

HM1 – Helen Mott-Mench, “Coming to Bridgeport”

Time-Line: Decade V, Labor History Time Line, 1942, "War Industries in Bridgeport"

Transcript: pp. 3-5

I: Why did the two of you come to Bridgeport? What brought you here?

HM: Well, because it was a town that you couldn't get no work. And we thought we would better ourselves if my husband was going to go to New York. He lost his way and ended up in Bridgeport.
[laughs]

I: Where was your first full-time job? Was it at G.E.?

HM: Yes. I never worked anywhere else.

I: How did you get the job?

HM: Well, I stood in line and they pointed us out, and they'd call us in and we had to take an aptitude test and all -- what our schooling was, what we knew about activities and whatnot -- what-have-you. I passed the test, so I was hired.

I: What was your position? What were you hired to do?

HM: Yes. He called me in the office one day and he asked me if I wanted to be a leader because I was always doing things for the girls and fellows. They'd go to the ladies, and I'd take over their position and make sure that the guns were in progress all the time.

I: So the line wouldn't stop?

HM: Yes. So, he asked me if I'd become a leader. I said, "Well, I'll

tell you something. I want you to call everybody that's working on the line and let them ask me if I want to be a leader. Because I don't want to have any friction," because in this job there was a lot of friction near different people. So he called me in and he had all the group around me and he said, "I want to make Helen a leader. Are you in favor." Oh, everyone said, "Oh, yes, sure. She helps us a lot." [laughs] So I became a leader.