean?"

E: "She thought you were from the Personnel Department and was going to have her changed or laid off. You know everyone wants his job and they worry when a slack time comes, especially when they haven't got much service."

I: "Why do you think the girls who were first asked were afraid?"

E: "I'll tell you what I think - I think it was the hospital. You see we had to go over there and get a physical examination and then periodically we would have to go through the same thing. The girls commented on that and didn't see why they should be running to the hospital for examinations. Now I don't mind it any more than eating. We are not going to go as often now as we used to go but we will have to go every six months. We are waiting to be called now. The first time I went over there I was so nervous

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my blood pressure was real high but that was because I was nervous and one of the other girls in the other test room that went over there was anemic and they doctored her up. They gave her liver serum and you know if she had to go and pay that money out it would cost her something but they fixed her up and you should see that girl now. She is as healthy as we are.

"It makes me feel better to go there. I feel it is to my own advantage. If there is anything wrong with me they will know it and they will let me know it too. The first time they gave us a rigid examination. They laid us right on the table and examined us thoroughly. You know when I came in the test room I only weighed 118 pounds and now I weigh 128. That's what I weighed the last time I was over there. The doctor said I didn't eat to live, that I live to eat."

I: "Have you got a good appetite?"

E: "No, I eat the same as I always did, but I do feel better. I think I am more contented. I feel more rested. Down in the department there was always excitement; people walking up and down talking to you and that bothers a person."

I: "Aren't you ever bothered in the test room?"

E: "No. People come in and go out but they never bother us. Since I am in the test room my pay has increased from six to eight dollars more a week than I was getting."

I: "Is there any difference in the kind of work you get?"

E: "No. Of course, we get mica all the time while in the department we didn't. I never made as much down there as I do here. I have \$36. or \$37. left after my deductions are made. No, I would have to go far to get a job like this and I don't mean maybe! And I know if I didn't have my deductions made I would just spend that \$5.00. They just brought me a certificate for two paid up shares the other day and I subscribed for two more, so I am paying on six now and I know I will always have something to fall back on, and if anything happens that I can't keep up the payments I will just

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have to cancel them, but as long as things are going along the way they are now I don't miss that money. You know we just moved down in this little room lately. We weren't always down here."

I: "Where were you?"

E: "We had another test room up on the fourth floor but didn't like it as well down there as we do here. This little nook is better; it is a little more cozy. Up in the other department the sun used to peek through the windows. We liked that, but down here at times we get music from one of the departments on the floor below us and we like that.

"When we moved down here Mr. X. brought us down here and had us look the place over. We had a hard time getting a place. I guess the department didn't want to spare this room. We liked it and I thought it was nice of them to bring us down to look at it. One of the girls was off that day and the following day Mr. X. brought her down to look at it. We said we were out 'flat-hunting'."

I: "Why do you like it better than the other place?"

E: "Oh it is more cozy down here. They spent lots of money up there. They put in new radiators; it was so cold our hands and feet were cold all day. They put in a radiator just like you have at home and they put a tarpaulin over our heads. They had everything to make us comfortable, but then they moved some heavy machinery on that floor and the vibration affected the gauges. That's why they found us this new place."

I: "They are treating you royally, aren't they?"

E: "I'll tell the world. When we were here a year they gave us a dinner over in the Company Restaurant. (Employee laughs) We had steak and mushrooms; a meal for a king. I don't know who paid for it but we didn't. Mr. Y. came over to the table when we were eating and said, 'My! What's going on here?' Of course he knew all about it but he was just joking. Oh they are paying lots of attention to us and we are felling hard for it. (Employee laughs)

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"I had one bad drop when they changed my gauge but I knew what it was all about. That was the only time I did fall down in my output but I knew the reason. You know when you are used to using one thing you get so used to it that you gain speed, and the minute that's changed you just have to get used to the next gauge. I dropped a lot then but you can just notice at the very beginning I gradually increased, not a lot, but all the way along until they changed that gauge and then I couldn't make much headway. They want to know the reason for those things and when you are watching them yourself you can pretty near tell. I pay a lot more attention to myself now than I ever did."

I: "In what way do you mean?"

E: "Well, the way I feel. Many times down in the department I would drop in my output but if you asked me why I couldn't tell you, but now I usually know because they are watching me and the reasons for a drop makes me realize. I know when my mother was terribly sick I didn't think I would drop but it was terribly hard to work. I had that trouble on my mind and would think of it all day. We didn't know whether she was going to live or not. I did not think I dropped in my output but at the end of the day I was so tired I didn't know what to do and I had to work so much harder to make my amount. You wouldn't think your mind had that effect on your body, would you?"

I: "No, a person wouldn't."

E: "I have learned a lot since I am down here about things I never thought about and I think the girls that turned this chance down were very foolish, and they are sorry now. Of course, we were just taking a chance but we happened to get three of the best men back of us. We don't have a boss here at all. I suppose you know Mr. X?"

I: "I have seen him around here lots of times but I don't know him."

E: "Well, that fellow is a bundle of sunshine. He just got married not long ago. When you look at him you would never dream he is the fellow he is and he sure has been fine to us girls. He

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married a girl that worked up on the sixth floor. I guess she had a pretty nice position there. (Employee spells the girl's name and describes her appearance and compares the two people). Well, I think they will make a nice couple. The girls in the test room made a shower and wanted to give him something and when he came in that morning he was so surprised he didn't know what to say.

"You know we are not allowed to have collections. I got myself in a lot of trouble one time down in the department about collections. Of course, it was a different thing. We bought a Christmas gift for a supervisor and there was a big row about it. But he was a prince of a fellow. One of the girls thought that she had something on us and went over and made a big squawk at the Welfare Department and we were all called on the carpet about it. So I hated to get my hands on another collection, but it was sanctioned before we went ahead. But it is nice to remember a person that works in the department. At least I always thought so. And then a little group like we are I think we can do and agree to a great many more things than in a big department where there are so many different kinds of people."

I: "Yes, that's true."

E: "Well, now the way we are working we have no boss at all. I hope they never change us out of here; at least not for a long time."

I: "I hope they don't either as long as you like it so well."

"Do you think you have told me all that you care to?"

E: "I don't know what else I could tell you. I must have been up here a long time."

I: "Yes, it is about two hours. When you go back to your department mention the time to [REDACTED]"

E: "Oh I won't have to do that. He watches everything; when we leave for our rest period he marks that down and when I came out here to talk to you he marked that down and he knows when I get back. We don't have to bother with that at all."

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I: "Do you get a rest period?"

E: "Oh yes. That was one of the main reasons they started this off. They tried the rest periods on us first. I think they will have them all over the plant in time, if they are not already. There was so much discussion about that. Some people thought they could not make up the time they lost for those ten minutes in the morning and ten minutes in the afternoon, but I can't see that. We had no trouble making it up here at all. My output is just as much now as it was before we had it. Yes, that was one of the reasons they got this group together to begin with, and we feel so much more rested at the end of the day than we did before....."

"Well, I guess that's all, and I really enjoyed this talk with you so much. I think the interviewing program is a wonderful thing for some employees. Mr. Z. explained that to us, about people carrying grudges around for a long long time. It is all right for those people but everything has always been fine for me."

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1231-112-23E.

Program was explained.

E: "This is my third time I am back, so that must prove I like it here. Every time I had a chance to come back I always did, but in the beginning I didn't have very good luck in holding my job. You associate with nice people here and I was satisfied in the department too but some of my girl friends didn't like it in the department and asked for transfers. I couldn't see why.

"When I first started I had trouble with my tonsils. The doctor wanted me to have them removed but my mother took me to our doctor and he didn't think it was necessary, so they let me work one month until I was laid off. They never bothered me to this day. I think my tonsils were a little swollen or something, and they only laid me off for a while and then sent for me again."

I: "Well, that was nice. Did you come back to the same department?"

E: "Yes, I came back and they put me on the same job I had been on. That was on the punch press but that was too hard for me and I was on that only about a month and a half and then [redacted] changed me to the mica job. I could do the work and got my rate all right but I got so much of it back."

I: "Back?"

E: "Yes, there was something wrong with the press and one day I got my whole day's work back to repair and when [redacted] came over and looked at the press and then brought the mechanic over and they found there was something wrong with it. I had to fix all my work over and then [redacted] changed me."

I: "Who was [redacted]?"

E: "That was our instructor we had down in the department."

I: "Did she change the girls?"

E: "Yes, any time there was any changing she did it. A girl couldn't do one job when she would give her another one. She put

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me on mica and I have been on it ever since. I don't think I would be on now if I was in the department. Maybe I would be laid off."

I: "Why do you think that?"

E: "Well, there are only 35 girls on the mica job now and I was one of the last ones to go on so I am sure they would take me off first."

I: "Did you always get along nicely on mica?"

E: "Yes, I did better than on the press."

"Today is my two-year anniversary. When Mr. Y. gave me my certificate he asked me if I liked my job and I told him there was nothing like working over here in the test room, and he laughed and said he was glad to hear that. I imagine if a girl wouldn't like her job she wouldn't stay. I don't think I would."

"So many people on the outside knock this place and I don't see why, but I think the people think the Western is too strict but they have so many people here they have to be."

I: "What do you think they find strict about the Western Electric?"

E: "They kick about ringing a clock. I had a hard time ringing the clock when I first started here. I would always forget. I would be here in plenty of time and would pass right by the clock and forget to ring and I would first think of it when I saw the clerk taking the clock cards out of the rack. It was hard for me to get used to that but I worked in different places and they decked me when I was late and I worked in a store and they didn't dock me but they didn't like me to come in late and they told me about it."

"I was glad when I got my two years service. I always used to think when I saw the girls getting their two and five-year certificates if I would stay here that long. I like to have a steady place to work, and in my two years I never missed one day of work. I am never late either and I like it because of the work."

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I: "Do you like the work you are doing?"

E: "Yes, I like it in the test room better than in the department."

I: "Why do you like it better?"

E: "I guess it is because it is something different. They are making a test experiment on our health by giving us a rest period. I was lucky to get in, not having much service. That's what Miss A. told me when they were picking me out, and I guess I was lucky. We have nice girls and get along fine together. Three of them are married and Miss A. is older than I am. There is one in there that you did not talk to and that is Mrs. B. She is ill for quite a while.

"When I came home and told my mother about the rest periods she laughed and said they had rest periods in Europe years ago and she said she never thought they would have them in American factories."

I: "Did your mother come from Europe?"

E: "Yes. I was born there too. I came here when I was a little tot. I was born in Austria. There were five children in our family. We didn't all come here together. My grandma brought me here. My parents came first."

I: "Are you the oldest of all the children?"

E: "Yes I am. Some day I am going to take a trip back. I would like to see the town that I was born in. We have some relations there yet. My mother would like to go too; she knows lots of people there.

"My brother works here. He works in Department Dash. Lately he is working Sundays and Saturday afternoons. He makes more money than I do but if he works just straight time I make more than he. My sister, that is next to me, stays home. She worked in a place and they got slack and she was laid off. After she is seventeen years old I am going to try and get her in here at the Western. I hope they will be a little busier then. My kid brother

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goes to high school, and the smallest one is still in grammar school."

I: "My! There is quite a family of you. Isn't there?"

E: "Yes. We hardly fit in our house. We live out here, about ten blocks. We have only three bedrooms and that isn't quite enough room. My mother wants to move out to Wheaton."

I: "Would that be far for you to come to work?"

E: "Not so bad. My father drives us to work anyway. He works way down on the south side. We will go wherever she wants to go although we all like our home where we are living. We have the sunshine in every room of the house. In the morning it comes right into my bedroom."

I: "Isn't that nice. Does your father come and get you in the evening or do you walk home?"

E: "When I just work till 5:00 I walk home but sometimes I ride. When I went to school I rode home but if I walked I could get home in a half hour."

I: "Did you go to school at the Hawthorne Evening Classes?"

E: "Yes. I learned to sew and I took the English classes too. In the sewing class I made two dresses, two skirts and one blouse."

I: "My, you did fine."

E: "I always did a little sewing at home but I never knew how to use a pattern, but over there they show you all those things. When I made dresses before I had to make them all the same. I just knew how to cut the neck and the sleeves but I couldn't make long sleeves. Now I can make my dresses the way I want to. They show you everything that you don't know there. They have nice teachers too."

"I didn't stay with my English class because I missed two

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nights on account of overtime and then I didn't know where to go to make them up. You are not supposed to come to the classes unless you make up the lessons you miss and I didn't know where to go to make them up, and besides, we were having so much overtime I thought I would wait till later. I will attend the English classes again. I had to drop my Health Course on account of that and I am going this year. I like to read books to improve myself."

I: "What kind of books do you read?"

E: "On sewing and English and I read books on etiquette too. I get the books from the library here. We can usually tell what kind of books to read."

I: "Do you have time to read in the evening?"

E: "Yes I do. Sometimes I read in the morning before I come to work. I always get up early because I like to shovel the snow off before anybody else does."

I: "Do your sisters and brothers like to shovel it off too?"

E: "Oh my brothers are the laziest things you ever saw. My brother works at the Western any time they want him to but he won't do a thing at home for us."

I: "Maybe he is tired when he gets home."

E: "No, he is just lazy. My mother and sisters like to shovel snow and so does my dad. I try to get up first and beat them to it."

I: "Well that is good exercise for you."

E: "I don't have to do much work at home now. My sister stays at home and helps my mother with all the work. My mother says she can get a job in the restaurant making noodles; she is doing so good. I don't know, maybe you don't like noodles but we do in our house. My father was sick and had to go on a diet so we had nothing but noodles, spinach and tomatoes. He couldn't eat anything greasy. But on Saturday if there is a lot of work I help. My

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1221-112-225.

mother says that is the only way we can get along is to all help.

"I give all my money to my mother. She says no decent girl would pay her board. I don't care. She gives me back \$3.50 for spending money and lets me save \$8.75 for myself. I am buying five shares of stock and she buys all my clothes for me."

I: "Well you are lucky."

E: "I have to buy my stockings out of my own spending money. I buy my lunches and sometimes I go to a show."

I: "Do you go out for your lunch?"

E: "I used to bring it but now I go to the cafeteria on the second floor and I like it better. You get rice and spaghetti, buns and coffee, and when I carried my lunch every day I would have the same thing always - liver sausage or ham. I got tired of that and I would much rather buy my lunch."

I: "I think your mother can manage the money better than you anyway. Don't you think so?"

E: "Oh yes. She buys me anything I want and when I get my shares paid up look what I will have! I will be a rich woman."

I: "Do you go out at noontime?"

E: "Sometimes I meet some of the girls and we take a walk. I have a girl friend up in Department Dash and I see her sometimes. In the summer time I come out more than any other time. There is a bunch of us that go to the Club dances Saturday nights, and another girl and I always go out and play tennis together over in the Albright Gym."

I: "Do you know how to play tennis?"

E: "Yes. My brother taught me how and they teach you more over in the classes. I was the only girl in our department that signed up for that. Most girls are not interested in the outdoors but I love that kind of sport."

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4-20057-2KB-205D.

1221-112-22B.

I: "Well, that is very good for you.....

"Is there anything else you would like to talk about?"

E: "No, I don't think so. I think I have told you everything
about myself and about our whole family."

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