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Interview with John Pope

RCA Heritage Program

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[START OF TRANSCRIPT]

[0:00:02] Male Speaker 1: My name is John Pope. I joined RCA May 15th, 1950. I answered an ad in the newspaper for a production supervisor. So I was hired on as a production supervisor in the Home Instrument division, electronic component. Components for a TV or radio, etcetera. My first job as supervisor was on the night shift, about 60, 70 people winding what they call deflection coils that run around the neck of the tube, a TV tube. The winding operation and also we used to press the coils to form and so forth. I started night shift. It was an experience as far as people working for me. But they were... the people the workers were very good. It was an incentive. I supposed to make the rate, so things were involved as far as making the rate everyday and so forth. I thought that we had a good association with people. I can express something about some of those people who work there. It was all new to me.

[0:01:33] The women on their lunch hour, maybe they had a half hour lunch hour and they stayed in their position. They set up that position with food, and everyone is invited including the supervisors. Also there were several parties at night time. At Murray's, that was a bar that was near the racetrack circle years ago. So the people were very good workers and if you treated them fairly... they were good to their neighbor. Matter of fact at Christmas time, I was there this one Christmas, the first Christmas, and one of the people - I forget which one it was one of the girls - brought a case of beer for me as a Christmas present. I don't know how they got it in there. And the other thing was in that period of time that I thought was very interesting is I was only... was vacation came out. They usually shut down for two weeks. I wasn't fond of vacation because I was just hired. They gave me a job out in 24 Building in building ferrites for the two weeks. That was very good for me because I really needed the work at the time. That was the components division, and I learned a lot there.

[0:03:04] There was a lot of interaction between... well that's not the end of the components because after the first year they transferred me to the transformer department. I had a background in transformers. I worked with my father developing a transform electrical coil winding business and transformers. I was in charge of redress and laminating of the power transformers. The signal winding of it and the primary came up later while there was another section.

The people there, particularly the group leader, Marie Carr, actually the group leader, she was excellent. We became kind of friends. She enjoys the park. I went to visit her with my family, I had a young family. At that time, I think it was four children down the shore, so it was nice. Another thing about Maria and the people who worked for me, when the twins were born in 1953, they got everybody together and they gave me two \$25 war bonds for the twins.

[0:04:28] Male Speaker 2: Who gave that to you?

[0:04:30] Male Speaker 1: I believe everybody who worked for me.

[0:04:32] Male Speaker 2: Okay.

[0:04:33] Male Speaker 1: They got together and chipped in. I never forgot that. The kids kept them for years. We got along as a family. Particularly I formed a baseball team, softball with the guys in that department. We played in the RCA softball league. We had two shop stewards there Joe Simpson and Bill Jenkins, and both of them played on our team. One time I remember being invited by Joe to stop by the Union hall after work just to talk. We never talked work, maybe talk baseball and so forth. Joe was my pitcher. He was a little wild at times. I used to catch, when I played softball I used to catch. It was very rewarding and everybody got along. I got to know a lot of people and I thought it was a really good family atmosphere. Around that time there was the Victor AA Association. They had parties at different times, functions and so forth through the years. There was another place that we get together and talk.

[0:06:04] Male Speaker 2: Twice you used the term family.

[0:06:06] Male Speaker 1: Yeah.

[0:06:07] Male Speaker 2: Are you suggesting that there was an RCA family?

[0:06:14] Male Speaker 1: Yeah, it was an RCA family. In fact the papers called it an RCA family in the newspaper I think, you know? It's what they did. In that time, it was like a family, right? They tried to treat everybody nicely, even negotiations with the Union; even when they had to give notices to people, right? A line supervisor's job goes so far in reference to the people who's working for him, because if someone doesn't make the rate and continues to not, there is a formal way of doing it. You write a written record of notice and what goes down on the record. The third written notice is out of your hands, right? Then someone else decides about it. Upper management, upper Union management decides what to do about this problem you know? Whatever the problem was, production problem or something else with relation to an operator.

[0:07:15]

I learned one thing, one of the people who was managing at the time, I think his name was Al Laker. He was my manager. I remember him and I talking one time and he was talking about dealing with union stewards. He was like, "John, you have to remember they're just like you. They're managing their people, their Union people, so you have to show them the same respect." I think that goes a long way in dealing with Union/management relations. That was the components division, I worked there for five years. They were going to go to, Ohio, Findlay Ohio, they built a new plant. They were going to Ohio because they couldn't make any money because Union rates were going up. We were losing money. So they started up this new plant in Findlay. It was kind of enticing. They wanted me to go out there and I said, "No, I don't." I didn't want to go out there because if I saw the new plant, I might think it was a good thing to do. I wanted to keep the family together in this area.

[0:08:33]

At that time, I think we had four children. So I didn't go to Findlay. Al Laker, my boss at the time, he got me transferred to Moorestown in the radar business, and the radar business was just starting up. I got there in '55 The guy who was my friend was a foreman there. There was a lot of people from Camden started to work there, the supervisors and management people because the radar business was just starting up. I was in on the beginning of this new radar. Around that time, the first system was sent to Cape Canaveral for tracking satellites that were going to be shot. That also was a family-oriented in dealing with the stewards. Things were about the same thing as far as general people, except I had a lot less people working for you. Maybe you had ten people in a line building boxes, AIC 10 and G10, electronic communication boxes and so forth, and large cables interconnecting cables, et cetera. I had ten people rather than 50 people, and it wasn't an incentive. So you depend a lot on your supervisor, on your setup man, and your instructor, and your repair people and so forth. That was a little different.

[0:10:09]

I was doing okay on that, but there was an influx of supervisors that are coming in, and I could see that there wasn't much chance. I wanted to get going. I was there maybe a year or two. I called my old boss, Laker, I said, "Is there any opening?" He says, "Yeah, I have one down in Denver." So I says, "Okay." But he called my boss, my boss's boss Bill Butler, I guess to tell him. Next thing I know, they gave me a promotion I think about a year after or less. They asked me to go up to personnel and set up the training program for the wiremen and set up the reading blueprints and wiring and so forth. I did that and came back and forth for a while. I went back to the Systems area. They were shipping the systems out. I guess it was about different radar systems. I guess there were 15 cabinets and we integrate the chassis and all the cables and so forth. Went back there. Then I guess about '58, my boss, my boss's boss, Butler, took a job being the first manufacturing manager on a project, and this was the BMEWS project, ballistic missile early warning system.

[0:11:39]

He asked me to go up with him. I made the decision to go up because the next step up would be general foreman, right? For them it would be all the same stuff over again, but now a bigger.... This was something new. So I went up with Butler and we started up on a... I was involved in setting up instructions and writing programs, and then really got into working with engineering. That's where we really started working with engineering, the project engineer, design engineering. We worked with the sub-contractors that dealt with the sites. There was a site in Greenland that was having problems in there and they want me to go out there. I figured I don't want to travel through a thousand miles of ice to get there. So we had a radio system setup, and I had a fellow who worked for me who worked just directly with them on all their problems. That kind of stuff. Like I said, it was a couple of years.

[0:12:42]

A lot of new things came up. We were able to do the... they set up a big ball outside the Moorestown plant for the tracking radar. That was neat going up and my boss, he was pretty quick. He said to me one day, "You know, we ought to talk to personnel about the fact you don't have a lot of unions." You don't have company unions, you don't have outside unions, right? He didn't want any holdup for this project, so I thought that was interesting. Then I guess around '60, Art Malcarney was the vice president and he was very good. He had a good reputation, but also very tough. Bill was one of his boys or something. He called on people who knew how to get things done. He called on Bill to go to Hightstown; they were having a problem with a company called Sonotone. They were making the power cell for the Nimbus satellite. Bill went up, then he came back and he talked to me about it. He said what could be done and so forth.

[0:14:05]

So, we were assigned to go to Sonotone, Bill and I to work at Sonotone. We talked to people and he started working on bringing other people up at the place. Some kind of material problem, a guy up from Moorestown followed that. We made sure we got that and make sure we get this. I worked on the assembly for it. I started on the assembly for it. I was involved a lot. We used to get in there every morning before anybody. One day on the assembly floor, there was a problem where no one would work on Saturday in this particular area. The shop steward couldn't get them to work, the supervisor couldn't get them to work. So I said, "Do you mind if I talk to them?" I talk and I start waving the flag about how important the Nimbus program was, right? The space program. They worked.

[0:15:04] Male Speaker 2:

Cool.

[0:15:05] Male Speaker 1:

Then they caught up with us. We came in one day and the guard started escorting us to the president's office. We got there and he was a very nice gentleman. He said he appreciated everything we did. He said, "You're getting your work, but we're not getting anything else out of here, so you're going to have to leave."

[0:15:29] Male Speaker 2: Really?

[0:15:30] Male Speaker 1: Plus I think Bill wrote a letter to Malcarney and he copied the president. It wasn't too nice about Sonotone. So I think that sort of motivated it. We got back from Moorestown and I guess it was a week or so, Bill brings me in his office and has a big flip chart there. He starts telling me about it. He went up to Hightstown and he got this management problem. He had all the blocks up there. This guy does this and this guy does that, and he says, "We have to go up there and get it started," because they had these about eight satellite programs are not getting any production. He made schedules for me. It was more of a model shop operation. Engineering wasn't familiar with schedules. One of the first things built setup was a schedule, and I think Sternberg was the chief engineer. I think it was a SS1 or something, yeah, that was the name of the schedule.

[0:16:40] Then we went around and scheduled each engineering department based on the work they had in so force, in dealing with the management of each group, trying to get things set up. We did that and then wrote programs. I was put in charge to take over production control, production control coordination we named it, which evolved. Then they were assigned by project, to follow each project to make sure things happened on time, the right quality and cost level. We were quite successful in that. We had a big group of people just like I mentioned. At one point, I guess it was the third year I was there, for some reason they put me under the purchaser manager.

[0:17:39] I was under Bill Sticker, the plan manager. He was a very nice guy too. I was with him maybe a year or less and he pulled me over one day and he offered me a job. He wanted me to take over the electrical buying the job. He wasn't happy with the electrical buyer, and I didn't think too much of him either. I thought about it, but then what I thought was I had these people working for me that we told a number of times we told about the good system. Everybody loved us. So the engineering project, the engineering, everybody because we got the job done. I said well I'm not going to have some guy come here and mess this all up when we did all this work, so I told him no. Then I guess in the fifth year I decided I wanted to get back in the Camden area or even in Moorestown, I stayed in Moorestown, I lived in Moorestown. I was on the project called Red Eagle/ Red Fox.

[0:18:49] Male Speaker 2: Okay.

[0:18:50] Male Speaker 1: I think the man in charge was Osborne, and Butler was in charge, and Bill Sticker later came in. That was related to this secure program. One of the major things in that program was at that time, the multi-layer printed boards were just coming into existence. They what there a lot of problems. At that time, I guess it was all

single or double sided. That was holding up the production because it couldn't produce these boards fast enough. They had to set up another to satisfy the customer, the NSA. They set up the printed board facility in Moorestown, so that became part of what we were doing. That's in regard to the printed board problem. One thing I do remember while this was all going on, we still have once a week we had these great, big meetings. I remember the chief engineer, I think his name was Waters, I'm not sure. But anyhow, I remember him constantly talking about this problem, the multi-layer board, and the problem was there was one ohm resistance going through the hole. The problem turned out to be the speed of the drill drilling the hole, dragging epoxy through with it, right?

[0:20:18] Male Speaker 2: Mm-hmm.

[0:20:18] Male Speaker 1: Once they solved that problem, everything was kosher. I was working on that and then the chief financial officer on the project asked me to go out to Moorestown, to close out this board work because we're finishing up and he wanted to close out the cost, the budget. So I went out there and I work for a guy named Petrillo in the Moorestown project office. That was a decent experience. One thing I remember about that in my office I was next to an older gent who was a retired admiral. I was talking to him one day and he started talking about Malcarney, and evidently he was within the procurement part of the Navy when he was in the Navy, and he used to say how Malcarney was so well respected by the Navy that a handshake sealed the deal for a contract with the Navy, who he was dealing with. I think the early death of MalCarney kind of messed up Camden a bit.

[0:21:28] Also I think it had something to do with RCA, GE buying RCA, and Mal Carney would have never gave into that. But he died, I think he died in his 50s through leukemia. We stopped in to see Bill Steigert one day he was important staff and he said, "Hey, they're looking for somebody in a new program." He said, "Are you interested?" I said, "Yeah." It was P3C. I went on interview with a man named Al Hedler. I started working on P3C. I guess it was in the '68, because the first production was '69, I believe. They had gone through the model, they're building the prototypes and trying to get production up. That was in 13 building. The model shop, they were sort of the ones involved in everything then. Eventually we moved over to one building, into a manufacturing. Once you got into a production program, the manufacturing was slowly... production people came and took over. We're in 1- building and that was an interesting experience, because Al Keller lost his job and a fellow by the name of Al Capella who was actually a fabrication plant manager for years. I was impressed with how we was operating, but he died tragically in a car accident.

[0:23:19] I think a guy by the name of Ansler Adiie took over. Eventually, Rittenhouse. But anyhow, we got into production eventually. I used

to be there at night time from the very beginning. I called the engineers when there was a problem. We were getting something done by the HF, and he had assigned an engineer to do that. Had a new HF manager too, I think it was Natafella. I escorted the person who was at the radio, some clerk, at least 13 building at the time, and down the ramp to 17 building, into the pack and ship area, worried about it falling off the dolly because we're going down like we're on that rump it was bad like that between floors. So, that was the first shipment on the UHF7. UHF, the problem with the UH schedules was that I would talk about sets, but I think it was the major problem getting started up. But UHF, it was a transmitter, 46 states transmitter. Those transmitters were not doing good, they were always down. Bob Reese, you said you interviewed him, right?

[0:24:42] Male Speaker 2: Mm-hmm.

[0:24:43] Male Speaker 1: He came up eventually with a new transistors. The quality got much better. He came up with some transistors. We brought it down to a five states transmitter, which was no problem after that with that transmitter. Also then the HF was a transmitter problem. That was a 1,000 watt transmitter. I think the UHF was a 100 watts, a cooling system problem. The heat exchanger, they couldn't give all the heat exchanger. It didn't leak. That could be quite a problem. Talking about going outside and all that. I always believed. I never had anything to say. I always tried to keep the work inside. We had a good shop inside, like a board coil shop, and the... I forgot, the shop and so forth. The coil and transformer shop. I tried to keep inside because it's much easier to deal with as far as problems and so forth.

[0:25:45] We had a transmitter problem which was, I think, eventually solved. They got a better method of inspecting it.. But they used to, when it had holes and leaks leaking out, they used to put some liquor in there to flush it through to try to close it up. It didn't work too good. They came up with a brocking scope to do the inspection and find out where the holes were, then used that brocking scope to close up those holes. The job was kept in the fan shop and they did a very good job. A good thing about the fan shop in your own house is that if you had something you wanted to have built, you could take your prints over there and get an estimate right off the manager at that time, and know where you stand and what it can do. I guess one of the milestones at PH3C was the ten years of continuous production, that was '79. I said, "Well, we have to have a party for people who have been working all this time, right?" I ordered a cake for my tremulous father who was a baker in south Philly, what they call a... what's that called?

[0:27:01] Male Speaker 2: A sheet cake.

[0:27:02] Male Speaker 1: A sheet cake, right? A sheet cake, yes. I ordered a great big sheet cake. I went over with my secretary to pick it up and get it back. We

had the party and I went at a shop. The people really enjoyed it because they were a part of the success. One of the things that you find out from the line supervisor in the project is they really listen to the people who work for you, because a lot of them had good ideas on how to do something different. That's where the suggestion program is important. If someone had an idea, RCA had a suggestion program, you write it up and it would be evaluated. If it was used, then you got rewarded. You got money for that suggestion. But the people who built this stuff, the factory engineers probably say this all the time. The problem with engineers always in the factory, they feel with the supervisor and with the person building it, right? A lot of these people, you have to remember that we're sitting in this position building this thing every day, or parts of it or something.

[0:28:16]

So they're most familiar with that. As a supervisor, you have to understand that. You also have to understand who's good at it and who's not good at it. There's a couple of things to the program that I thought was unique. We had a UHF radio one time that they can't get a ship. It kept failing. It would pass production tests, QC tests, but fail in the deca test. They can't get a ship. What did they do? This is after months. I didn't want to throw it away, it's 50, \$60,000. So I came up with an idea, and I don't know whether it was me or Tony Harris, the quality guy. But we got together. I drove a pickup truck, and he got a rubber pad to put in the back of my panel to my truck, my pickup truck. Put the radio on it, stayed with it on the back, then I drove it over. I guess the front street with all those cobblestones that there are three blocks. Drove it back, took it inside, eventually it passed. After bouncing it around a little bit. I remember that because that was a unique thing. The other thing is people relationship and working with people.

[0:29:50]

I had a hobby of propagating plants, and I was into... I was inspired at RCA when some secretary had a [bulba?] plant that I saw one day. I asked her what it was, she said a [bulba?] plant. Eventually she said "Do you want a piece of them?" I said, "Yeah." You can propagate this just by rooting it, by just putting it in water. That's how I started on house plants. My oldest son was in agriculture. I think he was in college at the Del Val University studying agriculture, so he was interested in helping me. So, I got started in that. I had a lot of house plants in various stages. At one time, I tried to see how many... maybe three different crops three different times of the year. I decided to bring a lot of these into the factory and get one to each factor person, right? They seemed to appreciate that. That worked out good. The other thing as far as project manager and trying to get things done is there's a gal who was a professor at Louisburg State who hired on at marketing at RCA. My boss asked me if it was okay if she went with me over to a factory meeting. This particular meeting, I forget what the problem was, but it was kind of a serious problem, production problem.

[0:31:16]

Everybody was there, all the manufacturing people and all the managing people, process engineering. Engineering was there because I'm engineering. My secretary had some red pencils. I put a red pennant at the top of it, cut out a red pennant just to show it was a hot thing. I put that in position before we came in. So we start discussing. We weren't getting anywhere. Nobody wanted to pick up to get it done, right? Whatever, I forget what it was. Eventually after a half hour of going and forth with the different management guys in the meeting I said, "Look all, I'm going to take care of this," or something like that. They're like, "Okay." "I'll make sure this happens." After that one of the managers, I think he was the process engineering manager, [Monree Scallager?], he came up and started talking about how they're going to take care of this.

[0:32:20]

What I want to mention is the gal said, "That's the first time you ever show anything like that. Nothing was happening, then all of a sudden somebody's going to do it." So I always remember that because... as time went by with RCA, the years go by get into the early 80s and things start changing. Top mgmt changing and so forth and things were getting a little but more stagnant, not a lot of challenges. When '86 came or '85. I decided I was going to retire in '86, so that would be 64. I was going to wait until 65, but then the story was GE was buying RCA, so I thought I'd get out before GE took over. That was one of the reasons. Plus my mother, I had her in a home and I wanted to spend more time with her.

[0:33:21] Male Speaker 2:

You said 65, you meant 85, right?

[0:33:24] Male Speaker 1:

No, my age.

[0:33:25] Male Speaker 2:

Oh, okay. Your age was 65.

[0:33:28] Male Speaker 1:

I planned on retiring at 65.

[0:33:30] Male Speaker 2:

Okay.

[0:33:31] Male Speaker 1:

That wasn't just GE was taking over. I wanted to leave, plus my mother, I wanted to spend more time with my mother. So I retired in '86, April the first of '86. One thing I forgot to mention, I think, is **[33:50 inaudible]**. I used to carpool with an engineering manager by the name of [Bob Holster?]. By the way, Bob was a mechanical engineer. We used to go out, his wife and my wife, we used to go to different places at night. But we carpooled for 15 years. He lived in Moorestown. He told me one time when his retirement, he told the people something I had said one day when we used to talk going to work and so forth and talking about work, "Get this done and that done," and so forth. He told me he told them - because he never forgot this - he told the people, he said how he got motivated going to work is talking with me. At the very end when we're going to go into the plant I would say to him, "Let's go get those bastards." I'm not meaning anything bad but, you know, let's get at them, right?

He said he never forgot that and it really motivated him. He told me he told this at his retirement.

[0:35:02] Male Speaker 2: He never did forget. He brought that up in his interview.

[0:35:05] Male Speaker 1: Did he? You interviewed Bob?

[0:35:07] Male Speaker 2: Yeah.

[0:35:08] Male Speaker 1: Oh, yeah Bob, I haven't seen him for a while. His wife, Pearl, she was excellent. She always--

[0:35:20] Male Speaker 2: Let's talk about that, let's talk about your coworkers. What were they like?

[0:35:26] Male Speaker 1: I talked about my start there, right? I came into night shift and one of the things I found out real fast, everything gets waived in a night shift. The supervisors did my job in the day time. It was an ex-Marine named Stalmer or [Palmer Stern?]. We get along good enough but I was getting tired of when I come in, and his boss always tell me about things that went wrong and it was out fault, right? What I did was I started coming in two hours early, and I started looking into everything. Pretty soon, all of these night shift problems started disappearing. That's one thing I learned real fast. The respect I had for the people working on the job was tremendous.

[0:36:29] There's a new guy, the young guy, they treated me real well, the people. What I found out is if you're firm and honest, and make sure they're doing their job, as long as you're honest and you treat them fairly, they'll respect you. You cannot compromise yourself as a supervisor early on. I've seen cases of that happening. In other words, you cannot favor one person on a line because he's good looking, or he's got a good personality and let them get away with bad work because that's going to catch up with you. You can't do that, and that's what I learned there.

[0:37:13] Male Speaker 2: It sounds like you did a fair amount of socializing with the people that you worked with.

[0:37:19] Male Speaker 1: Yes. I made a lot of good friends. Things like I can recall as an example now - I forget his occupation now - but he lived down somewhere, **[37:28 inaudible]** or something, and he pulled me onto a butcher down there, a farmer who butchered his own cows and calves. I went down there and got half a calf. Another guy, another fella, I think he had fowl, chickens. My youngest boy who's the one now here, he was very into animals and chickens and stuff. He was telling me about chicken feed, how he gets it for nothing. So I met him one day someplace on a railroad car, an open box car, and what he was doing was scraping out all this chicken feed that fell out of the bags and so forth. No, he had pigs. He was feeding his pigs. So,

I've been in the company of several other people, Marie Carl particularly. She loved the kids. I know where she lives. I visited her even after I retired. I visit her.

[0:38:38]

I used to send her Christmas cards and then visit her in her town. She got a place next to Seattle City. I forget the name for now, so I had the relationship there. I've got one story about components. I guess it was once a month, I don't think it was once a week, but we had management meeting at Murray's restaurant that used to be right across from City Hall. We had it on the second floor, they set up the second floor for us. So we had the dinner, and I always remember Sam McGee who was one of the engineers taking photos, I remember him because he put ketchup on everything including ice cream. But the big thing about that is after this dinner was over, we'd clear everything get out come the cards and dice. We would shoot craps against the wall and play cards on the tables. That was kind of big. I never was much a card player or crap, I think I never played crap, even when I was in the Navy. They used to do that aboard the ship too.

[0:39:58] Male Speaker 2:

What about your supervisors?

[0:40:02] Male Speaker 1:

Well I respect-wise, I learned a lot from Al Laker, who actually was a former cost control guy. A very mild mannered gentleman. Eddie [Coleman?], who was an experienced general foreman and transformer, so we were very... we went out together, Eddie Coleman and I. I had a lot of respect for them. Then I worked with Joe [Kutchey?] for a short time. He was a transformer manager too, I had respect for him. In the one year I worked in the Oaks, they called in the [Oaks?], the guy I worked for directly at night... well actually I don't think I ever worked for him at night time. But Wally Brooks was in charge of me. I'd see him, I had to call him. Pete [Bone?] would hang around. He was a head bar guy, he'd hang around at night. I guess you could say I worked for him. He did hang around a little bit. But I never had any problems with him.

[0:41:17]

I had a lot of respect for him. I went to Moorestown. I worked for a guy I didn't have a lot of respect for because I didn't think...well he wasn't that bad, but I just didn't think he was as good as the others. I think his name might have been Mullivan, I'm not sure. I worked for a guy of the name of Tucker, a lot of respect for him. Particularly Bill Butler when I worked for him. He knew a lot, and got you in trouble. He was tough. When I was on the big news program with him. One of his responsibilities was making up instructions which involved engineering, for engineering how to do this, this, that and the other thing. Most engineering managers weren't used to that, right? He was pretty rough, Bill. He'd go in there and set it up, then I'd have to go in and ask the guy to sign it, right? The manager. That was tough because he wasn't feeling too good about it. But I had a lot of respect for him. Let's see, I worked for him. Then I guess, when I went to **[42:31 inaudible]**, my work from Bill [Sticker?] came

in after Bill Butler left. I had a lot of respect for him. He was good. He was an experienced product guy, manufacturing guy.

[0:42:45] Male Speaker 2: Did you feel that they valued your work?

[0:42:51] Male Speaker 1: Well when I was first started there at Moorestown, I thought there was just too many guys coming in from Camden, too many people who were **[42:56 inaudible]** over me were from Camden. I was from a different part of Camden, components. Nobody knew me, right? So I didn't think there was a lot of chance for me. But I think they always respected what I did. I guess Bill Sticker in Heights Town was a lot of respect for. Then they brought in an old fabrication manager from the West Coast by the name of Carrot, Jack Carrot, big, tall, white-haired guy. Great guy. Put him in over me. He was the boss, right?

[0:43:45] He knew nothing about what we had been doing for all these years, and I guess I was kind of protective of what we developed. I didn't want anybody messing it up, right? **[44:00 inaudible]** finally I got a lot of respect for him. But he said one thing though one time that I don't forget. I don't remember exactly when it was, but he called me in the office and he was upset about something. I think it was he was upset about he was getting all these good vibes about what we do from all the project and engineering people. He's not part of it, right? So he said something like, "If it wasn't for your large family or you having five kids, that the was going to do something." I said to him something like, "Don't you ever say that to me again. Don't ever mention my family again," **[44:39 inaudible]**. After that everything got cleared up.

[0:44:46] Male Speaker 2: Good.

[0:44:46] Male Speaker 1: Became pals. After he retired he was still working, so I visited him up in New Hampshire. One time we were up in the Maine area. So, it all worked out good. One thing he said to me, and this guy didn't work for me. He Bulldog I invite, I think his name was McGonagall, he was supposed to be a materials manager. We had experienced material people working there, mgmt people. They brought him in and he didn't know a lot. His character, I never had any respect for him at all. I never had any confrontation with him, but I just didn't have any respect. He was eventually fired for not being able to do the job **[45:27 inaudible]**.

[0:45:29] Male Speaker 2: You had a brief encounter with Jack Shannon too, didn't you?

[0:45:33] Male Speaker 1: Oh yeah, Jack Shannon, yeah. Jack Shannon, when I was on the P3C, he came out one day. He came out all excited and said, "Hey, I want you to stop your work in the redress section because you're interfering with my program." He's all excited because we're getting our work done and he's not their **[46:00 inaudible]** is not getting it done, right? So I listen to him and he says, "I want you to go down

there and stop that," something like that. Stop that. You know how Shannon was like that. I went down and I went to the supervisor of the section down there in redress and I asked him how come and so forth.

[0:46:27]

What he said is only because Woody, who worked at P3C over at manufacturing, was doing a better follow-up job, and making sure they knew he wanted certain things at a certain time and all that. The guy that was working for a small terminal wasn't doing that. So I come back and told Shannon. Didn't say nothing, right? He understand. I didn't say anything about stopping or anything. I didn't stop nothing, right? But Shannon, I always had meetings with Shannon. I have respect for Shannon in a way because even though I think he was always trying to show that he was the boss, you know?

[0:47:07] Male Speaker 2:

Oh, yeah.

[0:47:09] Male Speaker 1:

There was a fella, another guy. He used to review every morning with one of us. When there was a certain problem or something, he waited to review it. So, I would be there every morning and I was prepared. Another guy, another manager in another section who was involved, I can't remember his name, he was always coming in late and not prepared. That didn't sit well with Shannon.

[0:47:35] Male Speaker 2:

No.

[0:47:36] Male Speaker 1:

He beat him up awful, you know? You had to respect people who only wanted people to do their jobs and get it done and be prepared and so forth, you know?

[0:47:52] Male Speaker 2:

You had a quite a career at RCA.

[0:47:54] Male Speaker 1:

Well I was very fortunate. I have to tell you I was fortunate because it came at the time I need a job.

[0:48:03] Male Speaker 2:

Oh, good.

[0:48:05] Male Speaker 1:

It was all by answering the ad in the paper, right? The reason why I need a job is because I had come out of the Navy and I went to... I had an industrial course in high school, so I had to make up the academic credits. So I went to Brown Prep and I studied very hard, hard enough that I made the honor roll and was about to be president and valedictorian. So I was doing all that to get into college. I was going to go to Villa Nova. At the same time, I had played on the baseball team. I was a baseball player, I played third base. My father had bought this diner, which he's never been in the business. I used to help out there, and then he decided it wasn't for him, and decided to start a business. He leaned on me to help him. So, I sort of gave up on the college and we started a coil and transformer business, electric coils and transformers in our basement in our house in Mayfair.

[0:49:09] Then he decided that we're going to do oil and burner transformers. Just when we got the first one up, business went down. About that time, I think around '48, '49, things were starting to go down. Then we built a vacuum, and infrared tube baking oven to bake the goods and stuff they **[49:41 inaudible]** a lot of stuff. Next door neighbor complained. We had to get out of there, so we moved to Kensington in a garage where a [coal?], we had a coal business. We had the second and third floor, no heat in the winter time.

[0:50:00] We went up to Oyster Bay, New York and bought a coil winding machine. Then we wound buying secondary coils. The primary coils we used up a **[50:11 inaudible]**, made the **[50:14 inaudible]** to wind the primaries and the heavy wires that we were building at the time, replace them with power distribution transformer coils. The guy had a business that all was cleaning out all the fluid, taking out all the windings out and making new windings. We were doing the windings. The way we were doing that is the heavy coil was about a quarter inch per square thick with cotton cover. The **[50:43 inaudible]**, a little foot pedal to start and stop and holding the wire, banging **[50:47 inaudible]**. So, that was kind of interesting. But back to the point where I didn't see that going well for me. As I said in the book I wrote, I fell in love. I decided my life was really to raising a family, not making a lot of money.

[0:51:11] Male Speaker 2: You went to work for RCA because you needed a job.

[0:51:15] Male Speaker 1: That's right.

[0:51:16] Male Speaker 2: You stayed there how many years?

[0:51:17] Male Speaker 1: 36.

[0:51:19] Male Speaker 2: Just because you needed a job?

[0:51:22] Male Speaker 1: Yeah.

[0:51:22] Male Speaker 2: Why'd you stay there that long?

[0:51:23] Male Speaker 1: Well, it was such a nice place to work and it was very fortunate I worked with people that treated... you were treated well once you gained a position. I worked up from, I would say, a supervisor to foreman, to administering one of the projects. Then manager, well I maintained that manager position until the end of my career.

[0:51:49] Male Speaker 2: If I asked you to sum up your career at RCA, would you tell me it was just a job?

[0:51:58] Male Speaker 1: Oh no, absolutely not.

[0:52:00] Male Speaker 2: What would you tell me?

[0:52:02] Male Speaker 1: It was the best experience of my life. I enjoyed every part of it. I can't think of anything I really didn't enjoy. It was never a job for me.

[0:52:18] Male Speaker 2: What was the best thing about working for RCA?

[0:52:22] Male Speaker 1: The best thing, I think, was the people that work for you, as far as being a management person. Having their respect, and be able to get things done. My big thing was getting things done. I stayed in that kind of area. For instance, I can never see myself... if I was offered a position as a vice-president, with my experience I couldn't see myself doing that because it wasn't the same thing as getting something done.

[0:52:53] Male Speaker 2: What was the worst thing about working for RCA?

[0:52:59] Male Speaker 1: I don't think there was any worse thing. I don't think. I have to say I enjoyed every part of it. I had different problems, got involved in different things. But, there was nothing I couldn't handle. I really enjoyed it. What it did for me was gave me my goal to raising a family. We raised five children, and we have 15 grandchildren.

[0:53:31] Male Speaker 2: John, is there any other recollections or stories or anything that we haven't covered?

[0:53:42] Male Speaker 1: I don't think so. It's just I appreciate this. I don't know whether I expressed myself about it enough, but I appreciate the opportunity.

[0:53:57] Male Speaker 2: Yeah, you did very well. I appreciate you letting us into your home so that we can come and do this interview.

[0:54:04] Male Speaker 1: Yeah.

[0:54:05] Male Speaker 2: We'll combine it with all the other interviews, and we'll end up with a history of RCA.

[0:54:10] Male Speaker 1: Yeah. Well, it was a very fine company. It's a shame, like I think I said in the... it's a shame that Mal Carney died because of what he did. He was really the guy to push, him and then the manufacturing people. He had come from manufacturing, and he was good. It's a shame because they got people eventually in there that didn't know what they were doing. They kind of know what they're doing.

[END OF TRANSCRIPT]