

HISTORY Continued from FRONT PAGE

The next 10 years were fruitful as GM dominated the domestic market and thousands of workers went about the business of building transmissions. In 1963, the Willow Run plant, which had carried the Detroit transmission name from the Livonia Plant, became Hydramatic. 1964 saw the launch of a new, 3-speed automatic transmission, the 400THM, which became the mainstay at Willow Run.

The onset of the Vietnam War, from 1966 through 1971, saw Willow Run, which had been a big part of "The Arsenal of Democracy" in WWII, once again switch gears and the production and testing of the 20mm M39A1 auto-cannon for aircraft and the M16A1 rifle rolled off 2 high-security assembly lines.

The mid 1970s saw several transmission models come and go. The 425THM, 325THM and 200THM were short lived in what was perhaps the lowest point in GM's history with regards to quality and desirability of its automotive fleet.

In 1982, the 50 millionth transmission rolled down the assembly line.

1990 saw the Willow Run facility once again team up with the military and the 4L80E RWD 4-speed transmission became a mainstay at the plant and still is one of our major products today. This transmission is used in military Hummers. Sadly, 2009 will see the end of the 4L80Es run in our plant.

GM's announcement of a new, fuel efficient, 6-speed transmission, awarded to Willow Run for production in 2003, was the next wave of new technology for the Powertrain division. This smooth-shifting, gas



Afternoon shift coming to work

saver was slated for a new fleet of full-sized pick-ups and SUVs that the company banked on to continue in its quest to produce the best trucks in the world. In 2008, this culminated in the Chevrolet Silverado being named the North American truck of the year.

Since its inception over 60 years ago, the Willow Run plant has seen a variety of products, several own-

ers, and a long background of working hand-in-hand with the U.S. military. The products built within its walls over the years have helped write and change the course of history. Even though current employment levels have dropped below 2,000 employees, and, like the auto industry, its future is cloudy, the Willow Run plant, our plant, will live in history...forever.



Kaiser-Frazer stock certificate



Workers badge with badge number. Kaiser-Frazer plant Willow Run.



1947 Kaiser-Frazer assembly line



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