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Women in transition : role changes and learning experiences of dislocated women

Joy T. Margrave

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To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Joy T. Margrave entitled "Women in transition : role changes and learning experiences of dislocated women." I have examined the final electronic copy of this thesis for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science, with a major in Human Resource Development.

John Peters, Major Professor

We have read this thesis and recommend its acceptance:

Ralph G. Brockett, Roger M. Haskell

Accepted for the Council:

Carolyn R. Hodges

Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School

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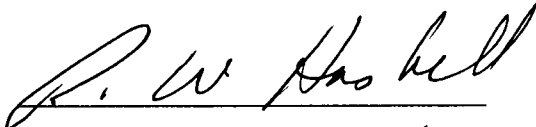
To the Graduate Council:


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John Peters, Major Professor

We have read this dissertation
and recommend its acceptance:





Accepted for the Council:



Associate Vice Chancellor and
Dean of the Graduate School

**WOMEN IN TRANSITION:
ROLE CHANGES AND LEARNING EXPERIENCES
OF DISLOCATED WOMEN**

A Thesis
Presented for the
Master of Science
Degree
The University of Tennessee

Joy Trapp Margrave
May 1995

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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my husband
Gary Margrave
for his encouragement and constant support

and

to my sons
William and Andrew
for their patience and love

Acknowledgements

There are many people to whom I am grateful for assistance and encouragement in the preparation of this thesis. I would like first to thank the women from Kayser Roth who spent their time with me and shared their thoughts and experiences. Without their generous assistance, there could have been no study.

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Donna Dutton not only transcribed the research interviews, but listened to my ideas. To her and to all those others who listened with interest, I wish to express my thanks. For her friendship, her many words of encouragement, and her midnight editing, I particularly want to express my appreciation to Connie Jordan Green.

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to explore the relationship between job dislocation and learning experiences among female textile workers. Learning experiences following dislocation were examined and relationships between learning experiences and role changes identified.

Qualitative methods of data collection and data analysis were used in the study. Ten women dislocated from the Kayser Roth Hosiery Mill in Harriman, Tennessee, were interviewed and a life story written for each. Changes in roles and learning experiences were identified for each individual. These changes were examined for themes relating to role changes and learning experiences.

Dislocation and subsequent retraining of dislocated workers were found to be related to both role changes and learning experiences. The study also found that relationships exist between learning experiences and role changes following dislocation.

This study supported the need for retraining of workers following their dislocation. Recommendations were also made for additional research regarding dislocated workers who have not participated in retraining.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

As the nineteenth and twentieth centuries brought manufacturing into the Appalachian area surrounding Knoxville, Tennessee, small communities became a haven for sewing factories and knitting mills. During the late 1980s and early 1990s, many rural textile jobs disappeared. Some of these jobs, lost in closures of three sewing factories and two knitting mills within fifty miles of Knoxville, took with them the livelihood, work identities, and social structures of three thousand women.

Few of these women had life experiences beyond high school other than the mill or the factory, yet many of them went on to participate in learning activities and retraining programs. Others, however, neither pursued further work nor participated in learning or retraining experiences. Still others sought re-employment in a similar industry.

According to criteria proposed by Merriam and Clark (1993), job loss does constitute a significant event because it is both personally experienced and subjectively valued by the individual affected. This study seeks to explore whether this event, dislocation, became the impetus for a learning experience among

former textile workers, and if so, what provoked learning?

Problem

Knowing how workers react to dislocation, and what factors may influence a significant learning experience to ensue, is important in managing the vast layoffs expected in a dynamic economy. As more and more jobs, especially textile jobs, are rerouted to other countries, the individuals who once held those jobs will be faced with dislocation and the resulting changes in economic, social and developmental conditions. Other jobs will be eliminated as continuing technological development creates obsolescence in certain occupations and demands for greater proficiency than that possessed by the current job holder in others.

Policy makers and program managers who are charged with creating alternative opportunities for retraining and learning experiences for the workers dislocated by these developments need supplementary knowledge in order to formulate the new directions for adult learning and development. More research into women's education should be conducted, specifically in areas of unemployment and preparing women to take on new roles,

particularly managerial and professional worker roles (Oduaran, p.228).

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to explore the relationship between job dislocation and learning experiences among female textile workers. Learning experiences following dislocation will be examined and any relationships between learning experiences and role changes identified.

Significance

Adult educators should be aware of the impact of job loss on learning and should be prepared to equip adults to seek growth opportunities following the job loss crisis. As national policy continues to focus on the retraining and readjustment of dislocated workers, such as through the proposed Reemployment Act of 1994, there is a need for knowledge of the impact of the dislocation event upon the worker. This study will contribute to that knowledge base.

Questions

Question #1: Do changes in life roles occur when a mid-life female is dislocated from a job due to a plant closure?

Question #2: Does dislocation from a job due to a textile plant closure trigger significant learning experiences?

Question #3: Are changes in roles related to learning experiences following dislocation?

Limitations of the Study

The researcher had prior experience with the population to be studied. During the dislocation and retraining following the mill closure, the researcher managed the service delivery system which facilitated retraining and counseling for the individuals involved. As the manager, however, the researcher came in contact with only a few of the interviewees during the service delivery project. In addition, five years have passed since the dislocation project, during which time the researcher had no contact with the subjects. The

researcher has taken great care to overcome any bias which may be implied from the prior association.

Generalization of the study is limited given its focus on a relatively small group of interviewees in a single community. Unlike most other dislocated workers in the population from which the study sample was taken, the interviewees had received intervention services at the time of dislocation and all save one underwent retraining.

Definitions

Dislocation - occurs when an individual experiences the loss of a job due to a layoff or plant closure and due to no fault of the individual. (Economic Dislocation and Worker Adjustment Assistance Act of 1989)

Mid-life Women - women who have passed the youthful stages of life but are not yet considered old. Although chronological age is not a sole determinant these women may be considered to be roughly between thirty (30) and sixty (60) years of age.

Significant learning experience - a significant learning experience is one in which the experience has subjective value to the individual

and results in expansion for the learner (Merriam and Clark, 1993).

CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A search for literature on adult education and dislocated workers reveals that these subjects have occupied theorists and researchers since the beginnings of adult education as a field, and interest in these related topics continues today. This review of literature begins with a discussion of two early points of view on the purpose of adult education and continues through a discussion of adult development implications, influences on adult learning, and research into ramifications of training and other services provided to dislocated workers.

Enlightenment versus Retraining

With regard to adult education for dislocated workers, the emphasis is most notably upon retraining for economic purposes. In assessing the implications of retraining within the context of adult education, one is drawn to the very roots of the field and into the basic differences between the teachings of Eduard Lindeman and Malcom Knowles. According to Fisher and Podeschi (1989), although both these noted educators sought to encourage continued learning among adults,

their purposes differed. Lindeman, often referred to as the "father of adult education," believed that the purpose of adult education was to enlighten the individual in order to bring about increased citizen participation in a democratic state. Knowles, often seen as symbolizing contemporary American adult education, saw the purpose of adult education as a means of helping adult learners keep abreast of change, of avoiding obsolescence, in a rapidly changing society (Fisher & Podeschi, 1989).

Lindeman was an idealist, a visionary who saw adult education as a field long before his teachings, and the teaching of others, brought the discipline to fruition. He possessed a strong social commitment, and he warned of over-specialization in the economy (Fisher & Podeschi, 1989). Knowles, however, felt the needs of the individual and the needs of the institution both could be fulfilled with complementary educational processes. He saw need and freedom to choose one's career and lifestyle to be a basic freedom of the individual that co-exists with the needs of economic institutions (Fisher & Podeschi, 1989).

Adult Development

In recent years, a number of adult development theories have been developed which included both stage theories and theories based upon life events (Bee, 1992). Giele, in her research regarding mid-life women (1982), claims events have more impact on the life course of women than do demographic characteristics. For example, the loss of a job often results in a negative life event fostering exaggerated personal problems and diminished self esteem (Labich, 1993). Moreover, unemployed women, especially mid-life women, often lack specific skills or specific goals for future employment (Giele, 1982). This lack of skills and goals points to the need for goal identification and retraining as features of adult education.

According to Caffarella and Olson (1993, p. 147), Merriam and Caffarella (1991) offer three major perspectives from which we may consider adult development in women. These are physical aging, psychological changes, and sociocultural factors. The loss of one's job due to the shutdown of a plant causes a major sociocultural change. In this event, the individual loses not only income but the culture to which he or she has been attached and her status as a job holder in the labor force (Labich, 1993). Even if

the individual re-enters the labor market almost immediately in a similar position in a similar plant, he or she loses the advantages of seniority and must adjust to a new work culture within the new plant where there is little or no acquaintance with the other workers (Labich, 1993).

Women tend to fulfill a number of roles and have the option of succeeding in two identities: one in relationships as wife and mother, and two, in the world of work (Rubin, 1989). Rubin, in her work on the various worlds in which women exist, further maintains that the earlier a woman enters the labor force, the earlier she learns work success skills and the greater her likelihood of dual success. The key thought here is that learning skills and concepts in multiple roles allows one more opportunities to experience achievement and success.

Learning Resources

Although learning is the process whereby an individual attains knowledge and makes decisions upon the use of that knowledge, learning does not occur in isolation. The helping resources include non-human resources (books and other literature), group resources (critique groups, self-help groups, etc.) and human

resources, particularly the adult educator (Merriam and Caffarella, 1991).

The adult educator plays a key role in the learning process and should provide both encouragement to the learner and helping resources to assist the learners with assessment of their strengths and weaknesses and to guide them to learning resources (Merriam & Caffarella, 1991). It is also important that the adult educator place a sufficient amount of trust in the learner to allow the learner to participate as a full partner in the learning process (Brockett & Hiemstra, 1991).

The significance of group resources also should be considered for the dislocated worker. Women, according to a study by Miller in 1976, experience greater development in a context of attachment and affiliation with others (Gilligan, 1982). Learner groups may afford opportunities for attachment leading to development (Lawler, 1992). Lawler points out that the individual must feel free to choose to participate. Thus, small study groups, as part of a larger class, incorporated the emotional effects of autonomy while adhering to the greater structure of the larger class. Whatever the purpose of the learning group, the likelihood of success for the individual is greater if the individual can attach herself to a smaller subgroup

within the larger class. According to Lawler, loyalty to the smaller group will ultimately result in loyalty to the larger group and pursuit of the collective interest. Groups of workers dislocated from the same facility may well provide these subgroups.

Significant Learning Experiences

Aslanian and Brickell (1980) found that life events can and do stimulate learning. When a life event causes changes, the individual may seek ways to manage the life style modifications, thus triggering a learning event. According to Aslanian and Brickell's findings (1980), 83 percent of adult learners participated in adult education as a response to a life change, either experienced or anticipated.

Merriam and Clark (1993) found that for a learning experience to be significant, a life event must personally affect the learner, resulting in expansion or transformation, and the experience must be subjectively valued by the learner. Their research was restricted to professional educators and/or advanced students in adult education. Nevertheless, their findings suggest more inquiry should be conducted into the influence of life experiences on learning within other adult groups.

According to Merriam and Clark (1993), the unwilling loss of a job can, and often does, produce a significant learning experience. Indeed, perspective transformation may occur as a result of the disorientation caused by the dilemma of job loss (Mezirow, 1990).

Dislocated Workers

There is a trend in America for highly qualified workers to find themselves, in mid-life, unemployed through corporate downsizing. The net result of this trend, according to Robert Lewis, is a growing population of individuals who find themselves in lower-paying and lower-status jobs (Lewis, 1994). In a survey taken by the American Association of Retired Persons, four of five respondents who found employment following dislocation found jobs at lower wages than before. One reason for this phenomenon is that experience which is important in one type of employment is not transferable to another type of employer (1994).

A study of females dislocated from the Levi Strauss plant in Maryville, Tennessee, in 1988 (Merrifield, Norris, and White, 1991), suggests that female dislocated workers become highly dependent upon public resources and should be provided with both

income supplementation and health care on an indefinite basis as a part of retraining programs. The women in the study received two years of income maintenance from various sources, and two or more years of retraining assistance under provisions of both the Job Training Partnership Act and the Trade Readjustment Act. The recommendation for more subsidy raises the question of whether too much additional assistance may constitute a sizable burden upon the public coffers, and may even render a negative return by building dependency upon the public system by these formerly independent women. Although the study did not address all the services utilized by this dislocated population, and therefore may have underestimated the financial and other services made available to the women, it did provide a perspective on perceptions by the dislocated workers. As perceptions are reality for the afflicted worker, these should be addressed. Of notable significance is the recommendation by the study that workers receive adequate individual counseling in order to better understand their options and their responsibilities when using public resources (1991).

Laswell (1994), in her study of dislocated workers, found that transformative learning does take place within the context of organized learning which the workers she studied pursued following dislocation.

Her findings suggest that a dislocated worker experiences a recursive process whereby he or she revisits a variety of explorative and learning reactions in a cyclical procedure beginning with confusion or disorientation which provokes self examination, followed by reflection, and finally exploration. These revisits continue but lessen in emotional intensity over time and eventually result in achieving new meaning. Laswell contrasts this cyclical process with Mezirow's stages of perspective transformation in which individuals move from disorientation to transformation (Mezirow, 1991).

One implication of the research on dislocated workers relates to how much and what kind of organized learning should follow dislocation. Training, is a major cost to industry and government. Economic justification for this expense is economic return on an investment. From this point of view, skilled training should be provided to dislocated workers sparingly, and only when both the demands of the labor market and the skills levels of the individual are carefully matched with adequate training resources available in the local area (Leigh, 1989).

The Texas Department of Community Affairs undertook a study in the 1980's to determine the impact and costs of providing dislocated workers with a

combination of skills training and job search assistance (Bloom, 1990). A demonstration program was designed and implemented to measure how these combinations of services would affect future earnings, employment, and Unemployment Insurance benefits. The findings were quite different for men and women. While women experienced a thirty-four percent gain in earnings (\$1,148 annual increase) following retraining and job search assistance services, the men showed a total annual gain in earnings following reemployment of only \$673, or half the gain for women (1990). White collar professionals benefitted more from retraining or targeted job search components than did poorly trained, high school drop outs, who actually experienced a negative impact. Bloom's study (1990) evidences the necessity of matching program services, both content and structure, to the characteristics of the group being targeted.

Much of the adjustment dislocated workers must face results from the changes in their immediate environs and their perceived value as workers. They are removed from a familiar work environment where their value, both in wages and status, is determined by proven or demonstrated skills and by longevity with the company in an internal labor pool. When they must compete in the external labor market, the competition

is often for entry level jobs with no value assessed for years of experience. This devalued status is difficult for both blue collar and white collar workers (Cook, 1987).

Summary of Review of Related Literature

The above discussion suggests that women do experience life changes and that these changes can be related to significant events such as the loss of a job. Job loss can bring self-realization, new insights, and better matchings of interests and skills (Labich, 1993). The question, however, still remains can job loss result in an important learning experience?

Participation in retraining activities following dislocation does have an impact upon the dislocated worker if the training is appropriately tailored to the individual's needs. Women may achieve better wages and/or increased self value through participation in post layoff retraining. According to the criteria espoused by the above writers, dislocation can indeed lead to a significant learning experience if it results in expanded thinking or transformation for the learner.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

Participants in the Study

The population of adults addressed in this study is female workers dislocated from Kayser Roth, Inc., in Harriman, Tennessee, in the summer of 1989, who also received services from Roane State Community College under Title III of the Job Training Partnership Act. Approximately five hundred (500) individuals make up this group. The women range in age from late teens to early seventies, and possess academic skills ranging from minimal literacy to college. The vast majority of the women are native to Roane and Morgan counties, and are rooted in Appalachian culture and traditions. Although a few worked as supervisors and office workers prior to dislocation, the majority of women were employed as production workers. Most earned minimum wage at production jobs. Retraining services received range from career counseling to training in college diploma programs; however, the majority received basic skills/GED preparation or vocational skills training.

Dislocated workers who participated in some training activity following the closure of the Kayser Roth Mill in Harriman constituted a sub-population for

this study. Ten of these women were selected for interviewing about their experiences following dislocation from employment at Kayser Roth. The participants were chosen after a search of files during which the researcher sought individuals representing a cross section of jobs prior to dislocation, a variety of training curriculums, and women who returned to work following training. Twenty files were identified and telephone contact was initiated with the intent of finding ten women willing to participate in the study. Although six of the women could not be reached by telephone, only two women contacted by the researcher declined to participate in the study. Ten women agreed to participate in the study

The ten women who participated in the study represent a broad range of jobs at the mill, including production workers, engineering technicians, machine fixers and clerical staff. The training received by the women ranged from a fourteen week vocational computer training session to a two year paralegal degree from a local community college. Most, however, participated in twelve to eighteen month vocational diploma programs. All returned to work following training.

Qualitative Research

In considering how to research the implications of dislocation for adult education, a qualitative approach is suggested. Research into women's adult development has mainly involved qualitative methods, according to Merriam (1989). Qualitative research is appropriate for the study of females dislocated from the Harriman Hosiery mill because it provides for the exploration of themes. As the intent of this study is to explore worker's own perspectives on the event of dislocation and any subsequent learning which may have resulted, qualitative methods provide the flexibility for the researcher to pursue topics introduced by the interviewees.

Because empirical data cannot adequately describe the life course changes of the workers, narrative descriptions are necessary. Narratives are used to depict the life stories of the individuals studied, and from these stories conclusions concerning the changes brought about by dislocation can be described.

Data Collection

Data were collected through a personal interview and a histogram. A histogram was used to initiate the interview and to introduce the concept of learning events over the individual's life span. The histogram consists of a time line covering the interviewee's adult life from about the age of eighteen to the present. Each woman was asked to identify major events in her life and to rate each event in significance on a scale of one (least significant) to ten (most significant). Each interviewee was asked to reflect specifically upon each of the five years since the hosiery mill closed. The purpose of the histogram was to lead the interviewee into a reflective activity which allowed her to focus upon the dislocation event as a life event along a continuum.

Using the histogram as a departure point, the interviewee was asked to discuss the events of her life during the past five years. Through questions by the interviewer for additional information, the interviewee reflected upon and discussed perceived changes in her life roles and her learning experiences. The interviewee was asked to determine the construct of her history by talking about her life as she perceived it, and placing emphasis upon those events and experiences

she found most meaningful to her. She was encouraged to discuss any learning experiences she may have encountered.

An oral history of the interviewee's experiences was compiled from interview results. This oral history consisted of a story of the individual's life, written from the perspective of the listener as gathered from the conversations with the interviewee. This story recounts the individual's experiences and reactions to those experiences.

Limited use of demographics also provided more insight into the situation of the worker at the time of dislocation. These demographics were available through the Job Training Partnership Training Act Management Information System. The researcher obtained access to these files through professional resources. Copies of the data sources are in Appendix A.

Procedure

Interviewees were contacted by phone and invited to participate in the study. A brief description of the purpose of the study was given over the phone, and, upon consent by the individual, an interview scheduled.

The interview location was selected by the interviewee. The interviews were conducted at a

training facility, a community facility, or the subject's home. At the beginning of the interview, the study was fully explained and the interviewee was asked to sign an agreement of understanding that the information will be published but the person's identity protected. Each interview was audio taped following written and verbal consent to the taping by the interviewee. A copy of the consent form is found in Appendix B.

Each interview began with the introduction of a histogram covering the interviewee's adult life but concentrating upon the five years of her life since the announced closure of the mill, on July 2, 1989. The interviewee was allowed to determine the construct of her history by taking free reign of the events and personal changes she wished to share. Nonetheless, the interviewee was guided by interview questions which asked for explanation of roles and relationships with others, and details of learning experiences and their meaningfulness to the individual.

Following the interview, all tapes were transcribed by a professional transcriptionist. From these reflections, a history was constructed. Each transcript was read for content and recurring themes were noted. A matrix was developed for each role the interviewees revealed and for each major theme

identified. The transcripts were reviewed again in detail for references which related to the themes. Additional matrixes were developed as additional themes emerged. A fictitious name was assigned each interviewee and care taken to exclude references which might reveal personal identity.

A second interview was requested of eight of the interviewees whose stories suggested the need for additional information. Five of these agreed to be interviewed a second time. The other three declined the invitation to comment or did not respond to messages left for them. During the second interview, the interviewees were allowed to review and comment upon the life stories as written by the interviewer. Only minor changes were suggested by the interviewees, but all suggestions were incorporated into their transcripts, and the data were reviewed again for recurring themes. After all data were collected and organized, the individual's life story was written. Each story evolved from the experiences of the individual as recounted to the interviewer.

Data Analysis

Each life story was studied for recurring themes, events, experiences, and responses. Changes in roles

were identified through changes in personal relationships and through changes in practices related by the individual. Learning experiences were identified as events in which the individual gained skills or knowledge that was meaningful for her and resulted in a change in her beliefs or practices. Practices prior to dislocation and retraining were compared to practices after dislocation. Careful examination of the sequence of learning and changes in practice was made to determine any identifiable link between learning experiences and role changes. Causal relationships identified by the women themselves were also examined.

Any recurring patterns in roles, behaviors, responses, learning experiences, etc., within an individual's own account was identified as a theme for that individual. When responses among several of the individuals appeared to be the same or similar, these were identified and studied. These similarities were explored among all respondents to determine if the response likeness was great enough for trends across the sample to be discerned.

A single site analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1984) was conducted of each life story using role changes and learning experiences described by the interviewee. These were displayed in a matrix format and analyzed

across individuals for further implications regarding the questions posed or other findings from the themes revealed. Role ordered matrixes were developed for each of the major roles identified by the women (see Chapter 4). Conceptually clustered matrixes were developed for each theme. These were compared for individual responses and then for similarities in roles, changes in roles and perceptions of why changes occurred. Learning experiences were categorized as formal or informal and as occurring prior to or after the mill closure. Additional matrixes were developed to organize and analyze the resulting information and allow for determining possible consequence of the mill closure in the women's lives.

CHAPTER IV: DATA ANALYSIS

Each woman interviewed during the progression of this study reflected upon an individual life path. Still, upon careful inspection, there came into focus a number of similarities, both in the events and reactions to events, among the various individual stories. The following analysis describes some of these similarities and reveals obvious trends in the outcomes of lives thrown off course by a single event, the closing of the Harriman hosiery mill.

Question #1

Do changes in life roles occur when a mid-life female is dislocated from a job due to a plant closure?

In the interviewing process, the women identified a number of life roles in which they participated. The roles given the most meaning by the interviewees were those related to the family, the work place, and the learning environment. Changes evidenced in all roles are discussed below.

Role of Wife

Nine of the ten women interviewed either have been or are currently married. Four of the women are

married to their first spouse. The remaining five have experienced various relationships as wives both in marital relationships and in long term commitment with single partners. For five of the women, roles before dislocation differ appreciably from the current role. A summary of the characteristics of these roles and the changes identified since the hosiery mill closed are found in Table 1.

Eight of the women indicated they currently fulfill the role of wife. Of these, three indicated little or no change had taken place in their role as a wife since the mill closed. Two of the women who noted no change in their role as wife indicated they participated in a positive, mutually satisfying marital relationship. The third woman existed in a subservient role which she seemed to accept, although it brought her great dissatisfaction. Ellen spoke of her husband and her relationship with him:

My husband was the kind that would make you feel like you were worth about five cents and you just lose all confidence or something in yourself...and of course he is the type that wants to be waited on.

When asked if her role with her husband had changed following the mill closure, Ellen responded:

No, it never changed. In forty-two years it has never changed. To argue with him or fight about, it is not worth it. I don't enjoy that or like that. So I just kinda accept it in my role....

Table 1

Changes in Role of Wife

Name	Before Dislocation	Current Role	Perceived Reason for Change
Anna	In abusive second marriage	Partner in single affinity	-Partner kinder -Careful in selection
Betty	Had just entered new marriage - Positive	Same husband Positive bonds	No change
Clair	Stable marriage - independent roles for both	Same Husband-remains good marriage	No change
Dana	Two prior subservient marriages - divorced	Equal partner in marriage	-More self confidence -Looked for different kind of man -"He lets me be me."
Ellen	Subservient role to dominant husband - "makes you feel worth about five cents"	Same husband, same role	No change - "Never changed in forty-two years."
Flora	Subservient to two husbands- one alcoholic, one abusive	Partner in single affinity - Caring but equal	- New self confidence - Learned to look for other values

Name	Before Dislocation	Current Role	Perceived Reason for Change
Gail	Mutually supportive marriage - traditional male/female duties/role	Increase in caretaker role but partnership still balanced	-Husband has cancer now in remission -No change in mutual support
Halley	Never married	No male friendship identified	
Iris	Subservient -dominated by husband of twenty five years -obedient -not allowed to get out socially	- Dominated but now sometimes stands up for what she wants to do - goes out socially sometimes	-Began getting out with other students while taking skills course - just does not care as much any more what spouse says
Janet	Divorced at same time the mill was closing	No male friendship identified	

A fourth woman indicated that, although her role as wife had not changed in terms of her positive relationship with her husband, she had taken on an additional responsibility as caretaker of her spouse during his treatment and recovery from cancer. Gail spoke of her role change:

We have always got along good. No problems. About a year ago, he had surgery for cancer. I have had some experience with cancer patients and being a nurse too, I felt I could take care of him. Since his surgery, he is doing OK now.

Of the four women who indicated they had become less submissive than before the mill closed, three had

established new, positive relationships, while the fourth had established new, more assertive behaviors in an existing relationship. In all four instances, the women indicated they had a new sense of self worth. The three with new partners had looked for different values in the relationships they established.

Dana spoke of her two earlier marriages and their difference from her current marriage:

When I think of my first marriage, I think of my son. With (second husband) I was cooking, I had to cook three square meals a day. With my husband now, he lets me be me, totally me.... I wouldn't have married him had it not been that way. I was tired of trying to be somebody else. It was time to be me.

Iris, although continuing in an unsatisfactory relationship, has challenged her husband's control over her coming and going from the home on social calls, and now sometimes goes out without his permission to shop with her sisters or be with other family members.

My husband never did like me going anywhere or doing anything, so I would just kinda stay at home or go to my Mom's. But more and more I am getting out and doing more, doing my own thing...just saying I am going here or there and not asking if I can go.

Role of Mother

All ten of the women interviewed had children. The women shared no negative comments regarding their role as mother or in their relationship with their children. Some did allude to having a better understanding of their children now, or to having a

better relationship than in the past, but in all of these instances, the strained affiliation seemed to have taken place during the offspring's adolescence years. Most of the women gave exuberant accounts of their current connectedness with their children, and some referred to their years as mothers of small children as their best. "I was the most devoted mother you have ever seen because I wanted him so bad....," asserted Ellen. Dana stayed home with her son during five of his early years, and now looks back on this time as being, "probably the pick of my life." Both of these women feel a continuing bond with their now grown sons.

The only change perceived in the mother role by any of the women as resulting from the mill closure is that some felt less exhausted in their current jobs than when they worked at the mill. This physical relief enabled them to have more time and energy to spend as mothers, and in some instances as grandmothers.

Interestingly, both of the women in unsatisfactory marriages indicated that their son is their best friend and favorite companion. One woman's son is thirty-seven and unmarried; the other's is thirteen.

Role of Friend

Friendship constituted a valuable relationship with each of the women interviewed. There appeared to be, however, two planes upon which these relationships were founded. One plane seemed to be the superficial relationships with other people co-existing within the same environment and subject to some of the same conditions. The other plane constituted a "best friend," an individual with whom confidences could be shared.

Friendships at work seemed related more to the proximity of the other individual than to the cultivation of lasting common bonds. These friendships were affected by the mill closure, and some were terminated. Most of the women attempted to maintain these friendships through occasional get togethers and Christmas cards, but over the course of the years, there remains little more than occasional and even accidental contact. As the women entered new activities, training, and employment, new friendships were forged, and the new relationships gradually replaced those from the mill. Still, a lingering affection remains for the old friends.

Clair spoke of her friends from the hosiery mill and how she had developed other friendships where she

now works. Nevertheless, her affection for her old friends continues:

I exchange Christmas cards with a group I worked with. I haven't seen them. I talk to one or two of them once or twice during the year.... We made an effort (to see each other) for about a year or so. But then we haven't since then.

Most of the women identified a best friend.

Frequently this person was related, and in most instances, a female filled the position. Still, three of the women identified male relatives as their best friend. One identified her spouse as filling this role. The two women who identified their son as their best friend had recently lost their elderly mother, whom they had regarded their best friend.

Overall, relationships with other females appeared to have great value for most of the women. The women continued to see close friends frequently whether they were also co-workers or not. None of these relationships was adversely affected by the closure. However, new relationships were formed during retraining for a number of the women, and these new friendships have become highly valued.

Role of Learner

The role of adult learner appeared to be heavily impacted by the mill closing. The event itself induced each woman, to one extent or another, to reflect upon her current life practices and career options.

The women learned of skill training options from a mass meeting held in the high school gym within five days of the closure announcement, and from discussions with cohorts. Thus, career exploration became the first post-closure learning experience, as each woman looked into areas of interest, visited schools and trade centers, and made decisions regarding future careers.

Five of the women had attended classes as adults prior to the mill closing. One had taken craft classes, the others had taken GED and or occupational skill classes. The remaining five women had not participated in formal classes since high school. Several had considered leaving the mill to undertake a skill training course in order to change occupations, but only one had actually completed a structured learning program prior to the mill closing. Ironically, the latter individual, who subsequently had been promoted from production to payroll, was the only one of the ten who did not enter a skill training program following the closure. She felt she had already acquired marketable skills and she did successfully enter the job market.

Although one woman stated that she expected to do well in the training, the other eight who entered skill training did so with some fear of failure. Five were

the sole breadwinners and faced economic struggles during the training. This economic stress may have contributed to their trepidation. Still, seven of the eight who held these fears performed better in learning activities than they had expected. Iris had no confidence she could complete a course of study, but decided to try anyway. She described her decision to take the phlebotomy course as follows:

I didn't think I could take anything else. It was three months and everything else was six months to a year. I just didn't think I could do the study part. I never had that much confidence in myself that I could do better. It scared me.... You show me and I can do. Keeping it all in my head, I don't think I could do that.... I could not believe I had a 4.0 average. There my name was on the dean's list. I just couldn't believe that!

The one woman who did not feel good about the training was in her late fifties at the time, and felt the instructor neglected the older students in her instruction. Although Ellen said she liked the class, she felt unable to learn as much as she wished. Referring to her teacher, Ellen said, "She taught computer and she was a Yankee. Well, she seemed to think that the young people only needed the help or the attention, that they were the only ones that would go out and work." Ellen also referred to her age in talking about her fears for finding another job and in discussing other dissatisfactions.

All nine finished the courses they began and went to work, at least initially, in the area of training. Five years later, one is retired, one has returned to production and seven remain employed in the skill area for which they studied in the months immediately following the closure of the hosiery mill. The women all shared their perceptions of their roles as learners. These perceptions, summarized in Table 2, reveal that, although the women all presume themselves to be learners, each has a unique concept of herself as a learner.

During the course of the retraining, all the women became goal driven and all took pride in having completed the training. With the exception of the one individual who did not have a satisfactory episode, the women were well pleased with the success of their personal learning engagement. One woman, feeling confident in her successful learning experience while pursuing a vocational diploma, now feels she would have been successful had she pursued a college degree instead. On the other hand, Iris, who made good grades and completed her training to become a very successful Phlebotomist, continued to disbelieve that she had the ability to succeed as a student.

Table 2

Perceptions of Learner Role in Structured Classes

Name	Perceptions
Anna	Learns what she needs to
Betty	Set learning goals to accomplish other objectives - learns as she goes
Clair	Loved vocational school - learned she can do college work - loves learning something new
Dana	Glad she went back to school - influenced son to finish his degree
Ellen	Uncomfortable with lack of attention from teacher - no desire to participate now
Flora	Feels successful - likes to learn and feels confident of her ability
Gail	Very proud of her GED - feels stronger for having finished LPN training - can achieve
Halley	"You learn what you have to."
Iris	Scared at first but her confidence grew - still fears she could not learn in school setting -could not keep facts in her head
Janet	"You learn something from everything. What matters is what you do with it."

Each woman who experienced success to one degree or another found this success in accomplishment brought about an increased self value. Many of the learners stated that they found they liked to learn. Each of the nine successful learners, having now flourished in a structured learning activity, perceived herself as an adept learner (see Table 2) whereas before the post-closure training experience, she did not.

Worker Role

All the women envisioned their role as worker changed. This was due in part to the fact that each worked in a different occupation from their job at the mill. Table 3 contrasts the last job each woman held at the mill with her job following dislocation and reports the women's reaction to the job change. Most grew up expecting they would work at a hosiery mill or other textile facility. The hosiery mill appeared to be a culture itself with a social hierarchy and subgroups nested within the major culture. Most of the women described the job at the mill as boring and some as exhausting. Even those who worked as clerks and office workers spoke of the "hard work" at the mill.

Table 3

Changes in Worker Role and Occupation

Name	Last Mill Job	Current Job	Reaction to change
Anna	Maintenance Secretary	Upholstery Inspector	Pays a little better
Betty	Payroll	Teller	About the same
Clair	Inspector	Admin. Secretary	Much better job More respect
Dana	Machine fixer	Para-legal	"It is a whole different life."
Ellen	Receiving clerk	Switchboard operator before retiring	Felt less valued and made less money
Flora	Machine operator	Nurse	more rewarding and more pay
Gail	Machine operator	Nurse	likes working with people more than socks
Halley	Machine operator	Shipping clerk/computer operator	likes the job-work is easier and pay better
Iris	Time study clerk	Phlebotomist	likes it better-says she is the best sticker around
Janet	Folder	Electronics assembler	Better work - better pay

The women also spoke of the inflexibility of the management structure. Ellen told about having to convince her supervisor that she would have no more children before she could be hired. Dana related that she was fired from her first job because she was pregnant. "At the mill, where you started, you stayed," said Clair, "they would not move anybody." Janet spoke of the frustration of "bosses switching back and forth on stuff." From the descriptions of the work environment, it appeared the women worked in a traditional top down management structure with little if any say in the performance of their job.

Only one of the women felt less satisfied in her new job. She expounded that she was "only worth five dollars an hour", as symbolic of her reduction in status and pay. Another, who had returned to a production job following a short stint as a secretary, felt that her role had changed very little. A third, who switched from payroll clerk at the mill to teller at a local bank without participating in any retraining, indicated that her new job was about equal to the one she had at the mill, but felt that her role as a worker was different because in her new position she interacted with people whereas she did not have any people contact in her old job. Betty described the difference this way:

You have to try to relate to people a lot more at the bank than what I did at the plant job.... I really liked the payroll job. I made more money, but I like this job too, I don't know, about the same.

Like the teller, all the other women felt their role as a worker had changed and all but one for the better. They talked of changes in terms of more respect, higher pay, less boring work and not having to work as hard. All these positive worker role changes related to the consequence of the mill closure and layoff, because without the necessity of leaving the mill and seeking other employment, the women would not have pursued increased occupational skills through training.

Question #2

Does dislocation from a job due to a textile plant closure trigger significant learning experiences?

All the women in the study, save one, reported learning experiences which resulted in transformation or changes in practice. Some of these learning experiences occurred prior to dislocation, but many more were reported to have occurred after dislocation. Although all the women encountered personal learning experiences, most did not recognize the event as such until the research interview.

Closure Reaction

By virtue of the sudden changes wrought in each woman's life, the closing of the hosiery mill constituted a significant event for each individual. Most of the women spoke of hearing rumors that the mill would close, but others did not mention any forewarning, and some indicated total surprise. All had vivid memories of where they were when they heard the news, and most recounted the shock of the sudden announcement.

Each individual described a specific reaction to the mill closing. These reactions, described in Table 4 for each worker, varied from "I lost a rock," to "It was the best thing that ever happened to me." Each of the diverse reactions appeared to be a function of the individual's life situation at the time. For instance, the person who stated "I lost a rock," had experienced a recent divorce and was attempting to redefine her own life. The one constant reality in her life at the time remained her ability to support herself through employment at the hosiery mill. Through two bad marriages and the youthful marriage of her only son, the mill, and her relationships with the people there, had sustained her. The woman who stated, "It was the best thing that ever happened to me," had been

Table 4

Individual Reaction to Mill Closure

Name	Reaction to Closure
Anna	"Kinda ready to get out after nineteen years."
Betty	"I was shocked! I didn't get to go back anymore....I wasn't worried about it financially."
Clair	"Like a death in the family", at first, but she later decided "It was the best thing that ever happened to me."
Dana	"I lost a rock, a stability I needed." The sensation of loss lasted six months. "I still get an empty feeling when I go by there."
Ellen	"The mill was my life." "I was not old enough to draw social security and too old to get a job almost anywhere."
Flora	"I was happy. It was my way out."
Gail	"I knew there was something else out there....I saw my chance for nursing."
Halley	"It was really a shock!" She did not like change and was frightened.
Iris	"I would never have left the mill." - She missed her friendships.
Janet	"I went home and cried."

dissatisfied with her life, but seemed to lack the self confidence to take proactive steps toward achieving standing goals. Her youngest child had left home and she had made up her mind to pursue another occupation, but she had been unable to give up the security of her job. In her case, the mill closing became the catalyst for goal oriented action.

Three of the women had career goals already in mind, but the other seven had not considered re-training until after being presented options by the Job Training Program staff. The availability of training seemed to make a difference because the opportunity for sponsored training provided an alternative to dismal job prospects. All the women in this study entered and completed a skill training curriculum immediately following dislocation from the mill.

Several of the women spoke of learning experiences resulting from events in their personal lives such as a divorce or the leaving home of a child. Some of these experiences, such as the woman who took knitting classes to fill the void left by her grown children, resulted in changed behavior. Others spoke of learning but did not change in practice. Such is the case of the woman who entered two marriages as a servant partner, and spoke of learning from her first marriage and divorce, but still entered another negative

relationship. Only through learning and practicing assertiveness skills during her retraining did this woman change her values and enter a new marriage as an equal partner.

Four of the women spoke of becoming less shy or more assertive and learning to interact with people more productively. In all cases, the loss of shyness seemed to evolve over a period of time, but the change in practice came after the mill closed and during the retraining when assertiveness was needed. Perhaps it was at this time that the learning experience became personally valued.

Janet spoke of developing inner strength and increased faith when the mill closed:

I think it (the mill closing) made me a lot stronger, able to rely on myself more. Especially with your faith, going to church a lot more regular and all through that helped me.... Take what you got and make what you can.

A number of the women encountered the mill closure at a transitional time in life. Three were in the process of divorce, four were in the process of adjusting to the flight of children from the home, and one had just entered a new marriage. Dislocation provided a season of changes, a time ripe for learning experiences.

The successful completion of the retraining activity proved a learning experience in itself as it

demonstrated to each learner that she possessed a capable mind and could achieve success. This realization enabled her to go forward with other learning, both structured and reflective, which resulted in transformative thoughts and changes in practice.

Flora experienced two disastrous marriages prior to the mill closure and felt she had no control over either. After she became a successful nurse, and gained a new self confidence, she seeks different values and characteristics in her associations.

I had a knack for picking people that were not suitable for me or that I could not tolerate. I don't know how to explain it.... But I think I have learned how to pick and what to look for and who to choose.

Flora reported that she is now involved with a man who is caring, makes no unreasonable demands, and abuses neither chemical substances nor Flora.

Although only one of the women had taken a formal course outside of job requirements, since the mill closed, all of them have participated in learning experiences. Table 5 recounts a number of learning experiences reported by the women as particularly meaningful to them. Some of these learning experiences have been precipitated by life events, such as the specific medical information sought by those women who

Table 5
Learning Experiences Following Retraining

Name	Learning Experiences Reported
Anna	Learned about medical condition from self directed learning from professionals and literature.
Betty	Learned to work with people as co-workers Learned to deal with the public.
Clair	Taught self WANG computer and learned to communicate with supervisors who spoke English as a second language.
Dana	Learned greater self value through skill training success. Learned assertiveness while completing para professional degree.
Ellen	No self directed learning identified.
Flora	Learned to understand daughters better. Learned greater self respect. Increased knowledge through travel.
Gail	Learned to be less shy and to deal with other people and with patients and families. Learned about husband's illness through self directed learning from professionals, literature and friends.
Halley	Learned more about computers. Learned to care for ill child through professionals. Learned how to purchase a home from family and financial resource professionals.
Iris	Learned duties of all support staff in doctors office where she is employed. Taught herself to make crafts. Learned greater self respect and assertiveness in marital relationship. Learned more about own capabilities.
Janet	Learned about mother's illness. Learned child care from various sources. Learned more expertise in her job.

have faced health problems and have pursued learning to gain knowledge of a particular condition. Others have simply explored new avenues out of interest. One has learned to crochet and now wants to learn to play the piano. Another has traveled and wants to do more.

In addition to self directed learning, most have enthusiastically pursued additional learning in their chosen occupation, including two who stated they enjoy working for learning institutions because they learn so much so often. All nine who reported they were still employed said they had continued to learn and that they had increased their skills since taking the position they now hold.

With the exception of one individual, who retired two years ago, all the women spoke of gaining new skills in personal relationships and learning greater satisfaction with self. They spoke of decreased shyness, better understanding of other people, more assertive practices, and increased self respect. A number of the women spoke of their new occupations being interesting and the mill work being boring. In this respect, the closure of the mill has initiated new learning experiences as a function of interest and decreased physical exhaustion.

Question #3

Are changes in roles related to learning experiences following dislocation?

In examining the role changes identified by the women, it appeared that learning experiences did have an influence on these differences. In the role of wife, for example, changes described in Table 1 were often attributed to learning experiences. Although the closure of the mill had little to do with ending old or creating new relationships, all three women in new relationships based the increase in self esteem upon their perceived change in status resulting from the retraining activities and new occupations. The learning experiences during retraining and subsequent employment allowed the women to reflect upon their prior roles, and in combination with their increased self worth, to experience transformation and to subsequently make changes in their practice as wives.

The change in Iris's more assertive relationship with her husband is also an indirect product of her training, because she had never experienced going out to eat with friends until she shared a ride with other students to Knoxville for health care training and they took her out with them. It was a new and pleasing experience she wanted to repeat on occasion. In a

sharing association with these other women, she learned that she could be more assertive. Consequently, she too has adopted new, more assertive practices.

Iris spoke of the changes in her practice since the mill closed:

I guess in the last five years since the plant shut down, I have probably done more than I have ever done.... My husband always told me, 'You can't do this or you don't need to do this or that,' and I kinda let him rule me and not let me go.... I think I have done a whole lot better.... I stand up more for myself in the last five or six years.

Changes in the learner role have resulted directly from success in learning occupational skills. Eight of the nine who participated in a skill training program gained self confidence as learners, and all of these individuals were able to articulate additional learning experiences which occurred after the conclusion of the initial retraining experience.

Table 2, which identifies perceptions of the learner role among the women, serves to point out the current status of the women as learners. All but one found structured learning to be beneficial and stimulating. All but one experienced positive results from her formal learning experience and replicated the role in subsequent learning experiences, both technical and transformational.

The mill closure brought about changes in each woman's role as a worker as a result of losing a job of

long duration. The direction of the change, however, resulted from learning experiences in all but two instances. Anna and Ellen took jobs for which they already possessed the skills prior to dislocation. Betty took a job for which she had received training just prior to the mill closing. The other seven experienced worker role changes as a direct result of the retraining experiences completed immediately following relocation.

Halley said her retraining resulted in a much better job and talked about the difference in her role as a worker now and at the mill:

I really feel that class was what got me my job at SEG.... For one thing, the work is much easier and I make more money than I ever have...I like it a lot. The work at the mill was a challenge. Some days when you were not feeling well, when you are on production, it was hard to make it; whereas, when I don't feel well at SEG, working on the computer, I can still get my work done because I am not on production.

For some of the women, the new occupation has come to signify a new beginning. The new worker role has provided new status as well as new pride in accomplishment. Increased income has also provided more opportunities for learning through leisure time activities. In all instances where new roles are more satisfying than the old, self esteem has increased and changes in practice has occurred.

One of the women, with whom the researcher shared a particularly reflective session, found the interview itself a learning experience. She gained self respect by revisiting some of the more unpleasant phases in her life while identifying some of the successes she had achieved and granting herself forgiveness for the difference in the two. Upon completing the interview, Flora, when thanked by the interviewer for the time spent together, concluded, "I hope it has been helpful. It helps me to talk about it. I am not ashamed to talk about what has happened to me. I am just proud of the times I have overcome."

CHAPTER V: SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

This study focused upon the lives of ten women dislocated from a textile mill. The purpose of this study was to explore the relationship between job dislocation and learning experiences among female textile workers. Learning experiences following dislocation were examined and relationships between learning experiences and role changes were identified.

In Appendix III are found the stories of the ten women interviewed in the course of this study. These stories were written from the words of the women as they shared milestones and phenomena of their lives in interviews with the researcher. Within the stories are the life events and experiences upon which the findings of this study are based.

Question #1

Do changes in life roles occur when a mid-life female is dislocated from a job due to a plant closure?

The most distinguishable roles described in the women's stories were those of wife, mother, friend,

learner, and worker. For the women, these roles were interwoven into the very fabric of life, but for this study, these roles were isolated and considered separately.

For the women in long established, mutually satisfying relationships, little change occurred in the role of wife. Most of the women, however, had existed in a dependency relationship, or had experienced prior marriage failures which they described as being helpless to change. For half of these women, the role of wife changed following the mill closure and retraining activities.

It seemed these women may similarly have been dependent upon the mill. Employment there, like success in a marriage, seemed to be reliable as long as they kept quiet and did the work expected. They could come and go from the mill between the birthing of children, or between stints of employment elsewhere, with relative ease. Likewise, they could marry, divorce, and re-marry. Little seemed to change, however, in either the marriages or the work at the mill. In both, they had to work hard, do as the boss said, and tolerate whatever task or circumstance they were called upon to sustain. They could either quit the job or divorce the spouse, but when needs dictated

they return to work or they chose to remarry, the new job or new marriage resembled the old.

When the mill closed, after years of dependable employment, the women were forced to abandon that dependency and search out unfamiliar sources of employment. In so doing, it appears they may have developed an independence and a self sufficiency which allowed them to measure their own self worth by a new set of values. Consequently, through greater self sufficiency, the women generated improved self esteem, which afforded them a stronger force in self determination. It is likewise possible that "freedom" from the drudgery of the job resulted in relative freedom in their marriage. In a more personal way, the need to remain dependent on a male partner seemed to have subsided and the women, for the most part, redefined their role of wife as less dependent, less subservient, and more equal and mutually supporting.

The role of mother seemed to be the least affected by the mill closure. All the women had found great satisfaction in mothering small children. Those women who had lived through their offsprings' adolescence years and had experienced the children's departure from home, missed the children and the mothering role. All who were grandmothers spoke of enjoying the grandchildren. When grown children were described,

all the women exuded pride, especially regarding the child's academic achievements. Although economic or child care circumstances may have changed as a result of the mill closure, it is safe to conclude that the mother role was only incidentally affected by the dislocation.

Results of the study suggest that the two most personal relationships were the role of wife and the role of mother. The women related that the wife role underwent more change than the mother role. The women who viewed themselves as unsuccessful as wives prior to dislocation still perceived themselves as successful mothers. The same was true for those who remain in an unsatisfactory relationship. This theme suggests that the women perceived themselves to be more successful as mothers than as wives. The perception of themselves as wife and mother appeared to exist independently of their perceptions of the role of worker. This separation of role perceptions bears some relationship to Rubin's suggestion that women may find success in either of two identities: one, in relationships as wife or mother, and two, in the world of work (Rubin, 1989).

Dislocation from the hosiery mill related to the role of friend in only a few instances. The rending of friendships, however, did cause great anxiety during the initial days of the closure as contact with

friends one usually saw on a daily basis suddenly ceased. Changes in daily contact, new interests, etc, all contributed to changes in the circle of casual friends.

Still, the role of friend, which was heavily impacted in the initial days of the closure due to the separation from daily acquaintances, tended to return to its former character after a new routine was established and new relationships forged. Thus, the role of friend did not change significantly in the long run, in that the women continued to connect with new friends with whom they came in daily contact. Those who had a large circle of friends at work eventually found a similar circle at the new job. Most spoke of having a best friend, but this relationship rarely had any connection to the workplace. Where such bonds did exist, the relationship survived the closure and continued to flourish. This continuation of connectedness to friends, especially female friends, mirrors Gilligan's writings that women tend to thrive in an environment of attachment and affiliation with others (Gilligan, 1982).

New confidants were sometimes developed from friendships established during the retraining activity. Forging new friendships came about as a result of entry

into new activities, in this case the learning experiences, not from the dislocation experience alone.

Although the women learned certain skills, both occupational and non-occupational, prior to the mill closure, and participated in self directed learning activities, they thought of learning as a school activity and did not perceive of themselves as learners. As a direct result of the mill closing, however, they participated in retraining activities and began to perceive themselves differently.

Some of the women found the interview process to be a learning experience through reflection upon the changes in their lives since dislocation. A few had not, prior to speaking with the interviewer, considered themselves to be learners. One is led to conclude that at least nine of the women are now more active in the role of learner than prior to dislocation.

All the women experienced change in the role of worker, and with one exception, all have perceived the change as positive. Although they have switched occupations, and this in itself has caused role changes, the greatest changes have occurred in job satisfaction and perceived relationship of self to the position. Unlike the workers Cook (1987) describes, those with successfully upgraded skills actually competed better in the work force with their new jobs

than if they had marketed their textile skills. In this instance, there would have accrued no benefit in their job search had they been able to market experience or longevity at the mill because the new skills outweighed the years of service. In general, the women were proud of their new jobs and their new titles. All but two of the women indicated they were earning more now than at the mill.

Working at the mill produced physical and mental exhaustion and left the women feeling devoid of energy and desire for additional stimulation. Their new occupations, however, seem to allow more energy for activities outside of work. This phenomenon is true even for the younger women who have children still at home. There are no answers to the question of why the women seemed to experience more energy, but it does leave some possible answers to be further explored. One possible reason is that the women had more interaction with people in their new occupation. Perhaps the new occupations were more stimulating in the variety of tasks involved and were less repetitive, thus less boring. This change in energy raises the question: could production work be so mundane and produce such boredom that it leaves the worker borderline depressed? Further study should be conducted in this area.

Question #2

Does dislocation from a job due to a textile plant closure trigger significant learning experiences?

The women in this study related a number of significant learning experiences. Some of these experiences resulted directly from the skill training experience immediately following dislocation. The learning itself involved not only the acquisition of skills, however. Much of the learning resulted from the new experiences and particularly from the increase in self perceived competence resulting from successful participation in the training activity.

These retraining activities produced both education and developmental learning, along the line suggested by Nadler (1971). All learned a new skill and all but one experienced growth in self esteem as a result. Most of the women perceived they developed competence as learners and were willing to pursue additional learning experiences. This competence came about due to the initial skill training experience. Having discovered this competence, the women tended to search about for other learning experiences which resulted in other new beliefs or changes in behavior. This finding contrasts with Leigh's economic point of view that skill training should be sparingly provided

to dislocated workers (Leigh, 1989). On the other hand, this finding is supported by Mezirow's argument that self directed learning endeavors for dislocated workers results in transformative learning (Mezirow, 1991).

For the women dislocated from the Kayser Roth Hosiery Mill in Harriman, the successful completion of the retraining activity proved a learning experience in itself, for it demonstrated to each learner that she possessed a capable mind and could achieve success. In contrast, according to a study following the Levi Strauss closing (Merrifield, 1991), the women from that plant seemed to benefit much less from the retraining experience than the women from Kayser Roth, even though the Levi women received more company benefits, more federal services, longer income supplementation, and opportunities for longer training than the Harriman women received.

It would seem that the crisis emanating from the hosiery mill closure caused action to be taken. With no possibility of maintaining the status quo, the women were forced to seek some alternative endeavor. According to Labich (1993), an individual may be expected to go through a loss of culture, income, and status before beginning a positive emergence into learning experiences following dislocation. This

pattern of reaction is similar to the Kayser Roth workers' experiences.

Having counselors to provide guidance and available opportunities for retraining combined to provide options for the women. Empowered to make a choice, each woman encountered a learning experience in making a conscious career decision, whereas before, her life had taken the course of least resistance. This experience formed the foundation for more learning to follow.

The availability of counselors to guide workers in obtaining resources and exploring options before making decisions, and to serve as resources throughout the decision making and learning experience seemed to account for some successful learning experiences. The positive outcome from learning experiences appeared to be the availability of training for special groups of the Kayser Roth workers. Having other learners of like age and circumstances created an affinity group which provided a support system for the learner. Merriam and Caffarella (1991) and Candy (1991) speak to the need for supportive adult educators to assist adult learners through the learning process. Candy further addresses the need for a "supportive climate" which takes into account the learner's existing knowledge structure and defers judgments by the educator (1991). Giele (1982),

in discussing women out of the job market, addresses their lack of both goals and skills. It would seem the need would be for a caring, adult educator to be available to dislocated workers to assist with attaining both. In addition, Lawler (1992) asserts that learner groups may create opportunities for attachment leading to development. His discussion of nested subgroups within the larger learning community supports the positive effects of having special classes of workers dislocated from the same facility. This proposal is further supported by Gilligan's assertion that women learn and develop better in the context of attachment and affiliation with others (Gilligan, 1982).

It would appear that dislocation in and of itself does not necessarily produce significant learning experiences. Indeed, dislocation can produce a very negative reaction which actually stymies learning. This negativity was evidenced in the reaction of one worker to dislocation and is in agreement with a University of Michigan study, quoted by Lewis in AARP Bulletin, that depression occurred at higher than normal levels among workers dislocated in plant closings, especially when the workers were long term unemployed (Lewis, 1994). However, if opportunities for learning are provided, and adult educators are

available to guide the individuals to learning resources, it appears that learning experiences occur which personally affect the learner and result in transformation while holding subjective value for the learner. It further appears that dislocation creates a time of crisis and transition which fosters learning experiences. This finding is in keeping with Mezirow's contention that perspective transformation may occur as a result of the disorientation caused by job loss (Mezirow, 1990).

Question #3

Are changes in roles related to learning experiences following dislocation?

A number of role changes occurred in the lives of the women studied. Many of these did tend to result from learning experiences. On the other hand, learning experiences may also result from role changes. The most obvious change resulting from the Kayser Roth women was the change in the worker role resulting from a change in occupation. One direct result, as reported by the women, was higher wages, thus greater job value, in the new positions obtained following dislocation and retraining. Although wages were not measured in this study, this finding was consistent with the findings of

the Texas study which showed dislocated women, when retrained, increased their earnings (Bloom, 1990).

The most personally meaningful element of the worker role change, however, seemed to be the greater self respect experienced by the worker. This increased self respect seemed to stem from learning more about one's own value system and developing a greater control over one's own life.

Apparently, the role of wife changed as a direct result of developmental learning among the women who had experienced negative relationships in the past. Following the experience of dislocation and retraining, three of the women chose new companions with whom they shared a partnership relationship rather than a subservient role. Whether this development resulted from life events or stage development, all the women talked of discovering new facets of themselves as an outgrowth of the experiences they had during and following retraining.

The learner role, developed as a necessity to participate in a skilled training activity, continued active following the retraining. Much like the learners in studies of self directed learning (Merriam & Caffarella, 1991), the women did not recognize themselves as learners and, prior to the research interview, had not thought of their involvement in

acquiring new skills, developing new hobbies, etc. as learning experiences. Because the individual, in the course of retraining, learned that she was indeed capable of learning, this role became valuable to the individual.

This study found that given displacement, role changes and learning experiences do occur, and they occur in relationship with each other. Workers studied tended to continue in static roles, and with little change in perceptions, until the mill closure produced a disorienting effect. Retraining following dislocation presented new ideas both in technical skill learning and in transformative contexts. As the newly expanded role of learner produced new skills, which in turn opened new roles as workers, new perceptions of self in the new roles seemed to influence reflection of practices and in turn additional changes in other roles, such as that of wife. Thus, a ripple effect of sorts resulted in a sequence of related learning experiences and role changes, thereby proffering a positive response to all three proposed research questions.

Implications for Research and Practice

This study has suggested several findings concerning dislocated females. These findings should be considered carefully and reflected upon by both researchers and practitioners for future implications in both research and practice. The following points merit special consideration.

The findings of this study are consistent with earlier studies (Bloom, 1990 and Cook, 1987) which found that the initial shock of dislocation is personally painful as it impacts not only economic stability but the balance of expected daily norms in the individual's life. The findings suggest that given options for achievement and assistance from educators and counselors, the workers often take decisive action. This action seems to be precipitated by learning, because decision making regarding the worker's next step tends to be the first action taken, and either job search or structured learning through skill acquisition is the second.

The availability of knowledgeable educators of adults is critical to this initial step. Educators and counselors should provide assistance to the dislocated workers within a very short time of the announcement of any plant closing. Because the dislocated worker tends

to be in a state of crisis and disequilibrium, the educator or counselor should provide leadership and information, but allow the worker time and flexibility to reflect upon her resources and interests before settling upon a final decision. This disequilibrium may entail the worker appearing indecisive or even hostile at times as she struggles to redirect her life course. Consequently, the educator or counselor must be prepared to accept the pain of the worker without inferring lack of commitment or negative attitudes on the part of the worker. In order to enhance this caring attitude, and to provide leadership for self directed learning by the worker, the educator or counselor needs to be carefully selected and trained in how best to assist the dislocated worker in crisis. The purpose of this training should be to enable the educators and counselors to recognize the dislocated worker as capable of self directed learning and in need of leadership rather than direction.

Although this study suggests that female dislocated workers respond to educators and counselors who treat them as adults capable of self direction and with care and affinity for their plight, it does not delve into factors which might entice the workers to enter retraining or to take advantage of other learning opportunities. Further research into what

considerations attract dislocated workers to retraining could provide guidance to educators and counselors in how to increase participation and further enhance the learning experience for the workers.

This study found that the role of mother was very important to the women, and that the women felt successful in this role both before and after dislocation. Studying how this importance affects decisions the workers made following dislocation could add knowledge to the field of adult education, by studying how women who are mothers of dependent children might best be attracted to learning activities.

Another interesting inference from this study is the possibility of a relationship between economic dependency and relationship dependency. Some of the women in this study tended to enter and re-enter unsatisfactory spousal relationships and to enter and re-enter production jobs. Following the closure of the mill, and successful training in more skilled occupations, the women have subsequently established less dependent, more satisfactory relationships in the role of wife. The possible relationship between the crisis of a plant closure providing an opportunity for managing a disorienting dilemma, and the increased competency of the women in managing personal

relationships could prove beneficial to the field of adult learning and adult development, especially as it increases our knowledge of transformation and how significant learning events become personally meaningful and subjectively valued. Further research is recommended.

Dislocated workers may gain strength from retraining experiences resulting from the success of the learning experience itself. Successfully completing skilled training seemed to have a positive influence on all the women who participated in the retraining, at least in that they achieved success and that they came to reflect upon the changes in their lives as mill workers and their lives now as skilled workers in other occupations. Because the newly dislocated worker was task oriented, the need existed for specific skills to be learned in order for the learning to be perceived initially as meaningful. In practice, specific skill training should be made available to all dislocated workers who do not possess the skills to secure employment in the existing labor market. For those who do possess those skills, a meaningful learning experience should be made available through job transition classes which provide training in job search skills and in skills to assist with a smooth transition to another employer. A positive

retraining experience, especially one that is followed by occupational or job proficiency, may well result in personal developmental and growth.

It is recommended that further study be undertaken to delve into the consequence of dislocation for female workers. The relationship between dislocation, retraining, and significant learning experiences could prove interesting in light of the similarity of impact between dislocation and other life crises such as death and divorce. This study may be replicated at other plants or a similar methodology may be used to study females who have experienced a disruptive life event such as the death of a closely attached relative or spouse, divorce, even a move to an unfamiliar community. Such a study could increase the knowledge of the consequence of life events upon role changes and learning.

Women dislocated when the Kayser Roth Hosiery Mill closed consisted of three major groups: women who sought training opportunities and increased skill proficiency before going on to other jobs; those who chose not to enter retraining and sought other employment very soon after relocation; and those who neither pursued retraining nor attained reemployment. This study addresses only the first group. Additional research is recommended to study both remaining groups

for the impact of dislocation upon their specific circumstances.

The retraining experiences for workers dislocated from the mill often involved classes which were composed primarily of other workers from the mill. Participating in a learning environment of individuals from a similar background allowed each individual to feel comfortable with cohorts, eliminating the need to adapt to a group of strangers. The subgroup of mill workers, within the larger learning community, allowed for an easy exchange of information and ideas beyond the specific skill learning tasks, consequently easing the transition from industrial production locale to learning milieu. From this exchange among cohorts began the process of personally meaningful learning.

Training for dislocated workers, preferably provided to a group of individuals dislocated from the same facility or similar cohort group, should allow for successful attainment of new skills and should provide ample interaction between the participants. The kind of skills and the duration of training seems of less significance than the opportunity to experience success in a learning environment. It would appear that the combination of purposeful skill learning and adult development learning would create multiple opportunities for significant learning experiences

which culminate in transformative knowledge and changes in practice.

It is suggested that public policy regarding dislocation and worker readjustment provide for retraining in a specific skill or purposeful academic pursuit for each female dislocated from a manufacturing facility. Adult educators should be available at the time of dislocation to provide resources for decision making in regard to training options available and suitable, and to encourage workers to participate.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

1 Local Office		EDWAA Certification (Title III)				2 Assessment Center	
3. Application (mm/dd/yy) Date		4. Social Security Number		5. Name (Last) (First) (Initial)		6. FIPS County	
7. Home Phone () - ()		8. Street Address		9. City		10. State	
11. Zip Code		12. Birth (mm/dd/yy) Date		13. Age		14. Disability Yes No	
15. Ethnic (circle one) Male Female		16. U.S. Citizen or Eligible Non-Citizen Yes No		17. Selective Service Number		18. U.S. Citizen or Eligible Non-Citizen Yes No	
19. Dislocated From: Employer's Name and Address		Beginning Date		Ending Date		Hours/ Week	
Wage/ Hour		Job Title		D.O.T.			
20. List All Jobs Since Dislocation Employer's Name and Address		Job Title/DOT		Beginning Date		Ending Date	
21. EDWAA Eligibility Criteria (circle the basis for eligibility)		22. TRA Status		23. Unemployment Compensation Status		24. Industry of Dislocation	
1 Terminated or Notice of Termination		1 Not TRA		1 Claimant		1 Agriculture/Fishing	
2 Plant Closure or Substantial Layoff		2 Eligible		2 Exhaustee		2 Mining	
3 Long Term Unemployed		3 Waiver		3 Neither		3 Construction	
4 Self Employment		4 Recipient				4 Manufacturing	
		25. Disposition				5 Transportation/ Communication Public Utilities	
		1 Refer to SDA _____ (NAME)				6 Wholesale/Retail Trade	
		2 Refer to ES/BRIS				7 Finance/Insurance/Real Estate	
		3 Pet Application				8 Services	
		4 Ineligible _____ (REASON)					
26. I have been informed of the employment and training services and opportunities available to me through the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) and I am interested in participating. The above information is true to the best of my knowledge.						27. Comments	
Applicant _____ Date _____							
Certifying Officer _____ Eligibility Certification Date _____ This certificate valid for 45 days following this date							
28. Certificate of Continuing Eligibility (CCE)							
Issued Yes No		Issue Date (mm/dd/yy)		Expiration Date (mm/dd/yy)		Redeemed Yes No	
						Keyed by: _____ Date Keyed: _____	

LB-0374 (6/93)

JTPA/EDWAA/JOBS Termination Notice

1. Social Security No.		2. Name (Last, First, Initial)		3. County Name and Code		4. Home Phone No.	
5. Address				6. Primary Contract Number		6a. Last Secondary Contract Number	
7. Completed Training		EDWAA Only		16. (Circle One): Entered Unsubsidized Employment		1	
Yes	No	14. Completed Basic Skills *	Yes No	Type of Termination	Adult /Youth Employability		
8. Received GED		15. Completed Other Occupational Skills Training *		Enhancement		2	
Yes	No	Yes No		Other Termination		3	
9. Received Academic Credit		8% Completion Codes		17. Termination Date			
Yes	No	Completed Lvl. of Ach.		Month		Day Year	
10. Attained Pre-Employment Skills		Comp. Lvl. of Ach./Ent. Trg.		18. Program Codes (circle the appropriate code)			
Yes	No	Completed Program					
11. Attained Basic Skills		Comp. Pgm./Ent. Trg.		Title II - A, Incentive 05 Title I, 3% new 31 Title II - C 62			
Yes	No	Comp. Pgm./Ent. Trg.		Title II - A, 75% old cc 10 Title IV - C 40 EDWAA - Fmla 91			
12. Attained Job-Specific Skills		Comp. Pgm./Ent. Trg.		Title I - 3% old cc 13 Title II - A, Older Wvrs 55 EDWAA - 40% 93			
Yes	No	Did Not Comp./Ent. Trg.		Title II - C, Incentive 15 Title II - A, 6% new cc 61 EDWAA - Nat'l. Rav 94			
13. Completed OJT		Did Not Comp./Ent. Trg.		Title II - A, 6% old cc 16 Title II - A 77 EDWAA - Incent 95			
Yes	No	Did Not Comp./Vol. Term		Title I - 6% old cc 18 Title II - A new cc 79			
		Did Not Comp./Invol. Term		Title II - B 20 JOBS - SDA 80			
				Title I, 6% new 28 JOBS - Non-SDA 81			
19. Reason for Termination (Circle One)				20. Industry of Placement			
Reason		Code		Reason		Code	
Employed Public		01		Program Ended		22	
Employed Private		02		Unable to Place		23	
Entered Military		03		Other, Specify		25	
Entered Registered Apprenticeship		04		Employability Skills/Emplmt. Compins.		26	
Returned to Full-Time School		05		Transfer to Other Titles		27	
Entered Non-Title II Program		06		* Entered Unsubsidized Emplmt. Retraining		31	
*** Completed Program		07		* Ent. Unsub. Emplmt. - Relocated Retr.		32	
Completed Major Lvl. of Education		08		* Ent. Unsub. Emplmt. - Basic Read. Only		33	
Moved from Area		09		* Called Back/Rem. w/ Layoff Employer		34	
Refused to Continue		10		* Transfer to Other JTPA Programs		35	
Administrative Separation		11		* Entered Non-JTPA Training		36	
Arrested in School		12		* Ent. Unsub. Emplmt. - Ret. in Area - Basic Read. Only		37	
UA Transition		13		* Change of Funding		40	
Family Care		14		Institutionalized		41	
Transportation Problems		15		Death		42	
Cannot Locate		16		** Lost Welfare Benefits		43	
Health/Medical		17		Terminated from Obj. Assessm ONLY		44	
Found Ineligible After Enrollm't		20		Terminated fr. Obj. Assm't & Ent. Empl ONLY		45	
21. Placement Employer Name				* EDWAA only			
				** JOBS only			
				*** Summer Youth only			
22. Street Address				Follow-Up Information			
23. City		State		Zip Code		Name of Nearest Relative or Friend/Relationship	
24. Employer Phone Number		25. Name of Immediate Supervisor				Street Address	
26. Starting Date		27. Hourly Starting Wage		28. Number of Hours per Week		City	
						State	
29. Occupation		30. DOT Code				Zip Code	
						Phone No.	
31. State job located in		32. Receives Fringe Benefits		Yes No		(must be different from #4, home phone number)	
33. Job Covered by U.I.		Yes No					
34. Non-Traditional Employment for Women		Yes No					
Signature of Interviewer				Date			
				Keyed By _____			
				Date _____			

LB-0245 (rev. 4/93)

APPENDIX II

INFORMED CONSENT

This project, entitled "Learning Experiences Among Female Dislocated Workers", involves case study research with ladies laid off from the hosiery mill in Harriman who participated in the EDWAA program. It is designed to identify the experiences of these former hosiery mill employees since the mill closed.

Your participation will involve an interview which will last about an hour. During the interview you will be asked to relate your experiences since the mill closed. You may be asked to participate in another interview to clarify items discussed in the first.

Everything you say will be held confidential. The interview will be taped, and a professional transcriptionist will be employed to transcribe the tape. She will be bound by confidentiality standards. All references which may identify you will be removed from the transcripts and no identifying information will appear in any published report. I will retain the audio tapes in my home until the study is completed whereupon the tapes will be erased.

Your participation in this study is greatly appreciated, because it will contribute to the research on dislocated workers. Your participation is voluntary and you may withdraw any time. Verbal accounts of your experience are completely at your discretion.

Your signature on the attached form below indicates your understanding of and willingness to participate in this project.

* * *

I, _____, agree to participate in the aforementioned study. I understand I will be interviewed and that the interviews will be audio-recorded and transcribed by a professional transcriptionist. I also understand that I am free to verbalize my experience at my discretion and that I may interrupt or terminate my participation at any time during or between interviews.

(Signature)

(date)

CERTIFICATE OF CONFIDENTIALITY

I, _____, certify that I have transcribed the audio-recorded tapes from the interviews with the subjects participating in Joy Margrave's research, "Learning Experiences Among Female Dislocated Workers." In having access to the interview data, I promise to keep all material confidential and secure. I will refrain from disclosing any names or revealing any information pertaining to the transcripts to any party, except for Joy Margrave.

(Signature)

(date)

APPENDIX III

Ann

Ann grew up the middle child, the only girl surrounded by four brothers. She lived outside of town and played country girl games. It was a pleasant childhood and she developed close, warm relationships with both her parents and her brothers. Such was not to be the case in all her relationships.

Ann graduated from high school at eighteen, and like many girls graduating in the early sixties, went to work at the hosiery mill in Harriman soon afterward. She stayed at the mill for two years before marrying her high school sweetheart and moving to Georgia.

She was very much in love and excited about getting married. A child came to bless the marriage, a daughter Ann adored, but the marriage fell on hard times and, after five years, failed. Her young ex-husband moved to Florida to be with his family, and she came back to Tennessee to be with hers. With a two-year-old to care for, Ann returned to the job market. She found a job in the admissions office of Harriman Hospital and went about putting her life back together. Although living in her parent's house, it was during this time that Ann learned to act and live independently as she earned her living and cared for her child.

Ann took her daughter to Florida to see her father's family two times after the divorce, each on her Fourth of July vacation, but after two years, he was killed in an automobile accident. Because it seemed important, Ann took her daughter to her young father's funeral. The sad trip turned out to be a good experience because the child met many aunts and uncles she may never have known otherwise. These older relatives rallied around the young girl and provided her with family ties, a value of importance to Ann who held no grudge from her marriage and wanted her daughter to experience these bonds.

Near the time of her first husband's death, Ann married her second husband, a man who valued money greatly. He did not think she earned enough working at the hospital, and wanted her to work at the mill. So she did as he asked and left the hospital for the hosiery mills, where the pay, based on production standards, did allow her to earn more money. First she worked at Roane Hosiery and, after four years there, moved on to the Harriman hosiery mill. She would remain there fifteen years, until the mill's very last day.

Ann and her daughter grew very close during the time they struggled together to survive. Even after Ann's remarriage, the two shared a special attachment.

When two more children came along, they both rejoiced and the seven year old shared a tiny bit of the mothering role.

Ann continued to work during the births and nurturing of her young children. They held the warmest place in her heart, and she devoted much attention to their education and development. Because her parents still lived nearby, she was able to see them and her brothers often. While she enjoyed these close family ties, she also found some time to enjoy creative expression through sewing and ceramics, crafts in which she developed a certain proficiency of skill.

She and her husband bought a house on a mountainside which she deftly turned into a gracious and well-kept home. She earned good money as a panel sewer and her husband held a white-collar position which allowed them some status in the community. So they seemed to have it all, a good income, a lovely family of intelligent and handsome children, and a certain degree of station in the community. But under all this respectability there loomed the specter of spousal and child abuse.

Like Ann herself, her eldest daughter married and moved to Georgia when she turned twenty, and her departure created a void in Ann's life. Ann would later reflect on the effect of this event as a more

profound incident than losing her job when the mill shut down. "That (her daughter's leaving) was worse than the mill closing," she would comment. But her resilience sustained her through the transition as she adopted the attitude, "You just have to get used to it and adjust."

There was never enough money. Ann's husband always wanted her to earn more and she did well on the production line. When, after eleven years as a panel sewer, the opportunity came for her to transfer to the position of secretary in the maintenance department of the mill, she took it. She was ready for the change and the money was a little better. The job lasted three years, the marriage not quite that long.

Three months before Kayser Roth announced the mill would close, Ann and her husband separated. She and the two children remained at the house on the mountainside. He moved out. The split had been a long time coming but it was still difficult, both emotionally and financially. In June, the mill announced it would close, and in September, Ann and her husband of twenty years divorced. It was a time of great adjustment, but Ann accepted each anomaly one at a time and decided she was ready for a change, because, as she said,

I had worked in factory work at the hosiery mill for fifteen years down here and I had

worked at Roane Hosiery for four years before I came to Burlington. So really, I had spent nineteen years at the hosiery mill. I was kinda ready to get out.

As long as the mill ran, the machines required maintenance on a twenty-four hour schedule. After they stopped the final time, they still had to be cleaned and stripped of the nylon fibers. Consequently, Ann's job remained critical until the very end. She worked until September.

In the waning days of operation, Ann explored several options for training being offered to Kayser Roth workers, and finally decided upon a clerical skills class at the local vocational-technical school. The class ran for nine months, during which time she lived on her unemployment insurance and personal resources. About half way through her training, Ann secured a co-op position with a community service organization, which not only helped her financially by providing her with some income, but also proved her proficiency as a secretary. Through this contact, she learned of a new industry coming to the county.

Berkline Industries, a manufacturer of upholstered furniture, saw an attractive workforce in the laid-off mill workers and came into the county with a sewing and cutting operation in the spring following the closure of the mill. Ann stepped forward early to apply for a

position with the company. She became one of the first employees of the new operation.

Like all the new employees, Ann began as a sewing machine operator. The company accepted no other applications. She learned all aspects of the operation and quickly moved up. By the time the company had moved from temporary into permanent quarters, she had been promoted to the coveted position of inspector.

Ann's two younger children both graduated from high school and entered college. Her younger daughter is a student at a four year college and lives on campus most of the time, but her son still lives at home. He is working full time at a nearby correctional facility and is attending classes at the University of Tennessee. She never sees her ex-husband and neither do the children. The relationship between him and all of them deteriorated to the point of dissolution. One child even refers to the father as deceased, although he continues to hold a prominent position in the community.

Ann is a very attractive woman of fifty-one, with pristine skin belying snow white hair. She is, however, afflicted with a thyroid condition which has recently caused rapid weight gain and other related health problems. One of her brothers has a similar condition. She has researched her condition through

discussions with her doctors, video tapes, and books. Her mother, concerned for the health of two of her children, orders books and pamphlets on endocrinological conditions and Ann reads all of them. Through these means, Ann has learned a great deal about her condition.

Ann has not engaged in any formal learning activities since completing her clerical course after the mill shut down. Of late, her eyesight has dimmed somewhat and she prefers not to drive at night, thus limiting her getting out to engage in any classes. She has, however, engaged in purposeful learning through her job, and she has sought to acquire more knowledge about her health condition. In addition she has learned whatever skills she needed to continue living independently.

While at the vocational-technical school, Ann met a gentleman with whom she later developed a long and comfortable attachment. He is a frequent visitor at her home and has established a positive relationship with all her children, no easy feat as he had to overcome their suspicion that he would behave similarly to their father, a man they do not wish to have in their lives.

Ann is a grandmother now. She dotes on the child and proudly shows her photograph. She enjoys weekends

traveling to Atlanta to visit, taking her other grown children with her. She continues to sew some, but she had given up ceramics because after standing nine hours as an inspector, and some Saturdays for half a day, she has no energy for ceramics. Her thyroid condition also leaves her tired much of the time, so she mostly watches TV and visits with her loved ones. Ann's loved ones still include her parents, with whom she takes every Sunday dinner.

Ann is pleased she took the position at Berkline. Like most jobs, there are ups and downs, but overall the pay is a little more than the hosiery mill, so she is happy with it. The relationships which matter most to her, those with her children, her parents and brothers, and her friend, are firm and rewarding. Her life is good, and save for her constant struggle against her metabolic imbalance, Ann is content.

Betty

Betty is a quiet person, having little to say and a soft voice. She thinks before she speaks but articulates with a certain authority. Her demeanor is pleasant, almost regal in propriety, as she bestows an occasional smile. Still, a genuine warmth radiates.

As a high school student, Betty tried to finish all four years in three, but at the end of her third year one fourth credit prevented her from graduating. Six weeks into that summer, her mother died, leaving the young girl, two weeks shy of her eighteenth birthday, on her own. At one of the lowest points in her life, she had no idea what she would do. She never returned to high school.

Soon after her birthday, Roane Hosiery hired Betty on the production line. It was not the position she particularly wanted, but it did pay the bills and she was happy to have a job. With no family to help, she had to support herself. She would stay with this job for nine years.

Betty lived on her own or with a friend for nearly three years. When she was twenty, almost twenty-one, she married. It was an exciting time at first, and she continued to work to help build the family. When she was twenty five, her daughter was born. She loved being

a full time mother but money was scarce so she returned to work soon after the birth.

When her daughter was about two years old, Betty resigned from Roane Hosiery to stay home with her. This time together was good for both mother and daughter. Betty enjoyed not working and being home with her child when she was little. But turbulent clouds loomed in her life, as her marriage experienced rough going and then failed. After two years as a full time mother, Betty's marriage ended in divorce and she again had to work to support herself. It was so like when her mother died and she did not know what she would do. How would she take care of herself and, this time, her child? She described this period of her life as: "I've had plenty of ups and downs. I've been down to where I thought I couldn't get back up."

There were really no options but to go back to the line of work she knew she could do. This time, Betty applied to and was employed by the Harriman Hosiery Mill. She hired on as a production worker and resumed a routine similar to the one she had known before. She would remain at the mill until it closed nine years later. But these years would not be static for her. Many changes would take place in and around the young woman's life.

Betty's ex-husband continued to beg her to try their marriage again, for their sake and the sake of their daughter. After eighteen months as a single mom, she agreed to remarry. Betty felt from the beginning it was a mistake, but she felt she had to try. "I wasn't happy," Betty described her decision. "I just let him talk me into it. I did it because of my daughter. I didn't think it was going to work. I mean he was good at convincing me."

As Betty feared, the marriage did not work. After four years of ups and downs, they called it quits again. This time, there were no difficult decisions. She was just glad to have the marriage end.

About the time her marriage dissolved the second time, Betty decided to go back to school. At the age of thirty seven, she earned her GED. It was a thrill to at last earn her high school diploma. She knew she did not want to work production all her life and decided training was the key to getting into the office. She enrolled in night classes where she took computer courses and word processing. Because she was single she felt she had plenty of time to take the night classes. She also felt good about going to school and did well in her studies, earning A's and B's from the local community college. Her efforts paid off and she landed a job in the mill's payroll department.

Other factors in Betty's life began falling into place. After two years she married a man she had known all of her life. They had gone to school together and had been neighbors. She felt because she knew her new spouse very well, his family and his personality, with this person there would be no surprises. She felt confident this liaison would prove a good marriage.

Betty's daughter entered her teenage years with some difficulty. She was a good child but she really wanted the rocky marriage between her parents to heal and for them to stay together. Consequently, she was not happy about her mother's remarriage, and, as might be expected, there developed a certain stress in the new family. Betty determined that she wanted both marriage and daughter and struggled to maintain her relationship with her daughter, while establishing her new marriage. It remained difficult, but she persisted.

Betty felt her life was going well following her marriage. Things were working out at home, her daughter was beginning to accept the marriage, and for the first time, she felt good about being married. Her position in the payroll department brought her more interesting work and more income than all her fourteen years on the production line. Her efforts to complete high school and the computer courses she had taken had paid off, and she found herself deftly learning the new

skills of her office job. As she had anticipated, Betty enjoyed clerical work far more than production. For the most part, her life was stable and she was happy.

In June of that year, the mill officials asked some of the workers to take a voluntary week off due to lack of work. Everyone knew they had lost the Penney's contract for nylon hosiery resulting in the work being down a little, so Betty took the week off. She never returned. A telephone call from the mill told her the news that it would close. She was shocked. Like most people, Betty assumed the mill could weather the current economic ups and downs just as it had several times before in the past seventy-five years.

When the initial shock subsided, Betty began to look about for options. She had just bought a new car two weeks before, but she was not worried financially because her husband had a good job and she had skills she felt sure she could market. At the other times in her life when she had needed to find work, she had no skills save for production. She had never before experienced the confidence she now possessed. Betty studied the opportunities available and knew she could participate in further training if she so chose, but after a short while, she decided she had sufficient skills to offer and began looking for another job.

Less than two months after the mill closed, Betty was employed by a local bank as a teller. There were many changes. At the mill she had worked around a lot of people but not with a lot of people. As a matter of fact, while preparing payrolls most of her contact with people occurred over the phone. At the bank she constantly dealt directly with the public as front line customer service. While working in payroll at the mill, she had dealt with a lot of dollars in the abstract of checks and figures. In her new job she actually handled cash.

There was no course in how to interrelate with people and the difference was very real for Betty, but she did, over time and through trial and error, learn to deal with the public. Betty related that one of her greatest learning experiences was, "Just to learn not to let what people say bother you or interfere with your work." Now that she has learned how to deal with the public, she is more confident and likes her job very well.

Betty did go back to school a couple of years ago to take more computer classes. This time, she attended the local vocational school where she took advanced word processing, and the local community college where she took computer literacy. She went back for these classes because she wanted to. Her experience with

computers at the mill and at the bank had been limited to the prescribed programs and she wanted to learn more. She may take more classes if she develops the interest.

Betty shared that the changes she has experienced over the past five years have not been all that great. So far as the impact of the mill closing on her life Betty says, "Everything has probably gone on the way they would if I was still working there (the mill)." Only her work has been different. She changed jobs, and she enjoys the job she has now, but she had to take a pay cut in the transition. She is just now beginning to earn what she made at the mill as a payroll clerk. Her work life is more public now, but she enjoys her customers. She is known in the community as an efficient teller and she brings a certain grace and calm to the position.

Every once in a while Betty will see an old friend from the mill, but for the most part that portion of her life is past. She lives and works in a nearby town, where she has forged a new career and new relationships. She has taken up walking both for fitness and for pleasure. Sometimes her husband walks with her, but only around home because he is not one to get out on the local walking trail. At home, her marriage is good and her daughter grown. She is very

proud that her daughter will soon finish the local
community college with a 4.0 grade point average.

Life is pretty good.

Clair

Clair appears a lady of refinement. She dresses on the edge of current fashion and wears her hair in a popular cut. Her presence is professional and polished with just a shadow of Appalachian argot discernable in her voice as she relaxes. There remains no evidence she is first generation literate.

Clair grew up "real, real poor", the fifth of twelve children. Her father held school to be a waste of time. Clair recalled, "He needed us on the farm and when you reached the eighth grade, 'You was doing really good and that was as far as you needed to go,' according to my dad." When Clair was in the fifth grade, her father moved the family to Cleveland, Tennessee, where he took a job with East Tennessee Natural Gas. This move would set Clair's life on a different course.

Clair's working life began in the seventh grade, she went to live with her father's boss. The man's wife needed assistance with her two children, and Clair was the right age to help out. She learned formal domestic skills from the lady, and used them to help with the family's chores. In return, Clair received room, board and her clothing. Clair lived with and worked for this family for two years in Cleveland, and

when they moved to Greeneville, she moved with them and remained a third.

It was in Greeneville that Clair entered high school, the first member of her family to study beyond eighth grade. The family for whom she worked asked her to stay, they would have sent her on to college, but she missed her own family and she wanted to go home, so she left Greeneville at the end of her freshman year and returned to Harriman, where her family now lived. She had saved enough money to buy her books for her sophomore year so she went back to school in the fall, and soon found work at Davis Diner as a waitress in the evenings and on weekends. There she remained until she graduated high school, the first in her family to do so.

Following graduation, Clair worked for a while for a dentist, but shortly moved on to the hosiery mill's third shift, because the night shift paid more than the others. About this time, Clair moved out of her family's home and into an apartment with a girl friend. She bought a sewing machine and made clothes for her twin sisters so they too could attend high school. She also helped them get a job as carhops in a local drive-in. They were "real cute and real smart," according to Clair, and she encouraged them to stay in school. Of

Clair's eleven brothers and sisters, the twins were the only others to earn a high school diploma.

When Clair was twenty-one, she married and moved away from Harriman with her husband. They looked for work in Chicago for a while, and then they returned for a time. They traveled to California and Michigan but always came back home. Clair worked at the mill during their periods of living near Harriman. She had a good work record at the mill, so she could quit when they left and hire back on with no difficulty when they came back.

Three children blessed the young couple in rapid succession, and Clair would balance motherhood with working at the mill when they lived near by, but she did not work all the time they were away. After the third child, her husband obtained his pipe fitters certificate and started traveling from job to job. Clair wanted a steady home for their children, so they bought a home in the country where Clair settled down with the three children to make a home. Her husband continued to travel but he came home often and worked nearby when work was available.

For the next twenty years, Clair worked at the mill and reared her children. When her husband was out of town, she pretty much devoted her time to the children. Whenever they had the money, they would take

short trips to Gatlinburg, Chattanooga or other places of interest. Her children, one by one, graduated from high school and then from college. The last one graduated from UT the year before the mill closed.

Clair worked at the mill off and on for twenty-five years. The work was hard but she always made above production and received promotions. She worked several years as an inspector and then was promoted to an industrial engineering technician, the top production job in the plant. She learned to conduct time studies and set production rates. Sometimes Clair dreaded to go to work. Not only was it hard work, she had seventy people to manage and she had to handle all their problems or, if she could not, she had to ask her own supervisor for help. It was a very responsible position, and as high as she could go in the personnel structure. She saw no real future in the job that brought her so little joy.

A few years before the mill closed, management began to bring in some computers. Clair learned to use them for time sheets, but she knew nothing about how they operated. "I kept thinking this is dumb. I didn't know if I was gonna blow something up or not. So I signed up at the vocational school for computer classes at night." Except for some knitting classes two years before, these classes were the first Clair had taken

since high school. She signed up for basic computer, Lotus and accounting. She found she really liked computers, and she wanted to learn more about them.

The year before the mill closed, Clair began to see unexplained changes. She worked next to the personnel office and, from there, observed as some of the top managers began to leave suddenly, one even being escorted from the building. Quality began to slide, and the workers knew it, but managers said to let it go. There was talk that the Penney's contract, vital to the economy of the mill, was in jeopardy. Then the guards came. They just sat at the gate and did nothing for about a month. Clair was home on vacation when she received a call from Kayser Roth headquarters in North Carolina. The voice on the line read a form letter telling her the mill would close and that she had an appointment to sign out on her insurance and pick up her personal belongings. When she tried to enter the plant, she had to sign in with the guards, and when she went to her office, she was stopped. She walked out for the last time with mixed feelings.

Clair thought about what she would do. She rejected the idea of going back into a production job. She had already decided she wanted to learn more about computers, and she wanted to work with them. Looking

into several options for schooling, she chose to enter a vocational-technical school to study office occupations. It was a time of rapid change for Clair, "We got laid off in June, got my first grandbaby in September, started school in October and turned fifty in December." But Clair came through the changes with only mild distress. She knew others who did not cope as well as she, and upon reflection, felt her transition may have been easier because she was not the sole support of her family, and because she feels that change, even as drastic as the mill closing, is inevitable.

In October, she and a co-worker entered the office occupations class at a nearby vocational-technical school. She gave up knitting, her passion for the two years prior, and began studying every night. She was determined to finish school as soon as possible. Sometimes she would feel frustrated because she wanted mostly to work on the computers, but she persevered, taking the English and accounting classes first and then the computer classes. She completed her diploma work in a year. The experience taught her job skills, but it also convinced her that she had the ability to learn, to perform well at the post high school level. As a result, she came to regret she had not chosen to

enter college and complete a degree rather than the more technically oriented course she had chosen.

Her first job in the clerical field was as a temporary worker with the construction operations at Watts Bar Nuclear Plant. She hired in unsuspecting that she would be thrown into a circle of supervisors who spoke, with difficulty, English as a second language, and that she would be given a WANG computer, with which she had no familiarity, to complete her work. "It was probably the worst place I ever worked," Clair said, but she set about learning not only the strange computer system, but also how to communicate with her supervisors, and how to navigate the bureaucracy of purchasing and supplies.

Eventually, as a natural course of the personnel process, all the temps were placed on layoff. Clair was told she would be off a week or two and then brought back. She seized the opportunity, however, to apply for a job with Oak Ridge Associated Universities, a consortium of universities involved in research and development, and landed a three month temporary position there. This position suited her, and at the end of the three months, she was offered, and accepted, another three month appointment. When her second appointment ended, she was offered a permanent job and she took it. Her experience at Watts Bar, where she

learned to work productively and pleasantly with all kinds of people, helped her develop a disposition which she uses every day at the sophisticated "think tank" where she is now employed.

Clair kept up with the friendships she had at the mill for a year or so, but the women went their own ways, most to other training and other occupations. She exchanges Christmas cards with them now and talks to some of them once or twice a year. She has new friendships where she works now. Her relationships at home are pretty much the same as before. Her husband and children, and now her grandchildren, remain a close knit family and she loves to have all five grandchildren over.

Has her life changed much since the mill closed? At first, in thinking of her home life, Clair answered no, but then, upon reflection, she added,

I do think it (the mill closing) is the best thing that ever happened to me....I never would have had the job I have now. I really like the job, and the people, and the kind of work we do. I had no idea that kind of job existed.

Clair is a remarkable woman. From the seventh grader hired out as a domestic for board and clothes in a private home, to the sophisticated clerical assistant at a scientific, educational and engineering facility, she has learned both job and life skills from every turn of her journey. She has gladly helped others and

found reward in it all. At the hosiery mill, she worked, and worked hard. Her reward came from her family, now grown and with families of their own. Since the mill closed, and Clair experienced formal learning through her course at the vocational-technical school, she has discerned that she not only enjoys learning, she is quiet competent in learning. She also enjoys working with highly educated individuals, and appreciates the respect accorded her. Had she a regret in this life, it would not be the changes she has experienced. As Clair herself stated, "You can't be set in your own way anymore, things are changing too much. You have got to be ready to change." Indeed, regrets are not her propensity, but had she one, it would be the lack of a college degree.

Dana

Dana's goal as a young girl was to get married and have babies. She worked only because life required it. But all little girls grow up, and Dana's realities drifted far from her aspirations. When Kayser Roth closed the hosiery mill in Harriman, she grabbed onto a dream and pursued it. She would, in her middle years, stretch beyond her greatest youthful fantasies and snatch the golden ring.

Dana finished high school at seventeen. Life was good and continued to be when, at eighteen, she married. Shortly thereafter, Dana began working as a turner at the new Roane Hosiery Mill. It was not a great job but it did produce income and the young couple needed the money.

Dana's dreams seemed fulfilled when she found out she was pregnant, but there loomed a dark cloud as early pregnancy nausea became a frequent malady. Her many trips to the bathroom became noticeable at work and someone told the supervisor of her pregnancy. Her boss called her into his office and asked her about her condition. She answered yes, and told him she was expecting a baby. To her surprise, the supervisor fired her. Her anguish still raises the pitch of her voice twenty-five years later as she describes the

meeting, "I got fired. Because I was pregnant. They couldn't do it now, but at that time, the laws were different. They thought they owned us and could do what they wanted to."

Dana felt devastated. Not only did she lose the income from her job, she lost her insurance, and her with a baby on the way. Her brother contacted some people at the mill and talked them into at least restoring her insurance. The mill agreed and that eased her financial worries some, but she lost respect for the management and for her value as a worker.

Dana experienced a very difficult birth but reveled in her healthy newborn son. She stayed home with him for a year, and enjoyed being a full time mother, but finances became a great problem and she returned to work.

She applied for a job with the same supervisor who had fired her for being pregnant. Because she had been a good worker, he hired her back. She felt comfortable going back to a job where she was familiar, but she sensed no joy at returning to work. Not only did she prefer to stay with her child, she had little respect for her job because she knew her employer did not value her.

After five more years at the hosiery mill, Dana and her husband agreed that their son needed his mother

at home. Dana quit her job and launched into the period she would look back on as, "the pick of my life." She participated with her son in school projects, took him to museums, tended to his religious education and generally enjoyed being his mother.

The only low point in this golden period came when her father died suddenly. They had been particularly close, and his death drew her into a depression. Partly due to increasing financial pressures and partly due to her sadness over losing her father, Dana decided to return to work. She still wanted to stay home with her son, but he was older now, about ten or so, and she knew she needed the money work would produce.

Again, Dana returned to Roane Hosiery, but this time to a new supervisor. Her husband also worked at Roane Hosiery and they began working together on the same shift. The boss made Dana the instructor and her husband began going out on her. He began going out with the girls on their shift, and she began denying it, hiding from it. In her words, "It was really humiliating and degrading. Any negative word you could use to describe it, I was feeling."

Dana wanted to make her marriage work. She left Roane Hosiery and hired on at the Kayser Roth hosiery mill in Harriman. She was still hiding from the truth, but eventually recognized her own denial and ended the

marriage. She had her son, her job in the knitting department and her house, but no self confidence. She saw herself as a failure, and believed her ex-husband when he told her no one else would have her. She prepared herself to spend the rest of her life alone. This petite, beautiful woman was shocked when, after her divorce, other men began to ask her out.

Although Dana enjoyed the attraction of men, she did not really enjoy the single life. Always, she yearned to have a stable marriage and advised her married friends to appreciate what they had. After two years on her own, she fell madly in love and remarried.

Dana adored her second husband, but he had problems she could not resolve. He obtained legal drugs from his physician but when he took them, he became violent and abusive toward Dana. She tried to live with the situation, but after six years, of breaking up and taking him back, she finally divorced him. The break brought her immeasurable pain. She had been ready to divorce her first husband, but she did not really want to leave this man she still loved. Finally, to escape the abuse, she forced herself to close him out of her life by closing her house and going to live with her sister for a while.

Meanwhile, her son grew up and married. Dana was not ready to give up her mothering role. She realized,

however, he no longer needed her as a mother, but as a friend. The transition was difficult. She cried the night before his marriage, but pulled herself together enough to smile through the wedding festivities, then took to her bed for three days. She tried to be friends with her daughter-in-law, but saw the girl going through a "real hostile stage". It took some time for the two to develop an appreciation for each other, but they eventually forged a friendship.

Dana found herself alone in her early forties and, looking into her future, decided she did not wish to spend the rest of her life making panty hose. She worked as a fixer on the machines, but she wanted to work with people. She heard about the paralegal course at Pellissippi State Technical and Community College. It appealed to her greatly, and she decided to take a couple of courses. She intended to just "play around" with the idea, to see if she liked it, but within six months the mill closed and she had to look at her future more seriously.

The mill closing bewildered Dana. Through her divorces and the maturation of her child, the mill had been her constant. Even though she had considered another career, she had not fathomed the mill would not always be there. "I couldn't sleep, my heart would be pounding. I lost a rock, a stability that I had

needed. I had been there twelve or thirteen years." The symptoms continued for about six months, but Dana pulled herself together enough to attend the mass meeting held in the high school gym for all the employees. There she heard about a special program that would make funds available for Kayser Roth workers to go to school if they wished. There she heard the philosophy which would see her through her transition.

I am not sure who said it at the meeting at the Harriman High School, and the thought had gone through my mind the night before, but it was "take a negative aspect and make it positive". And that is what I tried to do.

Dana decided to pursue her paralegal degree. It was not easy for Dana to ask for help with school, but she did. She studied hard and took a part time job, then took a full time job and finished her degree at night. Her son, who had dropped out of Roane State community College, watched her study and sacrifice to gain an education and her dedication influenced him to return to school. One evening, surrounded by her family, Dana graduated from Pellissippi State. The next day at noon, her son graduated from Roane State. It was a weekend for academic accomplishments, but it was not the end. As soon as Dana's granddaughter was born, her daughter-in-law also returned to school for a nursing certificate.

Dana's learning activities were not limited to her course work. She went on to become a Certified Legal Assistant. But more than her job skills, she learned to step out and take chances. This resolve, which helped her to finish school and launch a career, remains a character trait. Her self confidence is now greater, her shyness diminished. She contributes this learning in great part to, "the fact that I had to get out and do things I wasn't comfortable doing", things like asking for help and speaking in front of a group.

Dana is not sure whether she would have finished the paralegal course if the mill had not closed down. "I might have just given in and kept working at Kayser Roth. I really don't know." But she is very glad she changed careers. She is now a professional who helps people.

Dana remarried after the mill closed. This marriage is totally different from the first two. She compared them like snapshots, as follows:

When I think of my first marriage, I think of my son. With (my second) it was cooking. I had to cook three square meals a day. With my husband now, he lets me be me, totally me.... I wouldn't have married him had it not been that way. I was tired of trying to be somebody else. It was time to be me.

Dana has not forgotten her life before the mill closed. "I still get an empty feeling when I go by there," she said. Although she misses friends from

Kayser Roth, she has new relationships at her new work. Her faith has been strengthened by the events of her life, but her relationships with her family are constant. The greatest changes have been her role as a worker, her self confidence, and her role as a wife. All these changes have brought improvements to her life. Now in her mid-forties, Dana is happily married, a satisfied mother, a doting grandmother, and a career woman. She has indeed grabbed the golden ring. "It is a whole different life," she said. "It is like somebody pulled a shade and I walked through it."

Ellen

Ellen, even in late mid-life, is an attractive woman who dresses with dignity and care. She is retired, with no real plans to re-enter the work force. Her most productive, and most rewarding, years she feels are those thirty she spent in the office of the hosiery mill. Although she worked three years as the switchboard operator in the local hospital, her time now is spent in tending to her home duties, shopping, and waiting for her son to return from his mission work.

Ellen was thirteen years old when she began working as an usherette at the local movie theater. The job lasted five years while she finished high school and waited for her eighteenth birthday when he would be eligible to fulfill her goal of becoming a switchboard operator with Southern Bell Telephone Company. This was the job she would love above all others. "Oh, I loved it! It was switchboard as far as you could reach each hand. And you answered each customer, "number please". And you had personal contact with everyone in town that called anyone."

The operator job lasted three years, until Ellen married and began her family. A complicated pregnancy forced her to resign. She took the best care of

herself and her unborn child, but all her efforts did not prevent her baby boy's too early birth, nor his death soon afterwards. She went back to work briefly but tried again to have a family. Once again, in spite of great care and even experimental drugs, her baby, this time a girl, came too soon and stayed only fleetingly. Ellen's third pregnancy, in as many years, produced a premature son who weighed a little over four pounds. Together, they struggled through the rough weeks and won the battle for his life. From that time forward, Ellen would see herself as a mother above all else.

While the baby was young, Ellen stayed at home. This was due in part to her husband not wanting her to go back to work, and in part to the odd hours and split shifts required of operators. She loved her son and wanted to be with him but, after about three years staying at home, she began to feel depressed. Her husband, a very dominant man, did not understand her feelings. "My husband was the kind that would make you feel like you were worth about five cents." Her friends encouraged her to go back to work.

One of her best friends worked as secretary to the office manager at the hosiery mill and encouraged her to apply for the vacant payroll clerk position. She hesitated to apply, but decided to interview, almost

for spite, when her husband told her she would not work anywhere. She missed being a part of something that gave her self worth and made her feel she was accomplishing something.

Ellen went for the interview. It was common knowledge that the mill wanted women in the office who would stay for a long time and not leave to have children; so she told them the doctor had warned her she could not have another child, and even though she was still young, her family was complete. A week or so after the interview, the manager called offering her the job if she could report the next day. Quickly arranging both child care and temporary transportation, she reported to the mill the next morning and worked until the day it closed, thirty years later.

During Ellen's years at the mill, her life revolved around work and her child. As her son grew strong and healthy, he was allowed to express himself however he pleased and, as an only child, the toddler was bound by few rules. She attended to his every need, physical, emotional and spiritual. He matured into a Christian and a teacher. Mother and child grew close and, even as he achieved mid-life, they remained best friends.

In her early years at the mill, she found satisfaction in learning to do the payroll and,

eventually, in learning to do just about all the office jobs. As she would tackle a new task it would be difficult at first, but after she would do it for a few days, she would learn it and go on. Because of her prior experience as an operator, she was permanent relief on switchboard, a task she always enjoyed. She learned to perform invoice approval and receiving in her later years and she enjoyed these jobs, because they allowed her contact with a lot of people both throughout the plant and at the home office in Greensboro. It also introduced her to the rudiments of computers.

About seven years before the mill closed, a new young boss came in and told her she could not help with the payroll anymore. She did not really understand why, but she obeyed. She had always been there to help anyone who needed it, and now the girls would sometimes get mad at her for going home while they had to stay late and finish the payroll. But her boss "was dominant that way" and would not let her help. She had always been the "motherly type" who helped anyone who needed help with their job. She really liked to be able to help out and found it awkward not to do so.

When the plant closed, Ellen held a responsible position which brought with it good pay, benefits, and a certain status. She was allowed to remain until the

last day, often operating the switchboard. Unlike the younger, production workers, she received a generous severance package which included one year of salary. Still, she felt at loose ends. As long as she had worked her husband had never wanted her to be dependent upon him, and now she felt she might be. She was fifty-seven and unemployed. "I was not old enough to draw Social Security and too old to get a job almost anywhere. You know, who is going to hire someone that old when they can get young people and keep them for years?"

Ellen considered taking financial record keeping at the local community college, but ultimately decided against it. Finally, she chose to take a computer literacy class for dislocated mill workers at the vocational-technical school. She enjoyed it, but she thought she could have learned much more if the teacher had given her more help. The teacher seemed to think that only the young people in the class needed the help or the attention. Ellen felt maybe the instructor thought the older ones would not go back to work. Some of the other learners told Ellen their problems and because she was so motherly, Ellen worried about them.

The day she completed the computer class, she went to work at the local hospital as the evening switchboard operator. She was glad to have the job,

and she liked the switchboard, but she missed the respect she had enjoyed before. Her training supervisor seemed to think she could not handle the switchboard and was always jumping up to make sure Ellen did everything just right. After a while, Ellen got used to her supervisor's behavior, and duly ignored it. But the job entailed much more than switchboard and she had to learn many new procedures, such as patient census and room assignments, all while she was greeting patients and visitors, and dealing with staff and volunteers. It was hectic and demanding, and it paid only five dollars per hour.

Ellen never met a stranger. She had always liked people and to be friendly and helpful. As the switchboard operator at the hospital, she always tried to help other people with their jobs whenever she could. Sometimes she would get fussed at for doing things that were not her job, but other times, like the time she helped find the emergency surgery team to save a man's life, she received commendations.

While Ellen worked evenings at the hospital, her day consisted of work around the house. Her husband always considered such to be women's work so the responsibility for cooking, cleaning, child rearing, and household maintenance, had always been Ellen's. He required a full meal, so Ellen would cook his dinner

and serve it before leaving for her 3:00 pm shift. She never ate the meal herself, preferring instead to eat with other staff on her break in the hospital cafeteria. She did not take classes or participate in any group activities with other adults; however, after leaving work at 8:00 pm, she would often go to the wellness center to work out until 9:00 pm. She would occasionally go out to dinner or to shop with her son.

Ellen's relationship with her husband has changed little over the forty-two years they have been married. She never wanted to fight with him over his position that she should be responsible for all the work around the house. Ellen never participated in his interests of fishing, golf, and bowling. Now they just go their separate ways, except when they are at home, and even then, there is little to talk about.

After she had been at the hospital for several years, a controversy broke out between the city and the hospital administration. The ensuing strife affected all routines at the hospital and, as the operator, Ellen heard everything from everybody. "It was a really big mess." A new administrator came in to run the hospital, and Ellen never did feel like either he or her new supervisor were very friendly to her. When she turned sixty-two, and could draw social security benefits, Ellen retired.

For many years, Ellen had looked after her mother, who had been sickly over much of her lifetime. In the last few years, Ellen had been on call twenty-four hours a day. The responsibility seemed endless, but Ellen cared very much for her and always considered her mother to be the second most important person in her life, next to her son. In June of last year, Ellen's mother died. In August, her son left to conduct mission work in Spain. Since then, there has been an emptiness in her life.

She has maintained a life long friendship with a few close friends. She had some friends at the mill and a few from the hospital, but she seems to be too busy with her daily activities to give them all the attention she should. There just seems to be so much to do around the house, and she does not hit the floor running every morning like she used to when she was younger.

Ellen has considered the possibility of going back to work part time, but she probably will not. Her son will be back from Spain soon, and that will take up more of her time. Besides, she feels strongly that she is "worth more than five dollars an hour", although that is all they paid her at the hospital. She made much more than that at the mill, and she had more respect there too.

Flora

Two coin jars tell the story of Flora's victory and hold the key to Flora's latest dream. One jar located at her newly renovated home, and the other located at the home of her steady beau, contain the coins from each day's extra change that will someday go to purchase cruise tickets. This goal of taking a cruise, unlike the goal to become a nurse, which she held onto for nearly thirty years, she knows with confidence, will be achieved. She knows it will be, because she achieved the first, she is a nurse.

Flora graduated from high school at eighteen, the second girl in her family to do so, even though her four older brothers did not bother with high school and her family saw little value in education, certainly no value at all for girls. Following graduation, she put away her dream of becoming a nurse and went to work at the hosiery mill. "Once you get into the hosiery mill," she said, "it is hard to get out." For the next twenty-nine years, she worked at two hosiery mills and a sewing factory, finishing the last nine at Kayser Roth.

At twenty, Flora became a single parent at a time when society still believed every woman had to pull in double harness. For seven years, Flora struggled as a

single parent to provide the best for her child, including personal sacrifices to send the a five-year-old to a private kindergarten in the years before public pre-schools were available. Through careful planning and scrimping, she managed to purchase a home for herself and her daughter.

When she married at twenty seven, it was with hopes of a more stable life. From the very first, however, her husband disappointed her with his faithlessness. After her second daughter was born she returned to work out of economic necessity as her husband progressed deeper and deeper into alcoholism. He drank incessantly and saw other women constantly. He was never a good provider, so Flora worked to pay the bills and accepted food from her family to feed herself and the children. The marriage became almost unbearable and her nerves grew worse and worse, until finally, after nine years of fighting his alcoholism and its devastation upon his health and her life, she listened to her family physician's urging for her to end the marriage for her sake and the sake of her children. At last, after much anguish, she did, but it devastated her when, within a month of the divorce, he married another.

When her older daughter turned sixteen, the girl took a job at a fast food restaurant to help with the

bills and save toward college. Flora had just bought her first new car, and she agreed to help her daughter purchase an old car to get back and forth to work. Because the teenager was embarrassed to drive the clunker, Flora agreed to let her drive the new Pinto. Flora was working two jobs at that point to pay for the car and make the house payments. Her daughter paid off the Pinto and saved enough to finish college. Flora found great pride in her daughter's accomplishments and never regretted the swap of automobiles.

Flora remained single only a short while before she remarried. Her second husband soon displayed traits similar to her first. Like her first husband, he ran around with other women and she caught them together. He became physically abusive toward her and verbally abusive toward her younger daughter. The second time he beat her, he severely injured her neck. The marriage was not worth destroying her life and her daughter's. She confronted him the next day and the marriage ended abruptly. Her daughters gave her the resourcefulness to end the marriage but it took her a long time to get over his being unfaithful.

The next few years were very lean. The mill never provided full-time work so paychecks were not dependable. Sometimes Flora worked two jobs and when her second daughter turned sixteen, she, like her

sister before her, took a job at a local grocery store. Again, Flora helped pay for a car and the insurance so her daughter could drive back and forth to work. Financially, times were very tough. Sometimes, after all the bills were paid, they had only twelve dollars between them to live on in a pay period. Flora's mother and her sister helped keep food in the freezer, but they had no extra cash to help. Flora remained grateful for the assistance they gave.

During the ups and down of her life, Flora remained supported by the bonds of love between herself and her daughters. The first finished college and married. The second, eight years younger than her sister, finished high school and left the same day for Colorado with her future husband. The loss to Flora of this last child was terrible. During this difficult time, as Flora learned to live alone, she developed a near toxic condition from thyroid disease which created severe health problems. Her condition, although eventually treated and under control, left her with a few continuing health problems.

Now alone, Flora decided to revisit the role of learner. She enrolled in classes at Roane State Community College taking algebra, computer and some craft classes.

Flora was forty-nine when the mill closed. "I was happy," she said, "because I knew that was my way out. I could never afford to go back to school on my own." Flora enrolled in the LPN training program three months after the mill closed and finished the next year. She spent a year as a medicine nurse, then transferred to a learning hospital where for the past three years she has specialized in total care of oncology and respiratory patients.

Flora's life is on the upswing now. In addition to her nursing training, she seems to have learned a lot about herself and her own capabilities. And the nursing has changed her too:

I am a more caring person. I have different feelings about people....I guess I can relate to people more than I could before. I used to be real shy, but now I am coming out of that. That has helped me a lot.

Now that she has met the challenge of a tough academic curriculum, she feels confident of her ability to succeed. It would seem that she attaches more value to herself as a person.

As a worker, Flora has found a new identity. At the mill, she worked only with socks. The work was boring and probably overshadowed her quick wit. Now, she deals with people and revels in the challenge. She has learned to overcome her shyness and to treat both the ailing person and the family as a patient. People

award her the respect of a professional and she enjoys positive relationships both at work and socially. Her greatest reward is a thank you from a patient for the care she gives. No sock ever acknowledged her existence.

Flora has always felt deep affection for her daughters. Their survival struggle evidences the closeness of their relationships. Now, however, she feels she understands the girls better. She is not sure how, but the new understanding has brought a greater depth to their affection. The mention of her three grandchildren brings a smile to her eyes and a display of her obvious adoration. She enjoys doing little things for her grandchildren, and has taught herself how to crochet for the babies and to cut the boys' hair.

As an extra benefit from her new occupation, she has more spendable income and more leisure time than ever before. When she began nursing school, the instructors told her to write down ten goals. She took the exercise seriously and headed the list with: finish school, buy a new car, fix up my house, and travel. Flora has now accomplished all four. She took one trip to New England and along the Eastern Sea Board. She wants to travel more.

With a new job and a new life, Flora has found a satisfaction she did not know before the mill closed.

She commented on her achievements:

I try not to let things get to my head, but I am real proud of myself. Because I have accomplished what I set out to do and I enjoy what I do. It just makes me feel good when people compliment me on good nursing care and thank me for being so nice to them and telling me that I am one of their favorite nurses.... I have had a hard life, but I have come a long way.

Flora has not remarried but she does have a very special relationship with a gentle man. She had a predilection for choosing the wrong men for partners. She learned after the first marriage not to get hurt, but not until the second ended did she realize that she "had a knack for picking people that were not suitable for me or that I could not tolerate." Now, however, she says she has "learned how to pick and what to look for and who to choose." She attributes her new, more satisfying, relationship to her new self confidence. Flora and her new friend both want to take a cruise together. They each keep a coin jar to collect change. "They laugh at me and tease me," she says of the coin jar, "but that is OK." Someday, those coins will buy the cruise tickets and Flora's next goal will be achieved.

Gail

As a young girl growing up in Harriman, Gail endured terrible shyness. She really wanted to be a nurse, but she more or less accepted that she was too shy to be a nurse. It would take twenty-five years in textile production, and two major plants closings, to convince her otherwise.

Education did not seem all that important when Gail decided not to finish high school, so she dropped out in the ninth grade. Like many girls from Harriman, she began work at the Harriman hosiery mill soon after turning eighteen. She continued to live at home except for a short time when she moved into an apartment, but she moved back home again and continued to live there until she married, at age twenty-one.

Gail continued working after she married until the birth of her son three years later. She had been at the mill seven years by that time and she wanted to stay home with her baby, so she resigned. The next year and-a-half proved rewarding for the young woman. She regarded being a mother the most important thing in her life.

When she did have to return to work, the baby was fifteen months old and she found she could work at Roane Hosiery on a six hour shift. Her daily routine

consisted of going in to work at six in the morning and working until twelve. The baby slept until eight, so she spent a mere four hours away from him each day. Only because her mother-in-law agreed to keep the child did she leave him then. Gail worked the six hour schedule, which allowed her to be an almost full time mother and an almost full time worker, for the next three years. As she watched her child grow to a healthy five year old, she foresaw him leaving for school, so she decided to quit and stay with him the final year before he started.

Just before his sixth birthday, Gail's son started kindergarten and she returned to work. This time, she took a job at Palm Beach, a sewing factory which made fine apparel for women and men. She liked this job a little better than the hosiery mill, in part because the money proved somewhat better, and in part because she enjoyed working on a sewing machine.

For the next seven years Gail's life proved fairly stable. She nurtured her son and enjoyed his early school years. Although at times her thoughts returned to the wish to become a nurse, she would tuck that thought away as too remote. With a stable marriage and a constant income, there was really no need to think about something so far away. Another idea, however, which would prove to be a first step toward her dream,

did begin to seem important. As she helped her son with his homework, Gail began to wish she had completed high school. At first it was just a thought but with time, the thought gained value.

Meanwhile, the sewing factory where Gail worked experienced economic ups and downs. Work stoppages and labor disputes flared occasionally between the workers and management. Ultimately, in 1979, the plant closed down. There were no special programs to help workers toward new careers or new jobs. Gail went home. Now she had the time to consider her options. Now she could go to school.

Gail enrolled in preparatory classes at Roane State Community College to prepare for the GED test. What made her go back? "I just wanted to. My son was in school and I encouraged him. I knew I had not stayed in school, so I went back and got my GED." She completed her classes, took the test, and passed. Gail felt very proud of her accomplishment, probably more so than had she completed high school in her teens.

With GED in hand, Gail wanted to go to nursing school. She had, with the various extensions of the time, about a year and a half of unemployment insurance, enough income to get by while she trained. She signed up for the nursing orientation and prepared to take the entrance test, but before she could attend

either, she was called back to another shirt factory. Weighing her family's current needs, she decided, "I needed to go to work more than I needed to go to school right now, so I went to work."

Gail remained at the shirt factory for a couple of years, until 1982, when she returned to the Harriman hosiery mill. Gail worked hard at the hosiery mill, just as she had always done, and was rewarded with a promotion to inspector. She enjoyed her job this time more than she had the first time she worked there. "I wonder," she said, "if we ever really like our first job?" Her experiences in other factories, in the plant closing she had survived, and in her adventuresome trek back to school had helped her overcome some of her shyness. She had matured.

Even though Gail felt fairly good about what she was doing, her thoughts frequently returned to nursing, and she off and on considered going back to school. She seriously considered quitting her job and going to nursing school, but she heard some of the rumors that the plant was going to close, so she decided to wait and see what happened.

When Kayser Roth announced the Harriman hosiery mill would close, Gail took immediate action. She had taken a typing course some time before and had not liked typing at all. From that course, she knew

clerical was not the skill training for her. She was ready to pursue her dream. Even had the EDWAA program not provided special opportunities for the dislocated workers, Gail had made up her mind to take the nursing course. "I had reached the age where I had wanted to learn something," she explained.

Gail applied for the nursing program and passed the entrance test with ease while she was still working the last days at the mill. To her delight, she was able to enroll in the nursing curriculum almost immediately, because the EDWAA program facilitated creation of an entire extra nursing class and she was able to gain admittance as a former mill worker. After less than a month of unemployment, Gail entered the Licensed Practical Nursing Program at the local vocational-technical school.

It was not easy, but she studied hard and did well in her studies. Looking back, she thought getting through school probably would have been easier had she been younger, but she felt she would not have been ready to face the task at an early age. Her husband, always her best friend, proved very supportive during her training. The support seemed to be mutual:

On Saturday, when he wanted to go to drag races, I would take my books with me and study on the way there. He was always real good to go into another room to watch TV. He always made sure I had quite time to study.

Gail's effort paid off and she landed a job at Rockwood Baptist Hospital even before her official graduation. She really wanted to work in cardiac care, but she stayed at her first job almost a year. When she applied at another hospital, she applied for a job she really did not want and later asked herself why. She decided she would not take the job, but as luck would have it, when the hospital called, the offer was for cardiac care. She happily accepted the position.

Gail grew up very close to her mother. They were best friends. When she married, her husband became her best friend and they have maintained a very caring, very sharing relationship. Over the years, she has considered several people friends but has developed a very special, sharing relationship with only a select few. While she was in nurses' training, she came to share such a friendship with one of the other former mill workers, and they have remained close over the years since. This friendship is similar to those earlier relationships, and it continues to have great value for Gail.

Since leaving school, Gail has found herself frequently in learning situations. Not only does she find it imperative to learn new techniques and care procedures to maintain her nursing skills, she has found that interacting with people under the stress of

illness, or the illness of family members, has taught her many things about dealing with people. She has learned, "You have got to be a nurse not only to the patient, but to the family, and staff." This is not something that can be learned in school, according to Gail, it is learned by experience when you have to deal or cope with people.

Gail has also undertaken a study of oncology, not because she chose to, but because her husband was diagnosed with cancer. She bought books and read about his disease. She talked to the doctors, to his specialty nurses, to her best friend who works in oncology and would tell her what her patients were going through. With her nursing skills and her caring ways, Gail saw him through the illness. After surgery and chemotherapy, he is cancer free and doing fine. During his illness, Gail assumed a caretaker role, but to some extent, she has always been a caretaker and she experienced little change in her role with her husband. Her son moved back home during his father's illness, providing Gail with his additional support to help sustain her.

Gail thinks she probably would have gone to nurses training eventually, even if the mill had not closed. It was a dream she held onto for a long time. She had taken the first steps when she experienced the closure

at Palm Beach, and sooner or later she would have completed what she started, because she always tried to do that, to finish what she started.

This small, soft spoken woman radiates kindness. The shyness that crippled her girlhood has matured into a quiet sweetness. Being a nurse suits her, and she is very glad she became one. The greatest change between working with socks and working with people she says, "It is not as boring. I mean, there is no time to be bored as a nurse. If you are looking at socks all day, you will get bored." She likes helping people and knows her job is important.

Gail continues to set goals for herself. She wanted to learn to crochet, so she bought a book and taught herself. Since then, she has made afghans, broom dolls, placemats, and house shoes. She never had time to take up crafts when she worked at the mill. She worked six days and helped her son with his homework. That seemed to be about all the time she had. Her next wish is to learn to play the piano. She says she is not good enough, but this coming from a tiny lady who wanted to be a nurse for over twenty-five years strikes a dissonant cord. The music she will surely one day play is almost audible.

Halley

Halley is younger than most of the women dislocated from the hosiery mill. She comes from the late baby-boomers and is just entering middle life. Her early years were spent in a secure family with her closest ties to her parents and her brothers. Still, she feels and projects that she is fiercely independent.

Halley began earning her own spending money at the age of twelve, when she began baby sitting. While in high school, she worked the concession stand in the local drive-in movie theater, and after graduation, took a job as a helper in a drapery making business.

In all of these occupations, she interacted with people, but she was unprepared for the hard work and gruffness of production work. When she took the job at the mill she was still very young and inexperienced.

When I first walked into that place (the mill), it scared me to death. The ladies there just looked like they were so rough, like they had just come from a prison. I had never been in an industry place before.

Halley worked hard during the day boarding socks. The work was demanding of a tall person, because boarding required long arms, but Halley stood only five feet, four inches, and the work proved extremely taxing. She worked next to the steamers and dryers, making the job

not only exhausting, but hot. For the first three or four weeks, she dragged her spent body home every night and cried.

Gradually, Halley adjusted to the physical labor, and conditions seemed to improve. She got used to her co-workers and found they were really very nice, so her opinion of them changed. The work was still hard, but she knew she had to make production and stuck with cultivating her skills until she did. From then on, the money was better than she had made in the past, and she settled into a life style she could afford.

After a couple of years, Halley moved away from home into a house and experienced living independently. Only of necessity did she eventually move back in with her parents. While living on her own, Halley discovered she was pregnant, but she decided it would be best if she and the baby's father went their separate ways. At first she decided not to tell anyone that she was pregnant. As time went by, she carried the child unnoticed, and unbeknownst to others. When she was eight months pregnant, she moved back to her parent's home.

A large woman by nature, her parents did not note her change in physique and they too failed to recognize her pregnancy. She told no one at work of her expected child and continued the strenuous boarding tasks.

Meanwhile, she took great pride in her independence, and made all arrangements for her delivery, including prudent prenatal care. On the Friday before her daughter was born, she worked a full shift before going into labor on Saturday. To her parents great surprise and dismay, she delivered a healthy baby girl on Sunday. On Monday morning when she called in to work to tell them she had a baby girl, few would believe her.

After six weeks of post natal rest, she entrusted her daughter to the care of adoring grandparents and returned to work at the mill. For the next several years, her life fell into a fair routine of work and child care. Sometimes she would go out with her friends, but she found her greatest satisfaction in her daughter.

Then, one summer morning she arrived at the mill to find unusual activity.

It was a total shock for all of us. When they called us to a room one day, they said, "We are giving you an envelope. If it has two letters in it, then this is your last day. Go on home. If it had one letter in it, you will be here till closing (September 30) or close to that time." I had one. I was there till closing. It was really a shock.

Halley worked at the mill until the last day it was open. After that, she became involved with JTPA. She had never really thought about going back to school while she worked as a boarder. Before the mill closed,

she had been able to make ends meet and even buy a few extras for herself and her daughter. Now, however, she had no job and only a little unemployment insurance to pay the bills. "I am usually a care free, happy go lucky, on my own kind of person," Halley described herself, "but the mill closing taught me that things can change very quickly without notice." She decided that she had to find something to support herself and her child.

Halley had worked for a few weeks in the office shortly before the mill closure was announced. It gave her the flavor of clerical work. She decided to take the three month computer literacy course taught at the area vocational school in Harriman through the JTPA program for mill workers. This course consisted of a daily routine of three hours of instruction combined with hands on experience in computer basics and popular office software. She found that she really liked computers and decided that she would like to work with them.

Halley's greatest fear was interviewing. Perhaps, she said, the worst part about the mill closing was that she knew she would have to interview to find another job. She took Job Transition Classes through the special EDWAA office set up for Kayser Roth mill workers. There she learned job search skills and

practiced interviewing. Her last exercise was to make applications to employers and go out on interviews. She was interviewing for any job opening when she found a job using her newly learned computer skills at SEG, a local waste management facility.

The job has gone well. Halley has worked there about four years. During her employment, she has learned more about computers and has found she truly does like them. She is now making more money than she ever thought possible at the mill, and she feels successful in her work. She prepares shipment paperwork, but has received an increase in responsibility whereby she now conducts quality control on other clerk's shipping papers. She also prepares special reports. The change in responsibility puts her in line for promotions in the future if she chooses to bid on them. She still does not like change, and she is reluctant to bid on other positions at this point because her job is going so well.

Her job at the mill was drudgery. Halley hated production work. It left her exhausted and stressed at the need to work so hard all the time. She enjoys the office work much better. She still gets her work done, but the pressure is less, and she can gauge her work load better than at the mill.

During the time Halley attended school and looked for a job, her finances continued to decline. She had one unemployment check left when she landed the job at SEG. She lived with her parents and they helped out all they could, but the house seemed to grow smaller as she and her daughter continued to live at home.

Halley decided to pursue a goal she had held for some time, however, and as soon as she could afford it, she purchased her own home in a modest neighborhood. She knew nothing about buying a house, so she went to the Farmers Home Administration and later to her sister-in-law, who worked at a bank, and began asking questions and learning about home buying. She felt really dependent on other people, but she obtained the information needed and bought the house.

Halley and her daughter enjoy a close relationship in their small home. They are still close to Halley's parents and Halley's mother still takes care of the little girl after school. Halley's father and brother take care of problems with the house that Halley cannot manage, and her brother continues to be a solid supporter when she needs his assistance.

Halley's first thought seems always to be her daughter. A few years back, the child had to have her tonsils removed. Complications followed the surgery and the youngster suffered two major setbacks. Halley

pestered the doctors and health care professionals to tell her how to care for her daughter. In this way, she learned quite a bit about how to care for dehydration victims.

Like at the mill, Halley has developed friendships at work. She likes her job better now than at Kayser Roth because it is physically easier, less stressful and pays better. She also likes working with computers. She is glad to be employed, in part because she enjoys working. She did not like being at home during the layoff. She feels she is more responsible now, because she has her daughter to care for, has a home to make payments on, and has a job that she likes doing. She credits learning the computer with much of her good fortune.

Iris

Iris is a small woman with a somber mask. Her cautious, almost timid, entry into the room belies her quickness as her eyes drink in every feature of the space and the interviewer. Abundant dark hair adds softness to the strained features but does little to hide the sadness. So grave is her expression that, like a sunbeam on an overcast day, her occasional smile illuminates the room. When, on one occasion, she laughs, it consumes her and makes her young.

Iris made B's and C's in high school but she never felt confident in herself as a student. She went to work at a drug store at eighteen, with no thought to education beyond high school. A year later she took a job at Roane Hosiery as an inspector and later moved to panel sewer. About this time, at the age of twenty, she married.

During the nine years Iris worked at Roane Hosiery, she did little else outside the home. Her husband did not approve of her going out, so she spent most of her time at home. Her mother continued to be her best friend and Iris would occasionally visit with her and her younger sisters. Spending most of her time at home, she developed the sewing skills she initially learned in high school home economics and became an

accomplished seamstress. She developed a second income sewing for other people. Being rather mechanically inclined, Iris spent time figuring out how things were put together, and then made up her own craft projects.

Iris became frustrated with her boss at Roane hosiery and, while he was on vacation, she decided to apply at the Harriman Hosiery Mill. She took a test and was offered a job immediately. She decided to work out a notice but when she again got mad at her boss, she decided to just quit and go to the other job she had waiting. Once at the mill, she stayed until the shutdown ten years later.

During her twenties, Iris was dominated by her husband. He never took her places and never wanted her to leave the house, so she mostly stayed at home except when she went to work or occasionally went to visit her mother. She always felt like a weak person who could not get out and do things by herself. When Iris was thirty years old, health problems required she have a hysterectomy. After the surgery, she seemed to get stronger as a person.

When Iris was thirty-two, she and her husband adopted a son. This became a turning point for Iris for she had a new meaning in her life. She built her time and indeed her life around the youngster. When he was very small, she began having him help her with

various projects. The most ambitious project they undertook resulted in the two of them building a porch onto the house. With no plans except what she made up in her head, Iris and the small child accomplished the task. Ten years later, the porch is still solid and useful. She has continued to find satisfaction in their work together, whether on other projects, his sports schedule, or just nurturing and helping him with homework.

At work, Iris always stood ready to learn something new and help out whenever she could. After she had worked a couple of years as a panel sewer, one of the engineers asked her to apply for the position of engineering clerk and she did. It was the only position for which she ever applied, and she did it only because the engineer asked her to. She did not have confidence in herself. She served as a clerk for several years and then moved into time studies, a position where she was responsible for helping to set production rates. Although she moved up in the company and took on more and more responsibility, Iris never felt confident in her abilities to learn.

The engineering department offered more than a secure income. A close knit group of workers and supervisors provided a variety of friendships. They worked together, took breaks together, ate together,

and shared experiences and dreams. Covered dish dinners were common and served to celebrate birthdays as well as holidays. Iris's specialty was fried pies. She would work for hours to prepare dozens of fried pies but she enjoyed it. She developed close friendships with several of the women which remain in tact today.

In the spring of 1989, word began to leak out that the mill was in trouble. Iris heard the rumors but hoped for the best. She had confidence in her job so the closing came as a real surprise. By July first, she found herself unemployed. She and the other workers would ask themselves what they would do. "It hurt for a little while," she said but unemployment insurance helped and they were able to pay the bills.

Iris talked to the EDWAA staff who set up an office in the mill. Looking at the variety of training that was available, she felt scared, but she ultimately decided to take the phlebotomy course offered by Roane State Community College, because it was only three months long and she did not think she could successfully complete a longer course of study.

I just didn't think I could do the study part. I was an OK student in school, but never the best in the world. I had a B-C average. I never had that much confidence in myself that I could do better. It scared me.

Iris did very well in the Phlebotomy class, completing with perfect scores and gaining her certification. Even so, she doubted her own ability as she said, "I could not believe I had a 4.0 average. There was my name on the honor roll and on the dean's list! I just couldn't believe that!"

When it was suggested that she take nursing, she shied away from more study. She felt she would not be able to keep all the study material in her head. She felt confident in a hands-on learning situation but not in a theory based learning regime.

While taking the phlebotomy course, Iris participated in several new experiences. The one she enjoyed most was traveling to Knoxville with some of her classmates. They would leave early to study for class, and often they would go out to eat in first one exciting restaurant and then another before going to class. Iris's husband had never taken her out to eat at such places as Ruby Tuesdays and TGI Friday's, and she had certainly never ventured out alone. The travel allowance from the EDWAA program enabled her to buy gas and pay for an occasional meal without having to ask for money from her husband.

Iris received only negative support from her husband while she was in school. He told her she did

not need to take the class and could not pass it. But she not only passed but made very good grades as well.

When she finished school, Iris almost immediately found a job at Harriman Hospital. She worked there only about two months because a local doctor offered her a position as phlebotomist. She has been with the doctor over five years now. While there, Iris has learned to do almost everything in the office, from operating the various machines (e.g. ultrasound) to serving as lab technician, to working the front desk and even nursing. She has learned each new task from the doctor or other professionals in the office. She likes to learn new things, and has considered taking nursing, but the old fear of studying from books lurks in her mind and stops her short.

Figuring things out has always been a great challenge and joy for Iris. She often looks at crafts and deciphers a method of reproducing the item. It is a talent she uses to repair machines as well as work in wood and sew on fabric. These hobbies and side endeavors keep her busy, and oftentimes produce income, while providing her with satisfactions born of accomplishment.

Iris's son is thirteen now. They have maintained a close relationship and she still dotes on him. He is active in sports and Iris goes to all the games. The

boy does not like his mother's hours (she works late two nights each week), but she stands her ground these days and keeps on working.

Iris states that she never would have gone to school had the mill not closed, but she is glad she did. She likes her job with the doctor better than the job at the mill. She takes great pride in how well she does her job, and is willing to express her satisfaction with her new occupation. "Like I say, I am kinda cocky about my job. I know I am good at it, and I have had people come to me and say that nobody else can stick me like you do."

Still, she misses the close friendships she had at Kayser Roth. She does talk to two of the ladies from the mill at least weekly and sometimes more. But the doctor's office is faster paced and seems not to promote the kind of easy relationships she established at the mill.

The greatest change in Iris's life is her relationship with her husband of twenty-five years. He always dominated her and required she ask permission to do things and go places. She no longer asks. Since surviving the mill closure, and finding unprecedented success as a phlebotomist, she has gained self confidence. Having gone out to eat with her fellow

students, she is no longer afraid to go places alone. He does not always understand the change in her.

Very recently, so recently the wound remains unhealed, Iris lost her mother to cancer. The two women remained close through the years and Iris refers to her mother as "not just my best friend, but my best buddy." It is this great sadness that Iris carries with her. She has the friendship of others, and her sisters and brother are nearby, but the loss of her mother is the greatest loss she has experienced. It is another turning point for Iris, a very difficult transition, but she is stronger than ever before and has the will to succeed.

Janet

Janet grew up on a large, traditional family, the youngest of seven brothers and sisters. As a child, her favorite playmates were her oldest sister's children, two youngsters about the same age as she. Her favorite memory from this happy time involved the three of them playing in her large yard, crawling in and out of an antique car pretending to be Bonnie and Clyde. She always wanted to be Bonnie, but her life took a less thrilling track.

Janet graduated from high school with her class. She wanted additional training so she took a teller training course the next fall. Unfortunately, she could not find a job as a teller because everywhere she went, both banks and stores, the employers wanted someone with cash register experience. All she had to offer was a short course in how to be a teller. She had neither experience nor training in how to use a cash register.

After many disappointments, Janet began applying to restaurants and landed a job at Danver's, a local fast food chain. She worked all the jobs, from carry-out to the cash register. She was glad to have a job, but she decided she could be more.

Soon after starting to work, Janet enrolled in Roane State Community College with the intention of entering accounting. She did very well in school, even making the dean's list. Meanwhile, she continued to work full time and go to school full time. The pace was exhausting and, at the end of the term, she decided to take a break before going back to school.

At twenty, Janet married. She was still working full time at Danver's, but she decided after a year or so to go to work at the hosiery mill, where she could earn better money. Because she hired onto the second shift at the mill, she had days and weekends free, so she continued working both jobs. She would work a couple of hours on the lunch shift at the restaurant and then go into second shift at the mill that afternoon. Weekends she worked at the restaurant. It was a rough schedule but she was young, with no children, so it did not bother her.

At the mill, Janet worked as a folder. She began as a manual folder, but eventually she advanced to automatic folding machine operator. Operating the machine required a tad more skill so the change constituted a promotion with a little more pay. She dropped the second job at Danver's.

When Janet was twenty-four, she gave birth to a son. He meant the world to her, and she truly loved

motherhood. She would have liked to stay at home with him. It was a difficult decision, but she left the baby with her mother and returned to work soon after his birth.

As time went on, Janet's world began to crack. Her marriage experienced troubles and she began to hear rumblings at work that production quality at the mill was falling. It seemed the whole time she worked there, she heard rumors saying corporate would shut the mill down, but this time the rumors seemed to gain more and more reliability. As winter approached, Janet's marriage failed, and the week between Christmas and New Year's Eve, she moved back to her parent's home. Her marriage was over and in six more months, her job would also be gone.

Janet had to start all over again as the sole provider for herself and her son. Her wages at the mill did not pay enough to support them so she continued living with her parents. She needed another car to make the trip back and forth to work, so in April she bought a fairly good used one. In May her divorce became final and in June the mill announced it would close.

Janet had watched the product quality go down. She, along with some of the other workers, spoke up to the supervisors, but management told them to just do

the best they could and go on. She worried about the amount of re-work that had to be done on the Penney's contract. If it went, there was not enough work to keep the mill going. She began to plan ahead, just in case. By living at home, she could double her small car payment and maybe get a little ahead financially. Time was not on her side.

She went into work one summer morning and heard the mill was closing. Management told them they would get paid for the day and that was it. The announcement was the last in a long line of negative events. She broke down and wept.

Janet needed to work and began looking different places for a job. Twelve hundred other people were looking too. Shortly after her job search began, she received a letter sent out from the EDWAA program telling about training and she decided to look into it. She had unemployment insurance and lived at home with her parents, so she decided she could afford to attending training for at least a while. She chose to sign up for electronics training at the local vocational-technical school. In August, just over a month after her last day at work, she entered school.

Janet learned quickly and did very well in school. Half-way through the training program, she received a ten hour co-op at a small electronics firm. She

reported for work late one evening and was given a specific assignment of making small modifications to one of the boards. When she studied the small repair job, she noticed something was missoldered. She knew the repair would have to be made before the item could be used, so she went ahead and fixed the board, and told her boss about it the next day. The engineer was impressed, not only with the job she did, but with the initiative she demonstrated. He extended her co-op for the full year she lacked in school and hired her permanent when she finished. Janet kidded that it was the longest ten hours she ever worked, but she never left and still works there today.

Janet's job has grown with the company. Although her title is electronics assembler, she does more advanced tasks, and is also the office manager. This very competent woman takes great pride in her position. She has had to learn a lot on her own in the job. Her boss would give her something to do, show her how to do it and then leave it with her. If she had questions, he would help her, but for the most part he gave her the chance to figure it out for herself. Janet likes this approach to learning, it gives her freedom.

This position is very different from the job Janet held at the hosiery mill. Her new skills allow her to undertake a variety of duties, all of which bring her

satisfaction. Her own words distinguish between the two jobs with feeling, "I have a lot more variety to do, more responsibility. I guess I feel like I am not trapped. I can advance as the company grows, which I have, because I started as an assembler."

Janet experienced another great loss a couple of years after the mill closed. Her mother was stricken with cancer, and Janet continued living with her parents to help her dad with her mother's care. Janet learned a lot about the disease, but learned even more from the experience of the loss. She became the caretaker of her parents. She stayed with her father for about two years after her mother's death, just to be near should he need her.

From her mother, Janet learned about parenting, but when the cancer left her mother too sick to advise Janet, she had to learn on her own. She does a lot by trial and error, but she has also taken advantage of other resources. When her son was a baby, she used the hospital infant hotline quiet a bit. Later, the day care provided pamphlets on nutrition, and other parenting tips. She has read these and has heeded some of the advice there.

Now that her son is older, and her father seems to be doing fine, Janet has moved into an apartment in Oak Ridge. She feels safe there and has even contemplated

buying a house. Although Janet shared time and friendships at the mill, and continues to do so at the electronics firm, she really relies on her relationships with her large, extended family and her best friend, a woman she met while in training. Her free time is spent with this circle of affinity. Relationships she has established at work are secondary.

Janet experienced developmental learning from the plant closing. It came at a transitional time in her life and she has reflected upon it some.

I think it made me a lot stronger, able to rely on myself more. I taught me that I had to do something different. It was rough and it was scary--without a job and having to start over again--but I think it worked out for the good. I think there are learning experiences in everything really. It is what you do with it.

Faith and the church remain very important to Janet. She has taken great care to expose her child to Christian teachings. She has also maintained strong family ties. Her relationship with her ex-husband has improved since she moved into an apartment of her own, with the result that her son now has a closer relationship with his father. Janet is pleased by all the success she has experienced and by her sons's happiness. Her goal for the future is to insure her son's future. With faith and family support, she no doubt will.

VITA

Joy Trapp Margrave was born in Fort Riley, Kansas, the daughter of two educators. She grew up in East Tennessee where she attended public schools in Kingston, and graduated from Roane County High School. She enrolled as a freshman at the University of Tennessee and graduated four years later with a Bachelor of Science in Public Administration. Entering the field of public policy planning, Ms Margrave worked for three years with the East Tennessee Development District before moving to Virginia. While with the Commonwealth of Virginia, Ms Margrave served as staff director and chief policy advisor for the Secretary of Human Resources. For the past ten years, she has been employed by Roane State Community College where she has worked extensively with dislocated workers. She returned to the University of Tennessee in August of 1991, to pursue a Master of Science in Technological and Adult Education. The Master of Science Degree was conferred in May of 1995, with a major in Human Resource Development.