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Date: Interview recorded in 2006 about events surrounding the Eastern Corporation's Mill in Brewer Maine before it closed in 2004.

Description: Interview with Dola Hinckley about her experiences as an employee at the mill.

Interview with Dola Hinckley about being an employee at the Eastern Corporation's Mill in Brewer, 1974 to 2000.

Amy Stevens: Do you think the Union was pretty effective?

Dola Hinckley: Well... [Nancy and AS laugh]

AS: Kind of an open-ended question.

DH: Well it is. There are pros and cons of a union, actually [Begin Track 8]. Unions were great as far as dealing with the company and getting benefits. That primarily, probably, and safety. That probably was a good part of a union. Trying to get you decent benefits, decent wages, decent working conditions. But on the other hand, sometimes they protected people that, if anything, they should have said "You're outta here!"

AS: Really.

DH: Just for an example, let's say that you and I were mates, shift mates, okay, and I'm no good. I'm not coming in, I'm not calling in, I'm sticking you because, let's say you work 3 to 11, okay. You're ready to go home. I'm not coming in. You have to stay, and if they don't find a replacement you're there 'til seven o'clock in the morning. So this goes on, you know, and like I say he doesn't come in and he gets, he's just argumentative or whatever, and if he gets fired, the Union, because he pays

dues, is obligated to represent him as he goes out to the company, you know, to try to get his job back, you know. My feeling is that generally speaking, they were the type of guys that were gonna do this anyway. They would give 'em a chance, and it wouldn't be too long, they'd be right back out there again. My feeling is that why, I could see fighting for a guy once. "Okay we'll get your job back, okay. This is it. You go to work, you be the worker you're supposed to be, you relieve your mate every night, and no more, you know, in other words, we've done this for you once. Now appreciate your job and behave yourself." Instead he's still sticking. My feeling is that I held a card that said that I was in good standing with the Union. When you hold a card that says "in good standing with the Union," nowhere does it say that you're in good standing with the Union sticking your mate, lying, coming in drunk, or whatever. That to me is not in good standing in the Union. There should have been a line drawn. I don't, I'm not sure if you could've done that, I don't know. But I always felt, I was asked one time to be on the Union board and I said, I just, I couldn't do it because I could no more in good faith go in to the company and say "This man deserves his fifth break," or his fourth, or his third, or, I couldn't do that because the Union wasn't looking out for the person that was being hurt by this. And there's, if they didn't do that, my feeling was that you're spending too much time on this guy who's no good, and not enough time protecting the person that he's hurting. 'Cause you're here every day. You're a good mate. You come in, you're there. This guy is zero, he's no good. So, I mean like I said, it has its pros, and it had its cons. But it had its benefits, you know, I mean, you couldn't be just fired if someone didn't like you. I mean if you had a disagreement with somebody they couldn't just say "You're fired!" You know, you at least had a chance to go out and say "Hey, you know, I just disagreed with him, that's all. And he fired me." Well, the Union would get you back in, or the personnel woman would say "Well that's no reason to fire anybody. You can go back to work." And believe me, that would have happened a good many times, so, like I said there's pros and cons.