

### Reminiscing Labor Life on the Muncie Southside



The perspectives of two residents and the Muncie Chevrolet Plant.

#### Jean W. Delk

#### Muncie Resident of 62 Years

After moving to the neighborhood in the 1950s, Jean found a job in house-keeping at Ball Memorial Hospital, and noted that it was much smaller back then. Her husband, Lindsey, worked for the Chevy plant on the south side of Muncie, where a typical day consisted of fighting traffic along the road the plant sat, working (sometimes through lunch), and coming home in the early evenings. The factory looked really big compared to other buildings in the area. There used to be a lot of houses along the opposite side of the street, but most are not there anymore. Many guys would go to the Workman's bar after work for a drink.

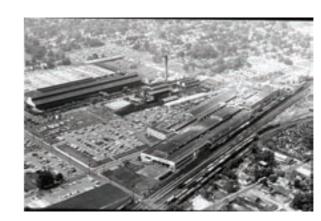


Lindsey's retirement party at the Chevy plant in 1977

#### **Bill Bernard**

#### Muncie Resident of 58 Years

Bill Bernard worked as a barber on South Madison Street for five years and eventually moved on to work at Westinghouse for 31 years. Bill has met many different people and experienced the shifts that the communities of Muncie experienced. Bill spoke quite a lot about Madison Street, according to him Madison was the Mcgalliard of Muncie. People from Bluntsville, New Castle, Cowan, Ball State, and the nearby neighborhoods all converged here to work and patronize the area. But, when the Muncie Bypass was built in 1973, Madison, the major artery of Muncie, was severed. People stopped coming and businesses started leaving. This is what really started to hurt the communities on the Southside of Muncie



Chevrolet Plant 9 (1974) Muncie, IN

#### **Rise and Decline of the Muncie Chevrolet Plant**

# 1935 Chevrolet Muncie opens in the West Eighth Street plant. About 1,100 people work there.

#### **Late 1970s**

More than 3,400 work at the plant.

#### 1990

The plant becomes New Venture Gear and operates under a General Motors/DaimlerChrysler joint venture. By 2000, about 1,300 people are employed there.

#### August 2005

General Motors announces that the plant, which employs about 500 workers, will close by March 31, 2006.

#### Jan. 31, 2008

The smokestack with "Chevrolet" emblazoned on it is demolished, with the remaining buildings on the 70-acre campus razed in the months following.



## OPCODE

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#### 1954

The plant employs 1,600 people.

#### November 1984

The Chevrolet plant is renamed Detroit Diesel Allison Muncie Transmission Plant, reflecting a change to another division of General Motors.

#### December 2002

Manual Transmissions is the new name of the Muncie plant after the General Motors/DaimlerChrysler joint venture is discontinued. In the months after the announcement, about half of the plant's 1,000-plus workers are laid off.

#### March 31, 2006

Final day of production line at the Manual Transmissions plant, which employs about 480 people as the month begins.