

Nuts and Bolts: Stories from New Britain Manufacturing  
Connecticut Humanities Ct at Work Project  
CCSU Students Keller Beck and Morgan Skovich  
Interview Subject: Helen Politz  
Factory subject worked at: Landers Frary and Clark  
Date of interview: February 12, 2014  
Location: 111 Lewis road, New Britain CT

#### Interviewing Helen Politz

"I worked above the assembly line. They were the ones who did piece work. To be frank, they didn't like me very much because when I found something wrong with an item an entire assembly line would be shut down" Helen Politz, 88, told us about her job at Landers Frary and Clark. It was hard to believe that anyone could dislike this sweet lady, I thought to myself as we sat in her quaint living room with a beautiful bouquet of pink flowers sitting in between us. Dressed in a green jumpsuit she sat on the couch and began to tell us the story about her life.

Just after high school, Helen began her job in the lab of Landers testing products like percolators, toasters and hair dryers. She was a dedicated employee who earned a mere \$18 a week on salary by investigating each piece of a product to make sure they were made perfectly for the public's use. Helen and the other 5 lab employees checked every little piece down to the packaging. The smallest little discrepancy would cause the entire assembly line to shut down. If the assembly line shut down, those workers did not receive any pay. Helen being one of two females who worked in the lab were not well liked by the staff of the assembly line for this reason. Helen held her head high and took a lot of pride in her work even if it meant getting a few ugly looks from the people who worked below her.

Years after Landers closed, Helen receives a \$23.85 pension every month. She lives comfortably in her home filled with gadgets and products she kept after testing them in the lab which is now just a loving distant memory for her.