

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Women in Labor Unions

Personal Experience

O H 1875

ELSIE HOLECKO

Interviewed

by

Erin Holmes

on

June 1, 1997

H This is an interview with Elsie Holecko for the Youngstown State University Oral History program, on Women and Labor Unions, by Erin Holmes, at the home of Charlotte Ingalls, on June 1, 1997 at 9:45 pm

Elsie, we are just going to start out the interview with some basic background questions I have down here that you grew up in Youngstown, correct?

EH. (EH will stand for Elsie Holecko) Yes

H And attended Ursuline High School Can you just give me some background about what it was like to grow up in Youngstown?

EH. Originally, I was born in New York I was born in New York City, and then we moved here from New York. I think I was in about second grade I attended Catholic school all of my life. I did go one year to New York with my dad, we were going to stay there, and then we moved back My mother died when I was in the eighth grade

I do not know, growing up in Youngstown was just, it was pretty pleasant It was just kind of rough, because my mother had died Everybody else had a mom My sister and I did not So we were very close to my mother's sister, who lived next door I do not know, we were just the average family, I suppose, minus the mom You know, my dad did all of the cooking and cleaning We learned to do the laundry and everything, we were very young So we had gangs of responsibility, you know, because my mother died I was in the eighth grade, my sister was in the fifth, so we always had a lot of responsibility Sometimes I think I was a little jealous because the other girls had people to do that for them -- a mom -- and we would have to stay home and do laundry and help clean, and do other things that other little girls did not have to do at the time But, other than that, we liked Youngstown I always did.

H What did your father do, as you were growing up? Where did he work?

EH He worked construction He originally was in restaurant business, but because of the hospital bills, he went into construction Now, I suppose people would have gone on welfare, to get those bills paid I think I was getting married, I was twenty-two, and my father was just paying off hospital bills from when I was in the eighth grade because, back then, you just paid your bills and kept working and paying them until they were paid My dad would never dream of having us on welfare

H Was your father involved in the unions in any way while he was working construction?

EH. Yeah, he belonged to the Cement Masons Union. I can remember going to union meetings, except they were closed to anyone but the members. And I can remember my sister and I sitting in the car and saying, "What do they do in there for so long? What is Daddy doing?" And we would be going to union meetings, sitting in the car, you know, waiting while our dad was in the union meeting.

H Did you get any of your fervor for unions from your father's activities?

EH Possibly. I can remember my dad talked about the unions a lot. They used to have picnics in the summer, have all the guys over from the crew, and they would talk about different things going on with the union. Plus, I always thought I was meant to be in the union since I am a Labor Day baby. [laughter] Well that is the way I always figured it, because I was born on Labor Day.

H After you graduated from high school, you went to college for a while. Can you tell me about your experiences going to college?

EH. I worked at a hospital prior to Packard, and I started out as an education major. In fact, I think I did have a scholarship for education. And then I wanted to be a dietitian, but at the time, there was not anyone who taught it around here. And then I got hired at Packard. Of course, I quit the hospital, because I made a lot more money working out at Packard than you did working at the Youngstown hospitals. Then they had what was called a tuition refund, where they paid for your schooling. So I went to school all during the daytime and I worked afternoon turn for years.

I think I went three years as a Biology major. I think I was Biology and Arts Science. I took meteorology and all, I do not know, astronomy and all the good things. One day I just decided that I would never get a job as a Biology major, and I switched to Nursing. I kind of started the whole thing all over again and then I graduated with an Associate Degree in Science. Then I had my license for registered nurse.

H How long did you work as a nurse before you worked at Packard?

EH I did not, I worked at the same time.

H Oh you did not?

EH I do not know how I did that. I was young, I suppose. I went to school all day and then they even gave me permission, when my classes ran late to like 4:00 or 4:30, to come in to work late two or three days a week. And then I worked all night to like 12:00 or 12:30, and then I just got back up the morning and went to school. In fact, the last year I was pregnant with my son. I took state boards, I

was very large and my husband had to come and sit with me for two days in case I went into labor. Which I did have my son a few weeks after I graduated, after state boards. It was kind of interesting.

But I was very fortunate because General Motors, Packard, paid for the majority of my education and they did offer me a job one time working in our health department, like our medical -- if someone gets injured in the plant, which I do not believe they do now. You had to work rotating shifts. I was breast feeding my son, and there was not anything I was going to do to disrupt my son. I had lost one before and there was not anything I was going to do, you know, to interfere with what I was doing with my son, so I just stayed in the shop and I never did go to work in the medical department.

H Do you just have one son? One child?

EH. Yes

H What was it like trying to work in a factory while you are raising a child?

EH Well, it never bothered me too much. My husband and I worked different shifts for a long time. He worked day turn and I stayed on afternoon, when he was working. I have always appreciated my job because he lost his job when Sheet & Tube closed, and he worked at Weine and they reorganized and he lost his job, and he has had several other jobs in between. And in between he got very well educated. You know, he graduated from Youngstown and then he went to school for computers for a couple years. He has his engineering degree.

It did not bother me because we worked separate shifts. I always had one of us with him all the time. And I worked afternoons for a very long time, which was not too bad, until he started school. After my son started school, that was when I took a day turn job because that way, while he was at school, I was at work, and then I could come home when he was home in the evening. It seemed to work out pretty good, but it is a sacrifice when you have to work both shifts, unless you have a lot of money and you want to pay somebody to be with him, you know, that forty hours a week. And then you have to worry about that they are going to be with your son maybe more than you are, and that your son is going to pick up a lot of their habits where you want him to be what you him to be. I should not say that, but you want to be the main force, you know in forming your child's beliefs in the way they act and compared to a stranger. So that is why we went to the separate shifts until he went to school.

H Your son just recently graduated from college, right? Where did he go to college?

EH Right. He went to William and Mary in Virginia and he graduated Phi Beta

Kappa Maybe I can find his picture (looking for picture), but you cannot see his picture on tape, but he is a cutey That is my baby He graduated Phi Beta Kappa, Cum Laude He took all the, all the classes for engineering and all the classes for medical school, the MCAT's [Medical College Admission Test], and he is going to go for graduate work at Clemson for Bio-Medical Engineering. And right now he is just traveling around Europe, backpacking it, and he went to see his grandmother over in Portugal. These are pictures of my baby, they are three years old

H Oh, my. Very nice looking

EH That is my cutey That is my baby And he is spoiled He is a good kid, so I do not care He was Valedictorian from Cardinal Mooney, also He is a good kid, smart kid

H. This sheet says that you have also attended classes at the University of Michigan and at Ohio State in Labor Studies?

EH Right Correct

H How did you manage to do that?

EH Well, as you know, General Motors has a tuition refund program So Ohio University, all the schools and all the classes that are listed on there were through tuition refund, and as long as you go to the classes and you get your certificate So I went to Ohio University, I do not know, probably three or four years; one week programs The classes were excellent I mean, one time you had to write a union newspaper One year we printed out a paper for everybody attending the school We did an interview class where we did an interview of the different people that were there at the school, and we made like a little advertisement for the school I cannot even think There was basic classes in communications and labor history and labor law

The school at Ohio State was with the AFL-CIO [American Federation of Labor - Congress of Industrial Organizations] and that was through Ohio State And they were similar type classes, all based on different aspects of union We have a midwest school for women coming up in Michigan and we have Kenion College for a week A summer school coming up the third week in July They will give you union excusal forms so you do not have to use your vacation, and the school is paid And some of the schools include in their tuition the food Like at Ohio University, it was included in the tuition because they wanted all the students to get together, to eat together, so that you could talk to people, you could talk to steel workers, you know, communication workers, service workers That way everybody could mingle during different meal times

Our Women's Committee at work, you know, we have people go. And there is a help and safety school. You could go to almost any school that you want because, it being tuition refund, all it does is cost you your wages. You know, you can get tuition refund on it, and you know we double up in the rooms. It is well worth the effort to go, and that is the only way you are going to learn, if you go to school and learn.

H This says that you hold a labor general classification. What is that?

EH Labor generals are, well we are basically the cleaning people. We clean the offices. We clean the restrooms. We have a crew that cleans outside, you know, like the lawn mowing, the snow. We do the snow removal. We clean the big machinery. We clean the truck wells. We clean the oil pits. We clean up after the tradesmen, you know. We sweep up the concrete. I have run a jackhammer. I have run the outside snow removal equipment. We do everything.

If you have your own regular assignment, you know, some people do offices everyday, restrooms everyday, satellites, which are cafeterias, everyday. We have people that work outside everyday doing that outside crew. Any overtime, you know, they could ask anybody to do snow removal when the snow flies. On overtime you could just about do anything. You could do weed wacking in the summer, snow removal in the winter. You have to be trained to do all of it. We get a lot of training for that job. You have to have your X rays, every two years, and you have to have your respirator test every year. They keep us up on the cleaning classes and your blood spill programs and your confined space. There is another one besides. When you tie off your altitude, I forget what they call that right now. We have to go to a certain amount of classes that are required by the state every year that we have to attend in that group of workers.

H: I have a whole list of things that you are involved with here in the union, so I will just kind of go down through the list that you have given me. If you think of anything else, then you can add to it also. You have been involved with the Women's Committee for seven years. What is your role in the Women's Committee?

EH As far as the Women's Committee, I am just an active member. At the time I had acquired a few other positions, and I never volunteered to be chair person because it is a lot of work. My friend Susie is chair person right now. As far as being secretary, somebody else can do that. I am just very active. I work real close with these other ladies. I always have. I just work real close with them, getting everything done.

I do not know if they told you. We do Spring Fling. We used to have a

Christmas party I am sure the girls told you about all of that. Like today we did the telethon You know we do different functions We have raffles to raise money We give money away at Christmas usually to about four different organizations of our choice like the shelter home for women or the battered women I forget what the house is called in Warren There are four organizations. They are like our pet organizations [that] we give money to We raise money for that. That is basically what we do

H What is the roll of the Women's Committee in the union as a whole?

EH: Probably the biggest thing we do right now is the Spring Fling, which is a picnic given by 717. That is the biggest thing we do. We used to have a children's Christmas party, which got outrageous I mean, I think their last Christmas party ran us almost twenty thousand. You know, when you have eight-thousand, eighty-two hundred people, and they can all bring their children and grandchildren, and you buy gifts for them all, it just ran us an exorbitant amount of money We are trying to figure a way where we can have it again and just limit the amount of people [so that] we do not have people bringing their whole girl scout troop or the boy scouts or you know just maybe to a certain amount of people

Right now we do the Spring Fling, which takes up a lot of time Even though that is just once a year, in between we have raffles And we educate a lot of women I know we have an Education Committee that I am on, and they do a lot of educating But, the Women's Committee educates a lot of people, and that is where I started. The actual union involvement was being on the Women's Committee

Before that, I had done like what they call the corporate cup, which was the corporation and the union I do not know if you have ever heard of the corporate cup, but they have races with different corporations or companies of different sizes, like employees up to 100, up to 500, over 1000 And they have it in swimming and tug of war and walking and bicycling I think now they have added tennis and banner drawing And I have been active in that for years You get to know a lot of the people because you have a lot of your union people that are involved That is also mixed with the company.

Also, what I did for years was, I used to like to do the March of Dimes Like today we did the phone bank. I used to do the phone bank with March of Dimes a lot and help them with For years I did the March of Dimes walkathon and even helped them do the cooking I still do the Canfield Fair I made my son do the phone banks so he would learn what it was like to try to beg people for money for a good cause Women's Committee stays pretty active We send a lot of women that have never been involved a lot away to school (Interruption by coworker's son Voice continues in background )

H Next I have that Political Action Committee for six years

EH Political Action Committee is a committee that is involved in your normal politics. Sometimes you can be very active on that, and sometimes there is a lull, depending on when you have your elections. You know when you have the general elections you can get very active. What they try to do is get everybody that is on the committee to take at least one candidate's election and work on that. Now, when Senator Latell was running, I probably went down to his head quarters at least two days a week for a good six months, sometimes three days a week. You know, we did the crepe paper curtains, and we decorated the place, and we manned the phone bank, and we did the door to door canvassing. We did hand to hand cards, and we addressed envelopes because that was my candidate that year. You know that I worked on another judge's. Of course, the one judge lost. I worked on another judge's, and that one won. And we worked on, it was a governor's. Of course, he lost.

But, one time, we had all the candidates come in in the valley to the union hall, and we had like little hot dogs. We always give them hot dogs and pop, and they all had so many minutes to get up and give their little speech. It is pretty interesting. Sometimes we have to go to dinners, you know, and you get to meet the different candidates and hear their little speeches. It is a pretty interesting committee. You just have to stay up on politics and the issues. Right now, we kind of limit ourselves to Trumbull County, even though we have members from Mahoning County and Columbiana County, because we really do not have enough active members to follow everything. But that is one of those committees where you work a lot. For a half a year, you will be really busy, you know, like nine months. Then, after the elections, everything is kind of in a lull for a while. Like Sheriff Altier is only allowed so many fundraiser dinners. They are only allowed to do so many different fundraiser things. Each candidate themselves have limits according to the law. So that is kind of what that Political Action Committee does.

H You were also involved with the Education Committee for two years?

EH Only because we have had a new chairman for two years even though we do a lot of educating. The Women's Committee, we send more women out of town to be educated. (Interruption by coworker's grandchild. Voices continue in the background.)

I tell the girls even if you never become a steward, you will still be a really good union member because you are less likely to have any flack from management, if they know that you know the contract, if they know that you are a little bit better educated. A couple years ago, the President changed the chair of the Education Committee, and we got a very active chair of the Education Committee. I do not know if you had spoke to Mary Lou Dever, but she is very



active. When she took it over, she decided that she was going to educate a lot of young people. This last time we had thirty-three people go to the school of Michigan. I guess since Charlotte and Susan could not go, I was the old bubba of the bunch. They were all our younger seniority members, a lot of the younger men and women. And it was just great to see them because they were really excited, and they were really learning a lot.

We are trying to educate the membership, you know, as far as some of the things that Mary Lou writes. Right now we are working on a project where we are going to the Kent Archives and trying to do a history of our union. They have gangs of big boxes of books. But you have to sign in at the archives to look at all the old letters and transcripts and just like all kinds of memorabilia, all the newspapers, everything from years all the way back, way back in the 1950's, from our local. That is really interesting to go down and read some of that literature. We just went to Kent not too long ago to do that. There was about nine of us that went and spent about five hours there doing that.

H: Now, you had other union involvement, and these are some of the elected positions. You are an employee participation representative? I do not know.

EH: Let me see what I put down. Let me see it.

H: Sure go ahead.

EH: I was trying to go from when I first started. This was back, oh, this was a hundred years. Well, not really a hundred years ago, but this was one of the first things that I did, when they had employee involvement, when it first started that American businesses started listening to employees. Now my son is twenty-two. I think this was before my son was born. And they had the employee involvement groups, and one of the first things we did was, we got the employer to agree to let our people have radios in the shop. Then people were working with their backs to each other, and they turned the boards around so that at least if they were doing their work, they could look at each other and they could speak to each other instead of everybody looking at everybody's back. But, that was a long time ago. That is what that was. That was a long time ago.

H: And then you have worked with the housekeeping task force.

EH: There was a time that they were going to get rid of what they call the labor gang, the ones that I described to you, the labor generals. They were actually considering it. I think they consider every contract because they do not get any production from these people. So, they are always looking like ways to cut the budget. Well, if you do not see any parts, you think the people are not doing any production. So they are always looking at that as a place to kind of chop the

employment level

We had a housekeeping task force. I think I was on it probably a good four years or more. What we would do is we would meet every two weeks, and we would go over cost saving measures, oh dear, for the company. We were trying to save our jobs. The people had asked me to be on that. We had at the time, I know this sounds ridiculous, but we had thirty-three window cleaners and seventeen bowl cleaners at the company. I could not tell you how many different soaps. We went through, I think it was like five, six hundred different chemicals and tried to figure out who used them and what they were used for, and we tried to organize that. It took us four years [to get] down to less than a hundred chemicals. In fact, I think we got it down to like seventy-some chemicals. We had different salesmen come in, and they would show us, "Oh you know this is an acid bowl cleaner. This is a base. This will work on this. This will work on this, or you know this one is environmentally friendly. You know, or it is biodegradable. It is non-pollutant, and it is noncaustic. It does not burn if you spill it on you, and it still has the same cleaning properties as the other one. We went through the material safety data sheets, and they used to bring all the salesmen in through us.

And then, I do not know, we got a new superintendent, and he attended a meeting. He wanted to know what we did. Like one thing we did was we got these big barrels. We would put them by the door, and they would put salt in it so that when the people come we could get salt put out. There is always salt in the winter by the front doors, any of the doors, so that when they go there, there is salt available to put out so that people do not fall. But, that was a hard project, to try to get the barrels and then get them painted. Then you have to take them over here and get them labeled and get wheels put on them. That was quite a project.

We made chemical areas to keep all of our chemicals confined so that if somebody was working, we had areas that were in cages so that they could go there. They can get the chemicals and make sure that everything is marked. We were on that for about four years, and then we got a new superintendent. I should use his name. He came to one of the meetings. Then he wanted to know what we did, and we told him. He came to another meeting. We were going to give a presentation on what we did, and he did not show up. Then he dissolved the committee. I always felt that all of us, all of the union members that were there, that we were kind of kicked in the teeth on that. To this day, I am real sour about that.

There were also foremen that went to these meetings and union representatives, stewards. You might know them as stewards. We just call them union representatives, and then right at the time I was not a steward. So there were regular employees that went, one from every district and every plant, so that we had a good rounded input from different types of people. I always thought when that new superintendent came in, that he kind of did us dirty,

because I felt like they picked all our brains because we had people from the chemical department, too

There was not anybody, of everybody that I said, except the people that worked on the floor, that worked with these chemicals, that knew what all these chemicals were for. In fact, I did not know where all of them went, but the ones I did not know maybe Denny knew. "Oh, they use this over here." Or maybe Jeanie said, "Oh they use this over here." Because there were people that worked in all these different areas. Management would never ever have been able to do what they did. I mean, we had a list of chemicals. It was this thick. It was like seven, eight hundred chemicals. I do not mean chemicals in the plant. I just mean the labor gang, the cleaning products. At the time, I think they had something like nine different type bars of soap being ordered for different offices, and just to organize and get it all down to what we did. Then it seemed that after we did that, they kind of just kicked the committee in the teeth, and they said, "Well, we do not need you anymore." I am very sour about that, how they did everybody on that committee.

That committee is no more, but we were real active there for a long [time]. We even put out surveys to ask the people, "Well what do you think of this chemical, and this chemical?" And "What do you like best?" At the time, you know, when you are talking, you might have had your choice of about six or eight different window cleaners. So, every time you worked in a different person's area, there was so many different ones. So we tried to get it down to where we only had a couple. So we did a lot of surveying on that. We even for a few months there had a little newspaper that we were putting out called "Labor Panes." I do not think the company was real happy with our little newspaper. But, we had little curtains on the front of it with little things on the window sill, and we called it like labor panes. You know, like it was a window pane. But, that was the name of our little news paper, "Labor Panes."

H That is cute

EH But, when they dissolved the task committee, "Labor Panes" kind of went by the way side, too. If I am talking too long, tell me.

H Oh, that is okay. This also says that you were a union counselor. What is that?

EH I do not know if the other girls went through union counseling. That is something I have not been real active in because they meet in Trumbull County. I just do not know if I can add more meetings to what I am doing already. Our union pays the bill on this. I think it is only twenty-five dollars, and you can go in Mahoning or Trumbull County. You can become a union counselor. What they do is they take, I believe it is an eight week course, and you go one night a week.

I spent one night. It is like three hours, I believe. One night with the Red

Cross, one night at the Jewish Community Center, one night up at the Speech and Hearing Center. Every year it kind of changes. One night at the Salvation Army. They do the same thing at Trumbull County. They take you to different places in Trumbull County, and they give you a couple nights [that] you just spend it at one of these locations, or at a neutral location. They give you all the information available. If somebody is having a problem, mentally or physically or financially, you would know where to send them. You can go to the Red Cross. We went

One night we had a class at the Red Cross. The second half of the class was all on AIDS. We got a safer sex kit. They told us all about AIDS, and the thing is, it is not so much counseling where you actually do the counseling. But if somebody comes up to me and says, "Well, I am really having a problem with this," it is more that you are able to have a feel for the community that you live in, where you can give him a direction where you know. I cannot tell people per se, but this is who you need to get in touch with. Or I can call them, and I can give you the direction where you can go to get some help because there is help there for people financially, for people if they need to go to the Red Cross, if they need any mental help, for people who are handicapped. I cannot remember the other places we went because this was probably about five years ago already, six years or whatever, that I went to the union counseling class. But it is offered every year in both counties for any of our employees male or female that want to go.

They do a big coat drive once a year. We collect literally hundreds and hundreds of coats that are given out through, I think it is the Salvation Army, or Union Counselors give them out. That is another thing that Women's Committee does. We usually buy hats and scarves for the girls for Salvation Army every year at our Christmas party. We all bring in hats and gloves and mittens, and we buy those other things, too.

I can not remember the place in Warren for battered women. I have to think of the name of it. But we all bring in, you know, the things you collect in hotels, personal size. So when the women show up at that one battered home, it will come to me, that they will have their own personal things because sometimes they show up in the middle of the night in their pajamas with their kids. So they could have their own little razor and bars of soap and their little bottle of shampoo. So, we do that once a year, too.

That is what Union Counselors is. It is a pretty good organization, but the Trumbull County is very active compared to the Mahoning County Chapter. You know, they are a lot more active. They have a cute t-shirt. It says "Union Counselors Have Heart," and they have a big heart on it. It is a cute t-shirt that they have for them.

H The next thing you are involved in [is] CLUW, The Coalition of Labor Union Women

EH: Here is my CLUW pin right there. I am an alternate alternate, which enables me to go to the NEB's, which means I could sit on the National Executive Board as a member. CLUW is an organization of women from all the different unions throughout the country. I could not even begin to name the women. What I really love about CLUW, because it is very expensive, they have three NEB's a year, and they are all over the country. They have them in Atlanta, and they will have them in Florida. Then they will have them in San Diego, Buffalo, New York. They just move all over the country.

But every two years they have a convention, and they go over all of the by-laws. And they have women come from, I mean literally, all over the world. I went to one in Pittsburgh, and then they had one in San Francisco, and Puerto Rico, which I did not go to those two. Then the last one they had was in Dearborn, Michigan. So, that was pretty close. That was two years ago. It is usually in November. This year it is in Seattle. I guess, if I am going to try to be re-elected to the NEB, National Executive Board, I guess I have to see if I can find my way and my money all the way up to Seattle to go to that.

But the convention is wonderful. Oh Erin, I have to tell you. They have girls, I mean, from almost every country you can imagine, and a lot of them will wear their traditional clothing. They have one morning where they wear their traditional outfits of their country like traditional clothing. They always have them from Africa. They also have educational classes along with this. It is just not meetings. A couple of days before that, they have like classes that you can attend, and you can pick all of these different classes. They are like two hours long. So, you can go to like eight different things a day, two before lunch and two after. The one girl got up. I will never forget it. She was talking about [how] they were trying to organize and some of these mines, wherever they work in Africa, and her girlfriend had gotten shot. I guess they have to be really secretive about it. It is really interesting because you get to meet women from just all over, not just this country. A lot of them do not speak English. It is really a nice organization.

Gloria Johnson is from IUE, and she is the President of CLUW. I believe she sits on a couple different committees with President Bill Clinton. I had the honor at the convention in Dearborn. I was asked to present her, when she got re-elected, with those long three foot long stem roses and to say something at the microphone. So, I was just on cloud nine because it was such an honor. There were probably eight hundred women in the audience, and I got to get up and give a speech about Gloria, who I love dearly. If you ever heard her speak, she is just dynamite. She is just dynamite woman speaker for women's rights.

We have a CLUW chapter here in town. My CLUW meeting was canceled today, which was great because I was not able to make it because of the telethon. They meet once a month, and they rotate between three or four different locals. We do not have a large membership right now that attends the meetings. I should put it like that. We have a lot of people that join, and the cost

is like twenty five a year and five dollars for the local membership. It is really good on a resume. But we do not get a lot that attend the meetings. The girls have them on a Sunday afternoon, and it is hard to be giving up Sunday afternoons. But, it is a good organization. I like it.

I love when we do the conventions. I just loved it because when you come back, you feel so great. This last one I went to, Tipper Gore was there, and I felt so great. She came by, and she stopped. She looked at me, and I shook her hand. She says, "Have we not talked before?" I met her when Bill Clinton was in town, and I was doing like handicaps. I went to give Bill Clinton a proud to be IUE pin, and when I did, the people behind me pushed me. I almost dumped this poor man that was in this wheel chair on Bill Clinton. It was like, oh my God. It was like the most horrible thing that ever happened. All these security people came over because this poor guy almost fell out of his wheel chair on Mr. Clinton. So then, they kind of pushed him along. So, Tipper came down. So, I gave her both of the pins. It was really something. But, she remembered that. When I saw her again I said, "You remember when I almost dumped a wheel chair on Bill Clinton?" She said "Oh yeah, I remember that." Whether she did or not, I do not know. But, it sure made me feel good, you know.

H That is funny.

EH But, that happened at the CLUW convention. I really like CLUW. I just love Gloria. If you ever get a chance, and if you are ever invited to a CLUW convention, the women, Linda Chevez, all the women that get up to speak, are just dynamic speakers. When you get done listening them, you just want to go out, and you want to organize everybody. You want to have equal rights for all. You want women to get equal pay, and you want to stop sexual discrimination. You really want to go out. It is just really energizing. It is just really great. You got me really worked up because I really enjoyed that. That was like a highlight for me.

H [laughter] I have just a few more before we get to the other questions. This says, "Elected to and attend district seven IUE meetings to represent the membership."

EH I will tell you what. District Seven is the district that we belong to. I hope I get this right. I believe it is five states: Ohio, West Virginia, Tennessee. I am trying to think of the other ones. Oh boy, right now I cannot remember. My stuff is in the car. I will have to give you the rest of that. I am blank. Virginia, maybe Atlanta? Anyway there are five states. It is called District Seven. There is like District One, District Two, District Seven.

What they do is they have a meeting. They used to have them four times

a year. We cut them down to three because of finances this year, because money is really tight with the international. We are having them only two this year. When you go there, the people are there from all the different states, and they go over the bylaws. The most exciting thing that I like is a representative from every union that is there. I think at this last one I was at there was like sixty-seven different locals. And everybody has someone get up, and they either give an oral report of what is going on at their local or a written report. But the majority of them will get up, and they will give an oral report as to what is going on. The work situation, whether they have hired people, what benefits they are getting on their contract, if they are working on their contract, if they believe a strike is eminent, if the company is giving them a bad time, if people are being fired, if the company is doing any hiring, if they have got any increases in the benefit package. It is really interesting to hear because we have, you know, IUE. I do not know if the other girls' international Union of (tape stops)

H. Okay you can go ahead. Side Two.

EH Okay, I do not know if you got that all [about] the IUE. But, it is really interesting to listen to furniture workers. You know we have people. Like in our IUE, we have people that make ketchup. We have the people that make clocks. We have the soap people. Where are the soap people from? I better not say Southern Ohio because I cannot remember which city right now. But we have the soap people. I should have brought all of my stuff in because then I would have all this stuff. You know I am really tired.

We have people that make soap, which is really interesting. Clocks. Our people make the whirley birds on the top of the police car. We have people that make transformers. We have people that make our GE products. GE is a huge part of the IUE organization. They make televisions. My one girlfriend works at a place called Philip's Electronics. They make the Magnavox televisions there. I think she said Magnavox, GE's, Magnavox, certain things that are made in the United States.

When you go to the District Seven, this last one was in Florida. There were twenty-two people that ran, and we only sent four. By our constitution, we can send eight. But, we usually only send four because of the cost factor. It is difficult to get elected to some of them because a lot of people want to go because, of course, that is an all expenses paid -- all but your food because you are going to represent the membership. It is really interesting.

Now [at] this one we went to, we had a four hour class on the Family Leave Act, which is very important right now, and that is a big plus. It is quite a confusing act. It was passed, and there was quite a few things in there that could be adjusted to benefit the people where there are some loopholes in there. We had that class for four hours, and we also had a financial seminar for four hours which a lot of financial officers, including myself, attended. So, they

always put some educational classes along with the District Seven meetings

Then if there is any amendments to the constitution, you know, that have to be presented, they are always presented. It is interesting. I love going because I have friends in all the different states and women and men that make furniture and do all kinds of different light bulbs and all different kinds of things. You get to know that there are a lot of people that have a lot of problems a lot worse than what we have at our local. You get to hear how they solve some of their problems and how some of their Women's Committees are elected. Our's are all appointed. All these positions, a lot of them that I have talked about already, are appointed, not elected. A couple of those were elected.

When you go to the District Seven, you get a wide understanding and a real appreciation of what the union does for people. I do not know when I tell you enough about something.

H You do not have it on here, but I see that you are wearing a button that says you are a treasurer?

EH: I should have that on there. That is like a biggie.

H Is it? I do not see it.

EH: It has got to be on there somewhere. I put that on.

H Maybe it is on the front. Oh, here it is. It is on the front. Yes.

EH I have about five of these. We go to political action. I have Women's Committee. I have Political Action. I have Treasurer. I have Education.

H So what are you? Are you the Treasurer of the Union?

EH I am an officer.

H You are an officer of the union, and that is pretty rare for a women to hold an office in the union?

EH Yes, except for our secretaries. Miss Charlotte is recording secretary, and we did have one women at one time go very high up. We had a girl named Barbara Gleason that was the Vice President. I think we had Marian Cook. We had Marty Morn, Charlotte, myself. You know, we have President, Vice President, Financial Secretary, Treasurer, Recording Secretary, Floor Guard, and then we have nine Members at Large on our executive board. We have had women through the years on our executive board, but I believe I am the first women treasurer because we have not had that many women that have been officers,



except for Vice President and Recording Secretary, that I can remember

H Wow, so that is quite a feat to be elected

EH I worked real hard, Erin I think I campaigned everyday for at least a month or five weeks I got off work, I went and changed clothes, I ate in the car, and I campaigned from the afternoon until midnight probably four or five weeks, every single day, and sometimes on the weekend because we have a continuous run that works Saturday and Sundays So, I also campaigned on the weekend I begged I worked real hard I had two men running against me, and that was quite an accomplishment I do not know if I will be able to do that again But, I did it once, so if anything else, I am very pleased I worked real hard.

H Good. That is really something We will start to get into these questions here

EH Oh, one more thing you did not ask me I am also an elected representative

H Oh are you?

EH I am a steward

H Oh, okay I did not see that on here either

EH That might be in the back or not Did I put that down?

H I do not think you did Yeah, I do not see it, unless that is the alternate committee

EH That is it, yeah

H Alternate committee woman

EH I had a chance When I first went in, I went in on an opening I was not going to take it, and the administration at the time said, "Well, are you going to let this other fellow have it who thinks he just wants to have it for super seniority? Why do you not take it?" "Oh, I do not know " You know Well, I took it, and I think I was a year and a half under the one fellow He moved on to another job, and I had a chance to move up I had a very confusing district, and he never missed work So, I never got to function So, I did not get to know the district

So then, I got another fellow to take it because I was not very self confident that I could do it The area that I represent is probably I would say fifty-five percent, maybe sixty percent men It is rough when four semi-drivers walk in

a room or eight truck drivers, and they are all three times your size. You know at first it can be a little bit intimidating until you know that you know what you are doing. So, I had another gentleman take it, and he liked the job. Now this last time, unfortunately, he did not get reelected, and I stayed on as alternate. So, I did not challenge to become a full time steward. I work everyday because people know where I am on my job, and they are always asking questions. Always, always, always. But, that is a very interesting job because that has to do with the contract. I tell all the women all the time, "Do you want to really get involved?" All these committees are fine. They are what I call safe ground. It is like you are in the bleachers because you are safe. You want to get out in the boxing ring, become a steward. Then, you are going to butt nose on nose with management. You are going to get into the nitty gritty of what it is all about, and you are going to really get out there and fight for the people being a steward.

H Okay. Let us see. What are we going to get down to? Okay, what are some of the important issues facing women in your union?

EH In my particular place? I would say equality. Equality. I think the women right now like to see women representatives. They like to see the women active. There was a huge amount of people hired back [in] 1965, 1966, 1967, and 1968, right in that time frame. And a lot of them are like the same situation I am where their children are getting all grown up. They did not have a lot of time before because they were raising families. Now I believe these women want to see other women active. They want to see women involved and a lot them are getting involved. They want equality. They want women in there to be assured that they are going to be treated equally. That is what I would say would be the main thing.

H What is the relationship between women in the union?

EH In the union? Oh boy, oh boy. It is rough. It is rough. Women do not always support women and, for a place that has been predominantly women workers, there is more men there now. But years ago, I always would have thought that there would have been more women in power. But, that is not true. You have to be very careful not to offend the women. I mean, this sounds kind of silly, but you have to be careful not to dress too nice or wear too nice jewelry to work. If you want to be in the union, now you can be regular. But, if you are looking for their support sometimes, you have to be very careful because a lot of women will not support other women. It is kind of sad.

Now I know I get an awful lot of support from the women, and I try to treat them as fair as I can. But, there are a lot of women who are still to this day very caddy, and I think that is one of the reasons why a lot of women have not been able to get ahead. We had an opportunity to make Barbara President when she

was Vice President, but Barbara was known for, like off the record, not supporting a lot of women. So, a lot of women did not support her because we could have put a woman in the Presidency at that local at one time, but the women just would not support her because she did not support women.

I think you have to be very careful because it has changed a little bit now, compared to the way it has been in the past, because I think women are getting to the point where they are themselves getting more mature. They are sitting back and saying, "I cannot look at the way this one looks or how this one dresses because, if I do not support her, I am going to have a man there who is going to treat us like we are the underdogs. So, let us at least put a woman in there who at least might support us out here on the floor." Am I making sense to you?

H Yes, that makes sense.

EH I think now women are supporting the women more than they ever have in the past.

H How are the younger women in the factory supporting other women?

EH We have some of them on the Women's Committee and the Education Committee. They are much different than our generation was at that age. The younger women now, I do not see them having a problem supporting other women. We had a young lady that won an election the other night, and after the telethon we went out to eat. And the girl found out about it, and she went, "Yes, yes, yes!" She was just so excited that this other girl won this election. There is a difference with the younger ones now from when we were raised. I do not know how Charlotte and Susan felt about it. But from our generation, the support was not there for women.

Fifteen years or more ago, I had tried to get involved to be a union steward by asking the committeeman. Well, we will call them stewards or representatives. I asked, "Can I be an alternate alternate," which is not an elected position. If the alternate cannot fill in, you have to have a fill in. Say I would be off, and the other person would be off. We need somebody to do the job. "Oh, no, no." And they would go over there and get their friend Mr. So and so. Whereas now, you can see a lot more women are involved. The young girls now, they support women a lot more because of the breakdown in the distance of the sexes. When we were growing up, the equality was way far away compared to the way it is now. It still is not, and I do not know if it ever will be equal. But it is much closer than it was thirty years ago, that is for sure, because of the laws that have been enacted. I do not think that is because the companies or the men wanted to do that. It is because they have no choice. They have no choice. We are there, and we are not going anywhere.

H: How was the relationship between the women and the men in the union?

EH: Now or before?

H: Both

EH: Before, I believe it was very distant. It was very distant. There was even a rumor on the Women's Committee. Do you know why the rumor has it why we have a committee? [It] is because it was formed to keep women who wanted to be active out of the role of being representatives, shop stewards. "Well, let us give them a Women's Committee and give them something to do." Not that we bake cookies and serve coffee, "but they can have Christmas parties, and they can have the summer picnic. They can do this and all these other little frilly things to keep the men over here on their safe ground." Now, that is the rumor. I do not know if that is true.

H: Thirty years ago, that is quite possible.

EH: That is the way we were always told why we ended up having the Women's Committee. So if ever you had any women that were loud mouths, and you felt they were going to be a threat to the men. Believe me, the men still feel that there are certain women that are a threat to them. I just passed up a really good position that I felt that I could have. I had eight men tell that I would be nominated for this position to run for it. I just found out last week. Someone called me and said, "You know why you were not nominated? Because if you would have been nominated, they thought you would have won, and they did not want you as their boss." I was devastated. I was so devastated because these men all support me. The trouble is, as much as they support me, everyone of them, and I love them all. They all vote for me. They all support me because they know whatever they tell does not go any further. They are only going to support you to a certain level.

That is where I feel the equality has not gotten to yet with the men. They are still men, and they are only going to support women to a certain level until they feel that you are a threat or you may bypass them. Then they are going to say, "Wow. What are we doing here? We have gone far enough." They might not say that, but is going to stop there. That is exactly what happens. They will go so far when it comes to women, but after that, they are not going to support you anymore. I do not know how in the past, you would have even got as far as we have gotten now. But now they do support women further than what they did in the past, but they are still only going to go so far. That is the way I see it. That is with any of the women, and I have as much respect, I believe, out there with the men as any of the women do.

They are still only going to support you for so far, and then they are going

to cut back. Men are never ever, ever, ever going to put women in a position that is going to go over them because of the way they have been brought up and the way society is. Men do not like taking orders from a woman. I do not care if she is far superior to them intellectually. It is still men do not like to take orders from women. It is still very difficult. When I became a steward, I was one time kicked out of a union office by one of the reps. I was told to get off the phone and not to use it. They did not care who I was. It was their shift. "You might think you are a rep, but you are nothing to us, out." Until some of the other reps had to set them straight. "You do not say this to her." Of course, now this happened probably five years ago. I would say about, yeah, four and a half anyway, four and a half, five years ago. And since then, of course, I have been elected an officer. So, they cannot say that to me anymore. At least I hope they would not.

It is really rough even being a woman steward, being out there because the men are still very chauvinistic. They still only tell you what they want you to know, and you have to do a lot of prying to find out what you need to know about certain things because men are just going to be men.

H What are the major road blocks that women are faced with in the union?

EH Well, I would say that the domineering factor of, you know, that they are women. That is, you know, what I was just talking about. The hardest thing is getting the men's support. Sometimes some of the guys will be talking about some of my fellow female friends, and I have to defend them. I will say, "Well, wait a minute, that is not true. This is not the way. You do not know her."

There are a lot of men that think that women, not that we should run bare foot and pregnant, but that we should just be home cooking and cleaning. They have a real rough time with what we do. I am very fortunate. I have a good husband who knows that I am very active. He is very involved on his job, and he lets me do what I have to do. There are a lot of men that tell me, "You would not be doing this if you were my wife because you would be doing what you are supposed to be doing." Which is whatever they think that their wife is supposed to be doing, which obviously is not having a life of her own. Taking care of him is a full time job, which he needs a mommy, not a wife. That is just the way I kind of see it. I am pretty vocal on that, and sometimes the men get really a little bit disgusted with me because I will tell them, "Oh, you want a mommy. You do not want a wife. You want somebody to baby you and take care of you." I guess a lot of men, like my son, might like somebody like that. I do not know.

But, I just never [have] done that with my husband. I do not think that he expects me to, and I do not know if I could ever do that. It would just be like a babysitter or a mommy to somebody. It might be different if you do not work and if want to stay home, or if that is your career in life is just to take care of your husband. But, if you are interested in something else, I think in this day and age,

whether it be you know spending all of your time taking care of your children or if you do volunteer work or if you are involved with the union or even if you are out, you know you have to have time to do your crafts or if you want to go painting or if you go bicycling, whatever. I think men now have got to know that women have to have their free time. It is not like years ago where women just did everything around the house, and that is all they were supposed to do. I think people have to mature enough that the woman has to have her time to do whatever she wants to do in her life.

They still have to have all their time together. You know, go out to dinner or like we do church. We do church every Sunday, like this morning, and breakfast after church. We still do our fish on Friday, different things like that. A woman has to be able to give the man time to go golfing and do what he wants to do. We have a couple young women that their husbands are very upset with them because they are involved with the union. And their husband has said, "Well, either it is me or the union." And the women are torn, and they say "Well, I want to be involved in the union. But, my husband does not understand, and he does not want me to be involved in the union." But, I think all men have to understand what the woman has to do. If that is what she wants to be involved in, whether it is the school or the church or their children or crafts, they have to let her do that. It has come of age that the woman has to have other outlets besides just the home. I would think for her sanity. At least in my book that is the way I see it.

H. You mentioned before that you went to a special session on a family leave act at the convention. How is your union addressing problems with family leave?

EH At the time they are doing a wonderful job. I sent, I think, three different people in our area. Well, I will use this one man in particular, and he is retired now. This was within the last year. His wife is very sick, and the one year he almost had problems, disciplinary problems, because of his absenteeism. I believe she was getting Alzheimer's fairly bad, and she was having some physical problems besides that that she had to go for treatments and to the doctor. He was on day turn. He was leaving early or coming in late, and he ran out of vacation. I told him what he had to do to go to personnel and to get family leave. He went down there, and he had no problem whatsoever getting it. He was immensely grateful that he was able to get that. We had two other people. One was a family, a husband, who worked there, and their daughter was having some problems. She had to go out of state to have some therapy, and they split the time up, which worked real good for them. But, as far as I know, our company is being really, really decent with the people on that. I have not had any complaints from anybody that has gone to try to get the family leave.

H. That is really good.

EH. I am real pleased with that so far.

H We have about fifteen minutes left I am trying to decide what to ask next

EH I guess I am talking a little too much on some things If you need to just go faster, just let me know

H How would you encourage women to become more active in your union?

EH If they have never been active? The first thing they have to start doing is going to the monthly union meetings They are on a Sunday evening It is difficult to give up a Sunday evening It always has been, and it always will be Even as an officer, there are a lot of days, especially when the sun is shining, and you have the old grill going, and you are eating in a rush to go to a union meeting That is the main thing that they have to do They start going, listening They can write a letter, a request to be appointed to any of the activities that we have. There are a lot of things that go on where the women can get involved a little bit at a time.

Like I said, union counselors is open to anybody If they want to help, they can help the union counselors with the coat drive There are so many things that we do that they can get involved in to start up becoming active If they are real serious, they can get themselves going to one of these schools where they can learn a little bit about the contract, how to be a steward, how to communicate, a little bit about labor history, labor law, how the different unions function You just take it from there Even if they never become a union steward, they can be very good union members by just going to union meetings and going to some schools or learning that contract

H Okay. We are going to kind of switch gears here a little bit

EH Okay

H Have you ever had to file any grievances with the union?

EH File them myself or have someone file them?

H Yeah, you yourself

EH As a steward, I filed grievances for other people

H No filing them for you yourself.

EH Oh yes, I have filed a lot of grievances Because when I became a steward, I

knew just how to write them up because I had filed so many, I knew the language I charge management, and I demand this. Okay, they messed up here, and they have to make it right. What did you want to know, what I filed for?

H Well, first I have a question. Another lady I have interviewed mentioned that sometimes management deliberately makes it difficult for people to learn how to file grievances. Is that true? Does that happen?

EH As far as them writing it up?

H Yeah

EH You mean as being a steward?

H I do not know. She just said that management tries to make the language difficult sometimes, and they do not educate people on how to go about filing grievances. So, they sometimes do not do that when maybe they should.

EH Okay, now I am not sure whether you mean a steward filing them because they are not educated on how to write them up, or whether you mean a person has a problem.

H I think a person who has a problem. They do not know how to go through the process because they are not educated about it.

EH All right, here is the thing. If they have a problem, they are supposed to put in a call for a union rep. Then, you have to keep checking because, although it is supposed to be put in a timely manner, this past week, I had two people that put in union calls, and neither one of their supervisors put them in. The one gentleman told the supervisor twice to put him in. It was still not in my book to pick the guy up, that he was having a problem. Yeah, you put in a call for a union steward, a union representative. We will call them representatives because that is what I always call them.

H Okay, that is fine.

EH It is a union representative's job to do the actual grievance writing. The employee does not do that in our shop. The union representative does. As far as being educated how to write it, when I worked under the prior administration, we did have a class at the union hall, which was like a two or four hour class. We were told, "I charge management with violation of, you know, paragraph such and such of the nation contract, or page such and such of the local contract, paragraph or section or whatever it applied to. And I demand, you know, that



this be, you know, the violation be stopped at once or this person, you know, be paid this or be made whole," or whatever you need, if it is money or if it is just a violation without a money grievance. I also learned, myself, I learned from my former subchairman. He showed me how, and the first committeeman I worked under showed me how.

Plus, I have taken a lot of classes. You know, when they give you these little books, you know how to be a shop steward, how to write a grievance, they do not go over everything in class. You have to take those home and put them by your television, on the night stand or something and pick it up, and you have to read it. You have to study some of that on your own to learn how to do it. The language in the contract can be quite confusing. If you have any questions, there is always somebody that is at the zone committeeman level or the subchairman.

I have a very, very good rapport with the other representatives. If I am unsure about something, I do not hesitate to call one of the, quote, "Men," that has been doing it for twenty three years because believe me, they are experts at what they do. I know a lot of people say, "Oh they have been in office so long. Let us get them out," because they make it appear so easy and simple only because they have done it for so many years. There is barely a situation they have not come across. So when you are starting new, I would go to the other representatives, you know, to learn how to write it as a representative myself. But the person on the floor, they just basically have to call in their representative, and then he has got to figure out what the violations are. But sometimes there could be two or three violations, and you have to sit down and decide which one you think you could win on in grievance, that you want to actually make the grievance in violation of which paragraphs.

H We do not really have time to go through all the grievances that you have filed, but maybe you can think of one in particular that had a large impact, off the top of your head.

EH. That I filed myself?

H Yeah.

EH. Well, we used to have something called Jamco out there, which meant all house-keeping jobs would be covered hour for hour. We kind of lost that in one of the contracts. So now, the only thing that kind of saves our jobs is we have OSHEA, which says that the restrooms must be covered. But we used to do a lot of filing on that, and I have been on this job for probably for about twelve years. If somebody was off, and they would not cover an office or something, my goodness, with the computer paper and the paper that we get out of the offices, the next day the person would come in, and they would just be swamped when

they could not even get the bags out of the trash can. We used to file a lot on those, and those were money grievances.

I filed so many grievances over different things. A lot of them were violations for things to be stopped in the work place, and a lot of them were money grievances. A lot of the grievances that are filed are money grievances for working people out of line of equalization or on the wrong jobs or something like that.

H Okay. Did any of those grievances ever have to do with any kind of sexual harassment?

EH I had one foreman one time that about put me in my grave. He drove me crazy. He used to yell at me across the room, "Elsie this, Elsie that," and he would scream and yell at me. I could not do all of the work he wanted. I used to try to get a three minute break with this one guy who had a little three minute thing in his watch. We could not sit for three minutes. I did not have my coat off, and he was telling me what to do before I had my coat off in the morning. I finally got away from him because he yelled at me one day because a girl was out of wires. This is how long ago it was. My son had just started school at the time. He yelled at me that this girl had been out of wire for like over an hour, and I had only been on the clock for like six or seven minutes. And he got in such a rage he took a swing at me. So, I immediately walked into a superintendent's office, and I said, "You know, your foreman out there just swung at me, was yelling at me that this girl was out of work for like an hour and a half, and I have only been here for seven minutes, something like that."

But as a result, I got moved to another job the next day, and he went to some kind of social training. Which by the way, now he is a general foreman. He put me through hell for three years. But, my husband was out of work at the time, and it was a very big overtime department. And I desperately needed to work in an area where they worked a lot of overtime. So, he could never, ever, ever, do that again to any woman under the laws that have been passed today.

H Oh, no.

EH And nobody as long as I live will ever treat me like that again, because I went through hell. When I left that area, the girl that took my job got a helper who was made that classification. There were two people leaving that job when I left. I still even have all of my notes of everything that I did. But, there were two people on that job after I left. And I was young and in shape. Actually that was quite a few years ago. I think my son might have still been in preschool at the time. That will never, ever happen to me again.

H No, it will not.

EH: That was the worst thing that I ever encountered in all my years at Packard. And, to this day, that guy makes me shudder when I think of what I went through with him.

H: Okay. Well we have about five minutes. So, I just have two more quick questions. What would you say has been your most positive experience as a woman being in your union?

EH: My most positive? I would say being elected an officer. I was elected, not this past September, the September before. It has probably taken me a year to realize that I am an officer. How that kind of dawned on me is, when I am walking down the hall or I go in on another shift or I have something to do in the shop, and people that I absolutely do not know from the man on the moon will say, "Hello, Elsie, How are you today?" or "Good evening" or, "How are things going, Elsie?", and I realize you know my name is on, you know, ten thousand calendars that we printed up. There is my name, Treasurer Elsie B. Holecko, and I think, oh my God, you are an officer. Of course they know you. You know, I met somebody the other day for the first time. He said, "I know you. I voted for you. I voted for you. I like you." And I have no idea who he was. It had taken me quite a while to realize that I am one of seven or eight officers out of eight thousand people. You know, we only have so many officers. So, I think that is a great privilege that the membership has given me, and I truly thank them for it because I think that is just fantastic. They are really a great work force. I really love my people.

H: The very last thing then. This is your story. Is there anything that you want to say that will be put into history for people to know about you, your involvement, just anything that you would like to say?

EH: I guess the main thing that I would like to tell everybody is, do not be afraid to try to do something because I believe you can make a change. I think, just myself, that I have made a change. I have got a lot of women involved, and the women do look at me positively. I try to present to them a very positive person because I am very happy everyday I wake. So, I am usually very happy, which I think the people really like that. I would like to tell people not to be afraid to try something I did not think when I was running for treasurer that, as an officer, I could make it, and I just worked very hard. This is what was told to me which I thought was kind of cute. I was told this because we were having a lot of trouble over this past defeated contract. Somebody asked me, "It is very lonely at the top, is it not, Elsie?" And I said, "Yes, there are days when it is very lonely at the top." And they said, "Always remember this. It is always better to have been lonely at the top than to have been crowded at the bottom." So, I take that with a grain of salt because there are days when I have some wonderful friends that I work with.

It has been a nice experience, and it is just a phase in life. Someday I am sure I will move on when I retire to something different. On the whole, it has been a pleasant phase because at least I could sit back and say, "Well, one time I was an officer of a great organization." I love what I am doing, and I love the people. I work hard for them. But if anybody, if there are any young ones, they cannot be afraid to try. I had ran a few times before I won. I had ran for other positions. I had ran for executive board a couple of times and never made it before I had tried to be an officer. So, you always do not win the first time. You just have to keep trying to do what you think you want to do because maybe someday you will just make it. I do not know if I told you what you wanted to hear.

H Yeah. That is wonderful. I think we are about to run out of tape here. Thank you very much for taking the time so late in the evening.

EH Oh you are welcome, honey.

End of Interview