

Nuts and Bolts: Stories from New Britain Manufacturing

Connecticut Humanities CT at Work Project

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Company: Fafnir

Who runs the world? Girls.

“A lot of the departments were exclusively women; some of them were exclusively men, but mostly exclusively women. Putting the bearings together, the finished product, yeah it was all women, no men did that. I never saw a man do that ever.”

When thinking of the role of women in the early days of factories you would think that the women wouldn't have a big contribution. But in reality they did. When I was interviewing Peter Morran, a veteran from the Vietnam War, who has been a loyal employee to Fafnir for 13 years, told us that indeed that women did have a big role in the factory, especially in the ball bearings department.

“I talked to a woman one time; she was inspecting the balls that go into the air craft. Under a black light she would roll around the bearings with a ruler to check for imperfections. So I asked the women how long she has been doing this, she said 40 years! Then I asked her, isn't it kind of tedious and boring? She said, oh no, we change sizes every now and then. She could spot anything. An imperfect ball was not going by her!”

Even though she was doing the same job for 30 years, she was a loyal and an important employee to Fafnir. She was a contribution to Fafnir and is one of the reasons why Fafnir was so successful back in their prime time.

