

Basic Detail Report

Title Interview with Irene M. Riley

Date 2006 November 30

Medium digitized audio cassette tape

Description Audio cassette tape of an interview with Irene M. Riley. She was interviewed on November 30, 2006 by Bruce M. Stave and Sondra Astor Stave at her home in West Hartford, Connecticut. Irene Riley was born in 1925 in Westfield, Massachusetts. Just before World War II, her family relocated to Maine. In 1947, she graduated from the University of New Hampshire. She worked in Boston for a few years before being awarded a fellowship at Syracuse University for a two-year graduate program to train future collegiate administrators. In 1954, Irene was hired at G. Fox & Company by Maurice Berins, the Personnel Director. She worked in the Training Department under Terry Falbo, the Training Director. She taught employees how to write sales slips and how to treat customers. Every new employee went through the Training Department for general orientation, then more specialized training depending on their position. The store hired many people at Christmas, so the training classes could be comprised of 50 or 60 people. She describes some of the specialized departments, such as the elevator staff and the telephone order operators. She talks about customer service and Beatrice Fox Auerbach's philosophy about her store. BFA held monthly lunches called the Family Circle, where she would meet with staff from various departments. Irene later became the Director of Youth Activities, where she ran the Centinel Hill Teen Club, which

Basic Detail Report

was for female high school students from across Greater Hartford. The goal of this outreach program was to bring customers into G. Fox. She was in this position for about a year before she became the Supervisor of Employment for Women. She describes the hiring process, especially for temporary employees at Christmastime. Irene left G. Fox in 1959, after she got married and was pregnant with her first child. She discusses friendship and how women might meet their significant other. She discusses how the department store eventually changed with the rise of discount stores and malls. After her children were grown, Irene went into real estate.

Dimensions Duration: 1 Hour, 33 Seconds