

*Sheet  
metal  
leader*

Interview with Fred Karbuski, Interview 1  
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Transcriber: Diane Roth  
Begin Tape 1, Side 1

This is Pat Pilling. The date is June 30, 1982.  
I'm talking with Mr. Frederick Karbuski who is a  
sheet metal leader at Chevy Gear and Axle. He lives  
at 3319 Parker, Dearborn. He's also a member of  
Local 235.

PP: Mr. Karbuski, could you tell me when you were  
born and where you were born?

Karb: August the 12th, 1923 in Detroit.

PP: Do you have any brothers or sisters?

Karb: Yes, I have a brother, Richard who resides  
in St. Louis, *Mo*.

PP: Just one brother. Is your mother Polish or  
part Polish?

Karb: She's German-Polish.

PP: Do you know what part of Poland <sup>*her*</sup> your family  
came from?

Karb: I have no idea. She was born in Texas and  
raised in Texas. And she married my dad  
and they moved up here.

PP: Do you know what part of Texas?

Karb: Yeah, (8) . In the middle of the state.

PP: Do you know the name of the town?

Karb: Yeah, Bremond. She first started in Waco.  
Then they moved on to Bremond, a little town.  
A little farming community. They raised cotton.

PP: What part of her was Polish?

Karb: Her father was German and her mother was Polish.  
Her mother's people came from Poland.

PP: What about your father?

Karb: My father was Polish-Russian.

PP: He migrated himself?

Karb: I think it was Russia at the time. They had  
border wars. It was Russia when he was there.

PP: Is your wife Polish or part Polish?

Karb: No, she's English. Canadian-Scotch-English.  
Her mother was English, her father was Canadian.

PP: Do you have any children?

Karb: Yeah, we have four girls. That's our grand-  
daughter. She's babysitting for her now.

PP: Have any of them ever worked in the plant?

Karb: No.

PP: Would you ever want them to?

Karb: For the money, yeah I guess. It's up to them  
though. One of them is a college kid, Jojo.  
Two of them. And Ruthie, <sup>the youngest</sup> She goes to college  
but she also works. She's going to be a CPA,  
I think. The other one works in a bank. The  
third one worked <sup>for an</sup> insurance company but  
now she's homemaking.

PP: And the fourth one?

Wife: That's the fourth one.

Karb: That's the fourth one. Well, I was speaking  
of Laurie the last. Jojo goes to college.

Just  
Rail/college

Bank/Ins.  
Co.

Karb: She's not employed. She's trying to <sup>get</sup> employed  
but she can't do it.

PP: Do you have any relatives that have worked in  
one of the auto plants?

Karb: My dad did for most of his life. He worked  
at Lincoln-Mercury Division Ford Motor Company.

PP: Doing what?

Karb: He was a production worker. Worked in the press  
rooms and metal forming department.

PP: Do you feel any sort of identity with Poland,  
at all?

Karb: Not really.

PP: Do you consider yourself an American or a Polish-  
American?

Karb: American, I guess. I'm not gungho as far as  
the Polish community is concerned. I never was.

W.R.: (28) .

PP: Where did you grow up as a young person?

Karb: In Detroit. I spent seven years in Texas.  
Right after I was born, they moved down to  
Texas. Stayed there for about seven years.  
That's where I <sup>was reared</sup> ~~(30)~~ .

PP: When you came back here were you living in a  
Polish community?

Karb: Yeah, Cambell and <sup>Buchana</sup> ~~(31)~~ . That was the  
West side. I was reared on the West side of  
Detroit.

PP: Do you attend a Polish parish?

Karb: No.

PP: Have you ever attended a Polish parish?

Karb: Yes. (32) *Assumption* on the West side of Detroit.

I think it's been disbanded. (33) —

Levitt and Warren on the West side of Detroit.

PP: Do you belong to any Polish organizations?

Karb: No.

PP: When you were being raised, did your parents own their own home?

Karb: They did until the Depression. Then my dad lost it. From then on they rented. We were gypsies.

PP: Did they feel badly about renting?

Karb: I don't know. My dad, at that time, (clock chimes) didn't work steady. He worked about six months out of the year. Never got laid off.

PP: Is this your first home?

Karb: This is the second home. We lived in the township, first home.

PP: How many years have you lived in this home?

Karb: Twenty-eight years.

PP: Do you have a boat or a cottage?

Karb: No. We're going to have a motor *home* .

Try this one out for a week *and* see if we like it or not. We're just going to rent it, and if we like it. We've been looking for motorhomes.

PP: I suppose the biggest disadvantage is the gasoline.

Karb: Yeah. You got to spend it on taxes for a

Karb: cottage or gas to get to the cottage. The people next door, they travel all the way up to (43) Oscoda. Cost a lot of gas going up there every week. Something we haven't done. We've rented cottages all our lives. When the kids were small. The wife never did find a liking for a cottage. She likes it down in Florida. She's not too crazy about being situated up in the cool country.

PP: Do any of your children live with you now?

Karb: No. They're all gone.

PP: What age range are your children?

Wife: Twenty-four to thirty-six.

PP: They really are all pretty much grown. Have you ever had a parent or a parent-in-law living with you?

Karb: No. Well, we had my mother stay with us for a while. When she was visiting from St. Louis.

PP: Just to visit, though.

Karb: Just to visit. My brother was doing that. He's down there living with them.

PP: Did your brother ever work in an auto plant?

Karb: Yes, he worked at Lincoln-Mercury Division out in Wayne, for a number of years. Then he quit to go to college. After he got out of the Navy, went to college for four years. Then he got an Associates degree. Now he's what they call (53) Añ Cardetney engineer. He's the

Karb: factory representative for air conditioning equipment in the St. Louis, Missouri area.

He handles Kansas, Missouri, Oklahoma.

PP: Where did you actually graduate from?

Karb: I didn't graduate.

PP: How far did you get?

Karb: Eleventh grade.

PP: When you were in high school then, what kind of jobs did you do on the side to make a little money?

Karb: Worked for a meat market hauling fruit and vegetables. Did a little bit of everything. Painted. At that time, there was no grass cutting because all you had was these little <sup>postage</sup> (59) — type lawn. You didn't have lawns like you have now. (59) — a steady job. I worked for Ford — (60) — .

PP: Doing what?

Karb: It was production work.

PP: Were you on the line?

Karb: No, it wasn't on the line. It was up in the press room.

PP: Then you went in to the Service?

Karb: Then the war came about.

PP: When did you get out of the Service?

Karb: November of '45.

PP: And then what did you find to do?

Karb: I went back to the plant.

PP: To the Ford plant.

Karb: To the Ford plant.

PP: Which plant was this?

Karb: Lincoln-Mercury. Where Edison is right now. <sup>At</sup>  
Livernois and Warren. I applied for an  
apprenticeship. Received it. Took an ap-  
prenticeship in sheet metal. That was in 1945.  
Graduated. And I been working there.

PP: Where did you do your apprentice training?

Karb: At Ford Motor, Lincoln-Mercury.

PP: But, I mean, where did you take the class work?

Karb: At Ford Rouge. At the <sup>Ford</sup> skilled trade school.

That's the best school I know of.

PP: Was sheet metal work the type <sup>that</sup> you wanted to  
get into?

Karb: No, it wasn't.

PP: Well, that's what I was wondering.

Karb: I actually wanted to defuse bombs. But that  
didn't last too long. It was a way to get out  
of production. I don't believe it was what  
I wanted to do.

PP: So, you've been in sheet metal ever since?

Karb: Since '45.

PP: How long have you been a sheet metal leader?

Karb: About twenty years, I'd say.

PP: What actually does that job entail?

Karb: Sheet metal worker does the job and I issue the  
jobs. And oversee them. If they have any

Karb: problems, they see me.

PP: What year, actually, did you get your journeyman's card?

Karb: 1949.

PP: What was the health of the auto industry in '49? Do you remember?

Karb: It was not bad. It was good. Well, <sup>at Ford</sup> (77) at that time. There was a lot of lay-offs. There was a lot of strikes. But, I received a lot of overtime when I worked for Ford, also. We worked twelve hours per day.

PP: When you started work then, actually the Union hadn't been too long in the company.

Karb: Well, I started before the Union really got in. To Ford.

PP: What year was that?

Karb: '38.

PP: What was it like? What difference between when the Union was . . . (82)

Karb: (82) before the Union come in. It was a lot of fear. Ford had a bad name as far as union. They didn't like the union, more or less. You were liable to get beat up if you talked Union. It was not as free as it is now. The company didn't have to bend over backwards. The company went into (85) and you behaved or else you didn't work there very long. You were laid off. Got fired or

Karb: worse.

PP: Before you went into the Marines, were you laid off?

Karb: No, not too much. You had your spasmodic lay-offs. in the Spring and then you'd get called back in the Fall. And they'd start the models then.

PP: Well, then, after you came back from the Marines, and you were still at Ford, were you laid off much then? That would be 1945.

Karb: Not too much.

PP: Were there just these periodic lay-offs?

Karb: Periodic lay-offs, that's about what it amounts to.

PP: So then, you were in sheet metal then.

Karb: I was in production then. Then in '45, it was about six months.

PP: Before you took your apprenticeship?

Karb: Yeah. I got off of production. I got into the streets.

PP: And then, how long were you actually at Ford before you changed to Gear and Axle?

Karb: <sup>About</sup> From 1938, minus four years I was in the Marine Corps, to about 1958. Because I worked pretty steady for Ford. When I was laid off with Ford's, I used to go to the contractors and get jobs. Either Hydromatic or Ventura was a sheet metal contracting outfit.

PP: What made you decide to go into Gear?

Karb: Here there was steady work. So a friend of mine,

Karb: Jimmy Vanflew <sup>10</sup> *was laid off at (100) Tarsteads* So I inquired and they said well, you might try Gear and Axle. At that time *this place* was a hell-hole. But, they just wanted you to do your job. That's all. They hired us in. I got the afternoon shift and Jimmy got days. He stayed there and I went back to ~~Tarsteads~~ *Tarsteads* after they called me. As soon as I got there, they had a steel strike and I was laid off from ~~Tarsteads~~ *Tarsteads* for a while. After that problem, I contacted a friend of mine at Gear. And he says, yeah they want you any time they can get you. So, they hired me in in '61. Jimmy and I went in there in May of '59 *or generally*.

PP: So, actually how many years of seniority do you have now?

Karb: We just got that clock about three months ago.

PP: So, twenty-five years.

Karb: It's the twenty-five year clock, you get that.

PP: How many people are in sheet metal at Gear and Axle?

Karb: About twenty-four, twenty-five. But that's on one shift; the day shift. They have maybe seventeen on afternoons. Not midnights. They have one man on midnights.

PP: Would you say you like your work?

Karb: Yeah. It's a living.

PP: But I mean, you're not *(112)*.

Karb: Oh, it's not that, but there's better ways.

Wife: You don't live for it.

PP: Have you ever considered a job change? Some people who have worked for a while in the same job, they keep thinking — that doesn't mean they're going to do it.

*Job change*  
Karb: Yeah, I've often thought of it. I like to travel. I like to drive trucks, travel, do maintenance work. I'm still thinking of doing that after I retire. In some apartment building like my step-father used to do in California. That would be interesting. You'd work whenever you want to. And they're always looking for someone who can do maintenance work, fix things, keep the place going.

PP: So, you've considered relocating in another state, perhaps, even?

*Relocating*  
Karb: Either Florida, Arizona or California. It's definitely one of those. We're liable to wind up in Oshkosh for all we know. (laughing)

PP: What would you miss most if you did move to another state?

Karb: The kids. The grandkids.

PP: How many grandkids do you have?

Karb: Five.

PP: Any little boys in that group?

Karb: There are two of them. They're both (121) .

Wife: Watch it, you're on tape!

PP: Does your wife work?

Karb: No. She did for a motel for a while. They took

Karb: advantage of her.

PP: Do you know of any Polish auto workers that have moved to another state?

Karb: No. Do we honey?

Wife: Yeah, the one who moved to Tennessee.

Karb: What was his name?

Wife: Chadwick?

Karb: Chadwick? He retired honey. He's not Polish.

PP: No, I meant Polish auto workers.

Karb: No. They might have to (127) out of Detroit. A lot of the guys where I work.

PP: Why do you say that?

Wife: (128)

*Refer*  
Karb: Well, not only that but a lot of the fellows that were raised in Hamtramck don't hardly go anywhere. Unless somehow they get out of here like I was when I went into the Marine Corps. See what's on the other side of the hill.

PP: The thing is that they would get their pension *whether they were* here or elsewhere. But what I'm trying to find out is why Polish workers stay in the Detroit area.

Karb: I don't know. I could not say.

Wife: I don't think it's going to be that way much longer. (133)

PP: Did you ever think about going back and finishing getting your high school diploma?

Karb: I did after I got out of the Marine Corps. But

Karb: with this job, and then age come up, it would be a ~~good~~ reason to go in now.

PP: There is this exam, the GED.

Karb: Actually I could, if I have nothing to gain.

As long as I'm working steady at Chevy's, what's the point. A lot of the fellows that went to college, after they got out they probably make less than they did before. Depending on what you do, naturally.

Wife: I'd try it again (139) .

Karb: We were lazy.

PP: What age do you plan on retiring?

Karb: Sixty.

PP: And you'll have how many years in?

Karb: Twenty-eight.

PP: Is there any special reason why you're doing sixty instead of sixty-two when you'll have your full thirty years?

Karb: Because I want to be alive when I get out. I don't want to be carried out. It's that simple. Guys got strokes. I don't care to stroke. A number of people have heart attacks. There's nobody invulnerable (143) . Everybody's vulnerable to that. To a stroke, heart attack, cancer. Anyone.

PP: So you figure, even though your pension might be a little less at twenty-eight than it would be at thirty years.

*Handwritten:*  
 1/20/70  
 at 68 ret.

Karb: Yeah. I've put a few nickels away.

PP: So your saving for early retirement.

Karb: And if I can earn a few bucks at some apartment building or whatever after I retire.

PP: Now, really you're retiring early. How common is that?

Karb: It's quite common.

PP: Is it due to age? Say a person started at eighteen in the plant and then <sup>at</sup> their thirty years they were only forty-eight. They'd probably stay.

Karb: Some retire and a lot of them don't. They just stay there. Why, I don't know.

PP: Anyway, you've decided sixty years is the magical age.

Karb: No, I figure I'll get enough time in where I'll have eighty-five points. Points is equivalent to your age plus your seniority.

And I understand you've got to have eighty-five points in order to get out before thirty years.

PP: Well, actually, what percent of your pension will you have to (156) .

Karb: I don't know. I try to get the insurance manuals but unless you're really ready to go, their not interested. But, I'll end up with *maybe* \$850, \$900 a month. Which I think is ample. We can make it on it.

PP: Well, then you get your social security.

Karb: When I get to sixty<sup>62</sup>, Two years. No, about a year and a half. Because I'm going to wait until I get a full twenty-eight years. Which will be about January of '84.

PP: Have you ever counted how many times you've been laid off?

Wife: At least four (162)

PP: Say for example, I don't think it's going to happen at Gear and Axle because Gear and Axle is such an important plant in GM, if something happened and they decided to close the plant or take back so much, you were laid off, would you try to get some retraining?

Karb: No, I would<sup>just</sup> retire right then and there. Travel.

PP: And what, get odd jobs (169)

Karb: When I felt like it, yeah. If I needed the money. Which I hope I never do.

PP: (How do you feel about people taking early retirement?

*Work* Karb: More power to them.

PP: You're really in favor of that.

Karb: It all depends on what the man wants to do. If you want to work all your life, fine, do it. )

PP: Do you feel that Affirmative Action has had anything to do with jobs, lay-offs.

Karb: The less I say about that, the better. It's putting a bunch of screw-offs where they don't belong.

PP: Lay-offs, though, is that based on seniority?

Karb: Yes, it is. That's the only saving grace the Union has yet.

PP: Have you played any kind of role in the Union?

Karb: No.

PP: Do you go to the trades meetings?

Karb: Not too often. Once in a while.

PP: Do you vote?

Karb: Yeah, I vote.

PP: But, you're not active. Ever been a committee-man?

Karb: No. Never had anything to do with it.

PP: Go to meetings or anything?

Karb: I go to meetings occasionally. Very seldom.

PP: Have you ever taken any classes at the Union Local?

Karb: No.

PP: You're very (184) from the classes. Not just on Union business, but on assertiveness training and this kind of thing?

Karb: No.

Wife: (185)

PP: I know they have classes on <sup>retirement or</sup> pre-retirement. Would you be interested in taking that?

Karb: No. I know what I want to do. They don't have to tell me.

PP: If you knew a few years ago what you know now about economic conditions today in the

F

PP: auto industry and in general, in the United States, would you have gone into the same kind of work?

Karb: I don't know. My dad instilled the idea that you've got to work. And the auto plants were a good way to work. I suppose I would.

But, if I knew it was going to be sour, I would look for something else.

Wife: (195)

Karb: Yeah, I did. Well, I took it tough to get into the apprenticeship program but I far surpassed earning powers of people that stayed in production.

PP: Even though you took a cut at the time, I suppose you got to be a journeyman or even before that, you decided to make up that money and could have gone ahead.

Karb: Yeah, you've got the overtime.

PP: Are you working overtime now?

Karb: Saturdays occasionally. Well, most Saturdays.

~~they're~~ slowing up on Sundays. In fact, they're setting the slow up for maintenance at the Gear. Unless we get more jobs coming in. Which I think we do have. We made out quite well last year. There was a lot of overtime, a lot of Sundays. It got so that you never turned down Sundays.

Wife: job.

Karb: Well, ever since I've been in sheet metal, I've had overtime.

Wife  
Point ID

(for 2 yrs)

(199)

PP: How do you feel about Japanese and other foreign cars?

Karb: I don't like them. I believe if a man works for GM, he should buy a GM car. When I worked for Ford, I bought strictly Ford products. Since I've worked for GM, I've bought strictly GM products. That's the way I feel.

PP: What kind of car do you have?

Karb: Chevy and a Chevy.

PP: What year?

Karb: '79 Caprice and a '78 Nova.

PP: Would you feel differently if some of these foreign cars were assembled in the United States by American workers?

Karb: No, it's still going to be a Jap car.

PP: What about the fact that people say that parts of our American cars are made in Japan, such as the engine that's put into the Luv truck.

Karb: That's really still a Jap car.

PP: How much of a car has to be (219) . And then it's a foreign car. Even if it's entirely different.

Wife: <sup>(220)</sup> That was a Marine fighting a Jap and it's the wrong thing to say.

PP: All right, let's consider a French car: a Renault or whatever it happens to be.

Karb: (222)

PP: (223) . I mean, just in general

PP: in the subject of foreign cars.

Karb: Datsun's a good little car. It's a Jap car, but my son-in-law's got one and he likes it. It works all right. It would still rub me the wrong way to buy something like that.

PP: But you'll still drive in your son-in-law's car and you'll still ride in it?

Karb: No. I've driven in it. He give me a ride in it. I just prefer an American car. The foreign cars are too small; they're too constrictive. And I think people are starting to taper off on it. Of course if the price of gas went down the big cars would come back. Like people are getting tired of being squashed up. They're starting to sell more Caprices, larger cars. Because people are just tired of being boxed in. And the big cars so far, are far more safer than the little cars. It's strictly my preference. That's all I can say.

PP: What do you think about young people, nowadays, being trained for more than one kind of job?

Karb: It's a good idea. They've got an ace in the hole, right?

PP: Do you think if you were young again you might try and take up more than one kind of job?

Karb: I suppose.

PP: I mean get training in more than one job.

*Jap  
Imports*

Karb: Yeah, it's a good idea to have the double duty, you might say; have an ace in the hole. Have something else you could drop off on. I used to put in furnaces, air conditioners. That's while I was working in the factory. And I did that on the side.

PP: So, in other words, you could do that kind of work if you wanted to.

Karb: Sure. I could do anything. I could wire up houses. I could plumb houses. I can do anything. Put in covers like this, knock walls out. If you're eager; if you've got the will to do something, you can do it. You can learn; if you're nosy enough, ~~if~~ you ask enough questions.

Work

PP: Have you been involved in any of these Quality of Work Life circles?

Karb: Yeah, we have one. I'm in one right now.

PP: How does it work?

Karb: I don't think they get their money's worth out of them, myself.

PP: Why do you say that?

Karb: It's okay. The first part of it, you go to these meetings. And guys all got ideas how to improve the place. Pretty soon, interest lags. And then you get in to the doldrums. And the company's not getting the money's worth. A lot of the fellows won't go to

QWL

Ken  
258.

PP: Why do you say they're not getting their money's worth? Is that because it's done on company time?

Karb: It's done on company time.

End Side 1, Begin Side 2

PP: One hour a week, you go to these meetings?

Karb: Yeah, but you figure if a man's making, the company averages you *earn* \$20 an hour.

*262*, so you've got to support the foremen, all the clerks, and everything.

I don't where they're getting \$20 per man out of this thing.

PP: How many men actually make up one?

Karb: In our group, we've got seven. Some of the groups are larger. Sometimes they turn into Union ~~for~~<sup>in</sup>. Sometimes they turn into arguing sessions. One of the fellows told me there was even a knife pulled in his with the laborers. So, I don't think the company's getting their money's worth.

PP: Can you see any kind of long range effect?

Karb: I don't know. Possibly among the production worker ~~that~~<sup>they</sup> can cut costs and improve production, yeah. They would get their money's worth out of that. But, not dealing directly with production, I couldn't really give any constructive ideas on it.

PP: Which building do you work in?

Karb: Over in 21. That's the maintenance.

PP: Have you worked in a different building?

Karb: We were in Plant 4 previous to this. Now they've got J-car ~~actuals~~<sup>axles</sup> and components being produced right there where we used to be. So, they're using ~~this~~ old L.A. Young plant.

PP: Can you describe very simply what a sheet metal worker does? In lay terms.

Karb: They put in exhaust systems; keep the dust and the smoke out of people's lungs. They make guards so you don't get tangled up in belts. They ~~(274) the (274)~~<sup>fabricate</sup> conveyors and walkways to help you get where you're going. They maintain roll~~doors~~<sup>doors</sup>. When a truck driver hits them, you've got to repair them. And the guys are freezing, you've got to get them going again. It's a door that rolls up and rolls down.

Then we get to the sheet metal end, we put in chip trough systems which the machine cuts the parts, the chips fall down into the trough, then it gets washed into a central conveyor where it's disposed of, into boxcars, or whatever. Screen guard<sup>s</sup> to keep the parts from falling on people's heads off of the mono-rail conveyor.

PP: When you say sheet metal, what kind of metal do you <sup>mainly</sup> working with?

Karb: You work with expanded metal, you work with 16-gauge, you work with I-beams, (281) <sup>channel</sup> iron angle iron, 10-gauge, quarter-inch plate, half inch-plate, full plate.

PP: This is what kind of metal?

Karb: Steel. We work with galvanized which is the steel equivalent to zinc.

PP: Where does the Gear and Axle get their steel from? From ~~this~~ area?

Karb: Yeah. A lot of our steel comes from overseas. A lot of steel comes from Canada, Poland, Belgium. A lot of different blends. They can get it cheaper from there. You see the expensive end on the angle-iron links and (285) <sup>channel</sup> -iron links.

PP: In other words, they're really doing a lot of out-sourcing. Where does that term 'out-sourcing' come from?

Karb: I don't know. The Union brought it up.

PP: But, then if they're getting the steel from Canada, ~~and Belgium and Poland~~, what happens to firms like ~~McCall~~ <sup>North</sup> Steel?

Karb: They're going out of business.

PP: It's cheaper to get steel from Poland?

Karb: The wage rate is so low that they can (289) "barbecue" it, manufacture it, ship it, pay for the cost, deliver it here at a cheaper price than what they can buy it at ~~McCall~~ <sup>North</sup>'s or Youngstown or Bethlehem or whatever.

Wife: (291)

*Outsourcing*

*Outsourcing*

X Karb: See they priced themselves out of the market like the carpenters are doing in this country. And the plumbers.

PP: So, in other words, you're actually working then with foreign steel.

Karb: Yeah, but that's what's hurt this town.

PP: So, when you think of the American car, I wonder how much actually is, parts and labor. (293)

Karb: American cars, the production steel is made in the country, in most parts. The material we use for ~~the~~ supportive production that could be made elsewhere. Possibly the mills can't supply the steel. That's why they get it ~~overseas~~.

*Jap. money*  
You see, after we whipped up most of the world during the war, ~~these countries~~ started all moving opening modern plants. Japan was supported by Marshal funds. We built beautiful plant for them, with our tax dollars. Now they're beating us to death with them. With our own money. 'Cause there wasn't that much left of Japan after the war. But, since they put in plants, they put in modern ones. We still have the same plants we had during the war; they're still in existence right now. They're old, tired.

PP: How do you feel about the modern technology coming in? For example, robotics.

Karb: Oh, I've been dealing with robotics in the

Karb: plants for twenty-five years. (clock in back-ground) We've worked on these megatons. We had one with a painter. Never did really work.

PP: What about today, though?

Karb: It still doesn't work.

PP: What about some of the new machinery?

Karb: (903) them working. These tape machines are pretty good because Japan's using them quite a bit. A lot of the spot welders are automated. They work off a tape. It's all right. But, (904) there's going to be more electricians, <sup>and</sup> more pipe-fitters, and more sheet metal men needed for it, because as they screw up they got to be repaired.

PP: So, in other word, your trade is pretty safe. Are they taking in apprentices into your trade.

Karb: No, lately they've been cutting down. They're not bringing in any welders either.

PP: So, what's going to happen then in your particular trade if they're not taking in apprentices?

Karb: They're letting us off through attrition; to the people retiring.

PP: I mean, for example, in ten years when you and some of your buddies have retired . . .

Karb: I don't know.

PP: Are there any apprentices now?

Karb: No, I think they've all graduated.

PP: So, that ostensibly in fifteen or twenty years,

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Tech

PP: there won't be many sheet metal workers available.

Karb: True. Because maybe they figure they won't need them then.

Wife: You can apply back when you're eighty. (Laugh)

PP: How do you rate the importance of a man's job to his sense of well-being?

*Mans Job*  
Karb: Pretty high, I guess. If you're not making any money, you're pretty miserable. You're fighting ~~with~~ your life all the time.

PP: Do you know of any people who are Polish who are laid off where they have any health problems or anything like that because of the lay-off?

Karb: Not really.

PP: Have you seen any problems among laid off workers that were caused, in a way, by the fact that they're laid off and they're not working?

Karb: No, not many.

PP: You don't participate in bowling or any of the other groups?

Karb: No. I used to bowl but it got to be boring. You've got to be there ~~every~~ weekend.

PP: Of course, you are living on the West side. ~~While~~ most of the Gear and Axle people live on the East side. The fact that you were working for Ford, probably had something to do with the fact that.

Karb: That's when I used to bowl, when they were on this side.

PP: What kind of hobbies do you have?

Karb: Watch a lot of television, work around the house. No hobbies to speak of.

PP: I know you like to travel because you've said that already.

Karb: Yeah, we like to travel, but that's not a full time hobby. You only do that when you can get off from work. After next year, I'll have a lifetime to get off from work. A lot of time to travel. I don't really do a lot of that, *no* hobbies. I used to, build model airplanes, fish and hunt. I'll do that again. But working six and seven days a week, it doesn't give you much time to mess around.

PP: Looking from the point of view of soon to ~~be~~ retiring, how do you view the future of Gear and Axle?

Karb: From what I've heard, it *looks* good. They've got one ace in the hole — they're located in Detroit. General Motors wants to pay the taxes. Otherwise Detroit will go under, if they don't have the taxes. Like, our plant pays an awful lot of taxes to the City. So, they've got to maintain community relations, you might say. The Warren plant, *spun* off from our plant, hydromatics taken in and they're putting on transaxles, *or* they will be, so they're getting some of their work over at our place.

PP: What is a transaxle?

Karb: It's a combination of transmission and axle. Like the front-wheel drives. You've got a transaxle in those. Passing right ~~through the~~ motor itself. You don't have no drive train, no drive shaft to your rear wheels. Everything is up in the front end. And when you have to have something replaced, it costs you an arm and a leg. Not like the old way with the ~~regular~~ axle.

PP: What about the use of computers? Are they used much in connection with your work at all?

Karb: No. But we have a computer that checks on where the steel is, where the order is, who's getting it, how long I can expect delivery on it. I don't use it but some of the people do.

*New Tech*

PP: Is there anything else you'd like to say for posterity?

Karb: No.

PP: Okay, well, thank you very much.

End of Interview.