

## Oral History Interview with Barbara Hanks

### Oral History Interview with Barbara Hanks

Hanks recalls the plant's closing. She remembers her disappointment, the concerns of other employees (especially older ones), and the dissolution of bonds of friendship.

#### Audio

#### File:

**Duration:** 5:15

#### Transcript:

#### Patrick Huber

Do you remember the day that they announced that they were going to close the factory? Do you remember where you were at?

#### Barbara Hanks

Well, they got us all together I think down in the shipping room. They was telling all about, you know, we're not--. Cause they have a better plant in Hickory. See, I was going to go to Hickory. We was going to move down there, and I was going to start work there but they weren't going to do me right so I said, "No." They was gonna cut my pay and stuff, and I was like, "Wait a minute, I'm moving." Nay, forget it. And they was just telling us that, you know, Hickory had a newer plant, and that we wasn't making enough money to keep the plant open. But we'd all heard it. We knew what was going on. It was still a kind of a shock, though.

#### Patrick Huber

Do you remember how you felt when you found out?

#### Barbara Hanks

Yeah, well, kind of disappointed, you know. After you've been working there for so long you hate thinking, well, you got to go out looking for another job, meet new people, learn a new thing, you know. Yeah, I hated it. I was near the last one to leave.

#### Patrick Huber

Were you?

#### Barbara Hanks

Yeah. Me and a few others, you know, we hung in there as long as we could. [Laughter]

#### Patrick Huber

How did they go about shutting down the plant?

#### Barbara Hanks

Like downstairs went before upstairs, like when they finished running it, that last piece. That last piece of furniture we run, too, I think they took a picture of our last piece of furniture that we run. When that last piece come by me-- and then, you know, we was there cleaning up. Like I said, we had called it bone yard where we put furniture. We had to get all that up. Just stuff, just furniture around. Maybe a piece of furniture without a drawer or whatever. We had to try to find a drawer to fit it. So that's why we was there longer, cause upstairs, you know, getting some of that furniture out. Yeah, but downstairs went first.

#### Patrick Huber

What was it like around the plant or what was like in rub and pack after they announced that they were closing? Did you see any difference in there?

**Barbara Hanks**

Yeah, everybody was talking about it, especially the older ones were wondering what they were going to do, you know, since they are so much older. Like when you're younger, you know, you can get a job usually, and the older ones they didn't know what they was gonna do. A lot of them, about their insurance were upset. They just been there so many years, I mean, you could really tell it on them. Some of them was glad, and you had some, "Well, good. We can draw unemployment for a while and stuff." Most everybody, you know--cause after you've been there and we was all like a family. I really felt bad about the older ones. That's what you heard mostly, "What am I going to do? Where am I going to find a job?" But, I think, most of them have, the ones that I've talked to, and I'm glad about that. It was really rough on them, cause they said, "That's all I know is furniture." It ain't many furniture companies around, not around Mebane.

**Patrick Huber**

Do you remember what your last day was like? Do you remember when it was?

**Barbara Hanks**

Yeah. March the 26th was my last day. I knew it was my last day. Yeah, well, like I say, it wasn't but a handful there. I really didn't do much of nothing. My uncle, he was there a long time, and then afterwards he would come and tell me, he'd say, "You need to go up there and look." Cause the difference, cause they was taking everything out. It was so empty. I never went back after I left. I never went back in there.

**Patrick Huber**

Did you tell people good-bye?

**Barbara Hanks**

Oh, yeah. Oh, you mean--?

**Patrick Huber**

On your very last day that you were there?

**Barbara Hanks**

Like I said, it was a handful. But when everybody else was leaving cause different ones would leave at different times. And, oh, yeah, we would give each other addresses and phone numbers and try to keep in touch. Yeah, it was bad. I mean, you know, you're sad because half of them you won't never see again, and some you might in passing.

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