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Interview with John Sikorski, Interview 1
Date of Interview: June 30, 1982
Release Date:
Interviewer: Pat Pilling
Transcriber: Deanna Cavanaugh
Side 1,

This is Pat Pilling. The date is June 30, 1982. I am talking with Mr. John Sikorski, 455 W. Marshall, Ferndale. Mr. Sikorski is a stock checker ^{up} in a material department for Chevy Gear & Axle, Local 235.

PP: Where and when were you born?

JS: ^{gloucester,} Ohio. December 28, 1939.

PP: So your how old now?

JS: 42.

PP: Have you any brothers or sisters?

JS: 8 brothers and 4 sisters.

PP: Any of them in this area?

JS: One brother and one sister in Michigan, not in this area.

PP: Any of them have any connection with the auto plants, at all.

JS: One works for ~~the~~ Chrysler Corporation.

PP: Which one, brother or sister?

JS: Brother.

PP: What does he do?

JS: Superintendent, and I think their plant is a body plant.

PP: So, he's superintendent of what?

JS: Material department.

PP: Is your mother ^Ppolish, or part ^Ppolish?

JS: No, mother's Italian.

PP: ^{What} about your father?

JS: He's passed away, but he's the Polish one.

PP: Now, was he Polish on both sides of the family or one?

JS: Both sides.

PP: Did your grandparents immigrate from Poland?

JS: Yes.

PP: Have you any idea what part of Poland?

JS: No, not really.

PP: Is your wife Polish or part Polish?

JS: No.

PP: How many children do you have?

JS: None.

PP: If you were talking to a young person now about their careers and so forth, and what they were going to do when they grew up or got a little older would you ever suggest now they perhaps find work in an auto plant?

JS: Yes, I would ^{but} in certain departments or trades.

PP: What would you suggest to them?

JS: I would recommend any kind of skilled trades, whether it would be an electrician or a machine repair, or whatever.

PP: You wouldn't suggest production?

JS: Well, if they had to get in the automobile factory, or if they did, then I would suggest that once they got there, because the company will send you to school or train you to become a skilled tradesman.

PP: Did your father or uncle or other close relative, other than the brother you mentioned, ever work in an auto plant?

JS: Yes. I had two uncles that worked at Chevy Gear & Axle.

PP: They work there now?

JS: No, they're retired now.

PP: Can you tell me what they did?

JS: One was a maintenance, and he was, I wouldn't say classified as a gardener, but he took care of the lawns. The other was a clerk in the material department. But, where I worked in the factory, he worked in the office.

PP: Your family really favors that material department, doesn't it?

JS: Maybe we have ^{cl = little} pull, you can get that in an automobile factory.

PP: How did you get in?

JS: Through my uncle.

PP: Do you feel any identification with Poland at all, do you consider yourself an American or a Polish American.

JS: Just an ^A American.

PP: Do you know any words of ^P Polish at all?

JS: Maybe a few slang words that I hear people saying like . . . but I couldn't pronounce them right ^{hard} ~~any~~ way.

PP: What is your accent, anyway? An Ohio accent?

JS: I'm about 40 miles from West Virginia, so we have a little bit of a drawl.

PP: Where was your father born?

JS: He was born in a little place called Modock, Ohio (?)

PP: Do you know why his parents happened to settle in that area?

JS: No, not really. When they first came over, I think they were in Pennsylvania.

PP: ^{Did} Your grandfather worked in the coal mines, then?

JS: Yes. Then they moved to Ohio. I think what they wanted to do was, I don't think he had the whole idea for himself, but he did really, practically founded the town, Modock, Ohio.

And he was a strong catholic, and he built the church and, until they got a preacher, or priest there he just gave them a place to worship, because he built the whole church and practically started the whole town for himself. But it wasn't a big place. And than they moved to Gloucester, Ohio, it wasn't that far away.

PP: We're their any other Polish families, or part Polish families in Gloucester, Ohio

JS: Yes, there are.

PP: Do you have a Polish church?

JS: Where I come from it's a small town and 75% of them ^{were} are ~~all~~ relatives.

PP: Is there a Polish church?

JS: Just catholic.

PP: Do you ever attend a Polish parish now?

JS: Just a catholic church.

PP: Are there many Polish people living in this general area of Ferndale?

JS: I couldn't say, because I don't know too many people around here. Now, from reading the paper there's a lot of Polish people that go to that church, St. James.

PP: Where is it, St. James?

JS: It's on Hazelhurst, just two blocks over from here.

PP: Do you belong to any Polish organizations? ^{JS: no} When you were growing up in Ohio, did you parents own their own home?

JS: Yes.

PP: Now, this is an apartment isn't it? Have you ever owned a house?

JS: No.

PP: Do you have a boat or cottage?

JS: No.

PP: Have you ever had a parent or parent-in-law living with you?

JS: No.

PP: Let me ask you a little now ^{at this time} about your work life. First of all, where did you go to school, did you go to school in Ohio?

JS: Gloucester High School in Ohio.

PP: When you were in Ohio what kind of jobs did you do?

JS: I worked through school. That's the reason I came here, there wasn't too much work there but in school you could ^{up} pick up odd jobs. I use to work for a teacher. The teacher had a farm and I use to cut grass and hoe gardens, not a big field or anything, just generally around her house. I cleaned out the barn. Then I graduated and we did have an independent sign company down here, an independent, one-man owned it, and he was fairly old and I worked for about 8 months and he passed away. I think he had two sons and left it to them but they didn't want it so they sold the building and that left me without a job. It was a decent job, it wasn't big money but it was a decent job. But that was the idea of coming to Michigan, there were just no jobs there.

PP: So, how old were you when you came to Michigan?

JS: 19. I was 18 and I think I was here a week and I turned 19.

PP: When you came to Michigan did you come to a friend or a relative or did you just come?

JS: A relative.

PP: A ^PPolish or Italian relative?

JS: ^PPolish.

PP: Where did you ^{live} leave?

JS: In Detroit on Albany. And Albany is between Nevada and 7 Mile ^{road}.

PP: So, it wasn't that far from Hamtramck, sort of on the outskirts.

JS: No, not far at all. I use to do my Saturday shopping there.

PP: When you were that age then you were really introduced to into a ^PPolish community, at least you were with one of these uncles. And then, obviously you had to get a job so what happened? Uncle said he'd help?

JS: Before I came up, I pretty well had the job because my uncle was a clerk for the overall boss in ^MMaterial. And he would come to Ohio ^{maybe} once a month or something like that and ask if I would like to ^{so} ~~come~~ to Michigan, which I really didn't care for at that time, but since there wasn't no work I said yes. I guess maybe he got the boss to put his name on an application. He brought me an application.

PP: Did you apply for a stop-checker?

JS: No, I worked production. I worked everything there.

PP: What did you start work as?

JS: I started work in the material department but I unloaded box ~~cars~~.

PP: What did they call you?

JS: Material ^a handler.

PP: What year was that?

JS: 1959.

PP: What is the date that you consider your seniority?

JS: December 28, 1959.

PP: That was your birthday then.

JS: My birthday.

PP: First of all you were a materiel handler than what happened after that?

JS: I worked, we had 8 different plants there, different buildings, they go by Plant 1, 2, 3, on up and so forth. I hired in I worked for Plant 7 as a materiel handler and I'd say I worked there for maybe 5 months on the afternoon shift, which I didn't really like, so I put in for day shift, so they let me have day shift at Plant 3 but I was still a materiel handler. So then they had, well it was union, they called it seniority bumps. If anybody wants to come from afternoons to days, so I got bumped. But instead of going back to afternoons they put me to Plant 6. I worked on production line there.

PP: Doing what?

JS: I was making control arms. Still in materiel. They made them
4 put them on the line and I had to take them off the line and put them in boxcars for shipping.

PP: What are control arms?

JS: They go in front of the car and ^{to} help it steer.

PP: So, it's part of the axle?

JS: Axle, yes.

PP: Excuse me for asking but I'm not familiar with these terms and when someone says what they're doing I like to at least have on the tape a rough description of what people are doing.

PP: So you were doing that, for how long?

JS: Maybe 3 or 4 months, all ^{tried} ~~totalled~~ I'd say maybe a year and a half, two years. Then, I finally went to Plant 4 in the materiel department and I got on what they call stop^{pk} checking and I've been with stop^{pk} checking ever since then. But different phases. Now we have steel, which is a certain person who checks steel, and we have gear, nuts and bolts that hold down things and ^{different} things that go in the axle which would have a different check for those. And then you would have a different checker for castings, which would be like knuckles, cases, carriers. I'd say there were five different checkers in Materiel.

PP: This is ⁱⁿ one plant?

JS: Yes, in the materiel department.

PP: Well, actually, the ^M materiel ^D department, does that cover the whole plant or

JS: Covers the building. But they have so much materiel, one man couldn't do the whole job it was divided into like 5 different parts.

PP: When you say check, do you mean hand the material out for use, is that what you mean or check the amount that's in the inventory.

JS: Check the amount that we have, because you don't want to run out of materials. They have people across the street in the office building, we call ~~a~~ follow-up men, ^J they order parts from outside companies and you would have to check, everything goes by number in the materiel department. Every little bolt has a number, whatever. so you would check and

take the stock ~~er~~ on hand every day and you would make out a form and hand it across the street to these follow-up people and they would check what you checked. They would check the list that you checked and see whatever they were low on in parts and ~~it~~ kept the flow coming in. So you didn't run out.

PP: So, what kind of checking job did you actually have there?

JS: I was on everyone of them. Just in case someone was missing or absent or something like that or somebody got laid-off They made all of us permanent.

PP: If this is the case and there are only if you say 5 people doing this checking work what happens when someone goes on vacation?

JS: They really didn't have five different people, there was 5 different phases of the checking, but they might had 7 people, there was so much stock it might have been divided up. But everybody ~~that works for~~ⁱⁿ the materiel department works with stock. They receive it or ship it, so it's not really hard if someone goes on vacation to have someone follow up on it.

PP: Tell me, is any of this helped along now with a computer terminal?

JS: To phase out my job?

PP: No, to make your job easier.

JS: Yes, it is.

PP: I mean by punching in on the terminal so they get the numbers of material across the street.

JS: It's made it easier to the fact that we use to have all our stock, it wasn't even confined to one area, they wanted to

confine it to one area, but there's so much going on and moving around and everything, that just about anytime you get something in, anywhere you find a place to put it you put it.

Now we have what you call a stacker. We got a place where we could put our stuff, not all of it, but 90% of it.

There's still some what you call hot material, you just have to have it so when they can get it real quick, the stacker can't break down and you may not be able to get it out of there. But, the stacker is run by computer and with all this stock in the stacker we have a tape. Now alot of my checking is confined to working at the tape to see what stock we have in stacker, outside of checking the floor too.

PP: This is what I was wondering.

JS: Alot easier. But the only thing is, made it easier to the point that you have a stacker and a tape, but they took some of the men off. Now, where there was five men going it, I'm going it myself. ^{Now} I check everything.

PP: You mean you check everything now, there's no longer 5 men?

JS: No. But that's what the computer did. It's just a one man job now.

PP: You have 23 years seniority. So obviously you have the highest seniority. What happened to the other men, ^{do} you know?

JS: Some of them were truck drivers, some were production.

PP: You really work alone then.

JS: Yes.

PP: How do you like that, in comparison with working with 5 other people?

JS: I like it. Not that I don't mind working with other people but when there's five, there's alot of mistakes

being made and all of it congregated somehow or other that you had to depend on these fellows for something, but now where I'm doing it myself, I know everything

PP: ^{would} What did you say, you like your work?

JS: Yes, I do.

PP: It sounds as if you do. As if you enjoy it, especially now that you have all the responsibility for doing it all.

JS: The reason I like ^{work} ~~more~~, it's an easy job but you have to learn it because there's part numbers, hundreds of parts numbers and you have to learn them and you have to identify the part number with the part.

PP: How many of hundreds of parts do you need of any . . .

JS: My job is divided into three different parts at least, I still would like to say, since I'm the only checker now, I still can't check everything everyday. So it's divided up like Monday and Wednesday I'll check certain parts, Tuesday and Thursday I'll check certain parts and than on Friday I'll check something else.

PP: Now, if there's only the one of you, you doing this, what happens if you go on vacation or get sick?

JS: They don't have a back-up man for me.

PP: They don't?

JS: No, they don't.

PP: How do you feel about that?

JS: It makes me feel good because it makes me think nobody can do my job.

PP: On the other hand, if you were offered ^{for} ~~ered~~ a week or two, I assume you get a, how many weeks vacation do you get a year?

JS: Four weeks.

PP: Four weeks. So, if you were away for four weeks, I imagine

JS: I imagine if I were to take my four weeks vacation at one time I imagine they would give me a man to train for a couple of weeks. But he couldn't pick it up in a few weeks.

See they also have, what they call hot parts, you have to check all the time, or low parts you check it every morning. There trying to have it where the boss, the foreman, who uses the stock checks his own stock, I ^{think} they could get along with that. He checks the stuff that's used mostly the day.

So, they can get along with it, I wouldn't say for four weeks, they might find a little hassle if I miss a day or take a weeks vacation.

PP: Have you ever considered a job change, have a different kind of job, have you ever thought about that?

JS: Yes, when I first started there I didn't like it. Like I mentioned earlier, I was young, and out-of-state and I didn't really like it. And I wasn't what you would call a good worker. I'd take my time off. I'd miss a day here, miss a day there and maybe take a Friday and Monday and go to Ohio and see my people. I had a few run-ins. Miss a day and they would ask what was wrong with me and they wouldn't like my excuse maybe they'd give me a couple of days. But I stayed single for along time. I didn't care if I got fired or not, I mean that was my attitude to begin with, but as time passed, well, no, I haven't thought about it lately, just earlier when I started there.

PP: You mean you never really thought of starting into a trade?

JS:

JS: Only if I did at first.

PP: Have you ever thought about relocating in another state? Say you were laid-off, something happened at Gear & Axle and they decided to lay you off, though it looks very unlikely since you are the only one that deals with the materials in Plant 4. Have you ever thought, say things got bad at Gear & Axle and they had to close part of the plant and there was just no place for you to go, would you try and stay here? ~~or would you~~

Job Change
JS: No, I would probably go back to Ohio. I still haven't got use to Michigan, I'm still an Ohio boy.

PP: Where's your wife from?

JS: She was born in Canada. She can't remember when she moved here. This one little town she was from I don't really know she was living in Ferndale when I met her.

PP: If you didn't move to another state such as Ohio would you miss anything in Michigan?

JS: I hate to say this but no. When I first came here it was fine. I stayed single for a long time, I had time, I did things, I went places.

PP: How old were you when you got married?

JS: Almost 32 years old. But there was alot of things to do, alot of things to see, which there is still things to do with the wife, but she works, she don't really care.

PP: What kind of work does she do?

JS: She's a lab technician for New Grace Hospital.

PP: So she works full-time?

JS: Yes.

PP: Do you know of any ^Ppolish autoworkers who have gone to find work in another state? Do you know of anybody?

JS: No, I really don't.

PP: So, you said you graduated from high school, ⁽¹⁹⁵⁷⁾ have you had any schooling since that time? I don't necessarily mean connected with the job but just maybe classes you have taken locally or at night?

JS: I always told myself I was going to, but I never had. I take that back. I didn't really get a chance to go to school when I was younger, after high school I mean because it was a big family. Unless you just did it ^{all} yourself there just wasn't enough money, but as time went on us kids got older, left the house and I got one brother that first went up to college and now he's in Saudi Arabia and he's been there for ten years. He works for a place called ElGadaland or something like that. It's a construction company, Arabic Construction Company. And if I had to relocate or something happened, I might see if he could do something for me over there.

PP: In other words you'd want to go far field and see another part of the world.

JS: Not really like that, it's just the idea of the way he talks about it and everything. I guess there's good money to be made over there.

PP: What are the living conditions like for families?

JS: Bad.

PP: Does he have any family over there?

JS: No, he's not married. For him, he was a professor, language professor when he first went over there and he got to know alot of people, I don't know what they call it, like we have a president here, I don't know whether they call them, well anyhow the head of the country. I believe they'd make him head of the country if they'd let him, because they all like him. He talks about it all the time. I believe it would be an easy way out instead of busting streets looking for a job that he could probably get one over there quickly *for me*.

PP: Let's talk about your ~~real~~ time. You actually only have about another seven years, so you'll be about 46 or 47 when you have your 30 years in

JS: 48

PP: 48 years old. which isn't exactly a hell of an old man, far from it. Do you intend to leave the plant at that time?

JS: Yes, I do.

PP: You do, what do you intend to do? You have many, many years.

JS: My intentions are, of course it's not 100%, but my intentions are, I don't know if my wife would agree to it or not, but my intentions are going back to Ohio and maybe working part-time. I like to play golf, and I like to bowl, do a few different things. I think if I could get a job I'd work part-time, work part-time would be all I'd do anyhow, if I could. Cause I think I could fulfill myself.

PP: Do you have any hobbies?

JS: Outside of sports, no.

PP: Sports. What kind of sports?

JS: I play golf, I bowl, and I listen to ball games.

PP: How many times have you been laid-off?

JS: Since I've been at Chevrolet Gear & Axle, I'd say actually laid-off one time.

PP: How long as that for?

JS: I would say for a period of a month. But since I've been there, I think we've been on strike twice, that was union business.

PP: If you were laid-off now, I mean say for any reason, before you came to retirement, would you consider any kind of retraining before your retirement because

JS: I would consider it, whether I would take it or not, I would consider it.

PP: You would. What kind of thing would you possibly retrain for?

JS: The way some of these skilled trade people work over there maybe electrician or something like that, because these people, they really have good jobs.

PP: Would you try and go into the apprentice or E.I.T. program?

JS: Yes.

PP: Do you know how much work is involved in the apprentice?

JS: Yes, I do.

PP: But, you would still give it a try.

JS: The further ^{high} ~~is~~ your training, I believe the easier ~~is~~ your job, the more that your ^{re}skilled. It's easier. Not that's it's easier work when you have to work. They may have to work only a half-an-hour a day, maybe somedays they don't have to do anything.

PP: How do you think your friends would feel about that, if you went from production to skilled trades?

Future
Workplan

JS: It would be alright. They wouldn't mind, except for maybe, *See* I was asked maybe 7 or 8 years ago, if I wanted to go on foreman training, for boss, now that's a different storey. Our plant has had a habit of salary people and hourly people just don't get along together, for some reason or another they just didn't. I don't know if they thought they was better than us or what, that's the way it was, it was the atmosphere. Now, we got a program going that they're trying to change, you can *all that be* buddy-buddy with your boss, they're having meetings

PP: You're talking about the quality of work life, I was going to ask you some questions about that. What do you think about that?

JS: Well, I haven't gotten into it.

PP: You're not involved *well* in that program at all?

JS: No, I'm not. I think they got everybody involved in the plant but me. Because for the fact they take these people in, they're all confined to one certain area. They're either working on the line or production, or truck drivers for this or that. I'd seen some of them myself and I'm the only one in my classification, and I move around. There's just no group for me to fit in.

PP: But aren't their other stock checkers in other *(plants.)*

Side 2

PP: You say that you aren't in one.

JS: No, I haven't *been asked to meetings.*

PP: What about the quality of work life circles you've heard about?

JS: They seem to like it.

PP: They seem to like it, do you think they seem to be working?

JS: I think it is. The areas, the jobs are in are where the people work, they seem to be cleaner, they seem to run alot better the whole flow seems to be good.

PP: So you've seen improvements. Do you think they have a long-range effect?

JS: It should be. That's what they're working for anyhow.

PP: How do you feel about people that take early retirement, I mean before their 30 years are up because they got laid-off or they take what pension is owed to them and leave. Do you their foolish or wise?

JS: It all works with different situations, I guess, to me anytime you work 20-30 years in one place, if it comes yours time to get out you should get out. Not that it works out for you all the time, I mean it's just a long time to work ~~in~~ one place. Of course, if you are going to work after that you might as well stay in the same place. I do believe that when a man can get out he can get out, now if they want to get out on early retirement because some of them have aged, some of them might have 20 years and be 62, which they can get out, I think, it should open up jobs for other people, but not necessarily so, ~~on~~.

PP: You mentioned about possibility of you taking foreman training what happened with that, you decided not to do it or what?

JS: Going back to the 30 years, I asked different questions on it and than the main question was, if you are hourly and you

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JS: work 30 years you can retire at any age, but if you're on salary you have to work until you're 55 and that would've given me about 37 years there. But I did ask about the retirement and they told me you did have to work until you were 55 so I also asked if I took the training and I did like it and they made me a foreman and I worked say up to 29 years then if they would put me back on hourly and they said no, they wouldn't do that. So I refused them.

PP: Would you have gotten ~~alot~~ more money as a foreman?

JS: Yes.

PP: Yes. But really the time for yourself was more important. cause it would've been about 7 years. It's almost like the Biblical seven years, Jacob when he married Leah, and thought he was marrying Rachel and had to work another 7 years. Do you feel affirmative action has had anything to do with job lay-offs or is strictly based on seniority?

JS: I'd say it's based on seniority.

PP: Have you played any kind of role in the Union Local, at all?

JS: Except for when I tried to run for committman, I did run for committman and I got beat. I use to, when I first hired into there, I heard alot of talk about unions. My dad was a union man, so automatically I would go to a meeting or something like that and listen. But when I would go, hardly anybody showed up. At that time we had maybe 4000 people working there and you ^{might} have 20 at a union meeting so I just drifted away from it. I just figured nobody else cares so why should I. One man can't change anything, anyhow. The only people that did show up were people that worked

JS: either committmen or involved in the union for the fact that they even got paid for their meetings when they showed up.

PP: Have you ever attended any of the education classes that the union has? ^{yes} What have you taken?

JS: This was back in, well it was mandatory, back in 1970 I think it was, we were on strike and they had union classes. You either had to walk the picket line for an hour and go a union class or vice versa, do them both and I did that..

PP: What kind of classes did you take?

JS: That's the only thing they were talking about really, it wasn't that we had high people in union business it was just people at our shop that would talk what we would ask for on the contract, this or that, things like that.

PP: So, it was really a class on collective bargaining. ^{JS: yes.} I ^{pb.} understand at the union you have other types of classes though, assertiveness training and stress management. Have you taken any of them?

JS: No, I haven't.

PP: Have you ever thought about it?

JS: Yes. I thought about it. But then when I got beat at committman I just took this attitude and said the hell with all of it.

PP: Do you think the union should have classes in education?

JS: Yes. They do. They put it up on the bulletin board. Tell you where and when they are having it, how many people go out on it, I would say the number is close to nil⁴.

PP: Are their any particular classes that you would like to see the union have that you ^{might} would attend if they had that type of

PP: class?

JS: I don't know, I think after 23 years, I think I'm just waiting for my time, I don't know if I would get in involved in it. Not that I wouldn't mind it, because I like to learn things but I think I'm satisfied now to sit back and let time pass. Maybe I shouldn't be.

PP: If you knew a few years ago what you know now about economic conditions, would you perhaps try a different kind of work, given the fact that the auto industry is having some problems now, I mean, would you, ^{be} because I know you have seniority and your job is more secure than most, but would you possibly, if you knew what was going to happen now, in the 1980's would you possibly have tried to get a job in another kind of industry?

JS: Is this just going back a few years?

PP: Yes, it's just going back a few years, when you first started at Gear & Axle.

JS: If I knew what was going to happen. I might've gone to school.

PP: What would you have taken, do you think?

JS: Well, I was always pretty good with numbers, I wouldn't have minded being a C.P.A. If I had anything to do, I would pick that.

PP: Did you ever think about the possibly the fact that when you retire at 48 if you went ^{to school} now and took classes by that time you might be a C.P.A?

JS: No, not now. It's a different situation. I think now if I went to school I would go for auto mechanics. I got a brother

Future Educ

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JS: that owns a garage. He's a year ahead of me. He and I were pretty well inseparable when we were going to school,

PP: He's in Ohio?

JS: He's in Ohio. He runs it practically by himself and he always mentions it to me that if you ever come out down here, if you ever learn anything, he says, well, you can help out around here.

PP: How do you feel about Japanese and other foreign cars? Have any feelings about that?

JS: Yes. I don't like them. Plain English, no. I wouldn't buy one, not that they ^{are} a good product, I wouldn't say they ^{are} not a good product, if they had anything to do with the situation the way our country is today, no. I don't like them.

PP: Would you feel differently if they were actually assembled in the U.S.?

JS: Yes. Yes, I would.

PP: Because Volkswagen for example is.

JS: Yes, I know that. It would change my mind alot.

PP: Except, that I suppose most people do know that many of our cars have foreign parts and so that actually when the car is assembled on the assembly line, they are assembling cars with alot of foreign parts.

JS: I hold it against both of us. The automobile factories over here and the Japanese companies too. I don't like either end of it.

PP: What kind of car do you drive?

JS: I drive a Chevrolet and a Dodge.

PP: A Chevrolet and a Dodge. What year is the Chevy?

JS: '80 and the Dodge is an '82.

PP: What kind of Chevy do you have?

JS: Malibu.

PP: What about the Dodge?

JS: It's called a Dodge 400, it's brand new I just bought it.

PP: Oh, it's an 82? Oh, my goodness.

JS: That's where I think the whole problem came from ^{today} that the automobile factories just price themselves out, that's all.

Because the way money is today, I just look for the best buy my best buy was on the Dodge. By far, it was the best buy.

Something like \$2000 difference, because I looked for General Motors cars. I've driven them before and liked them. I had a '74 Chevy before I bought this one and I want to buy a Cadillac. That's what I want to do before I retire, is get a Cadillac, which is a General Motors car.

PP: But, quite expensive.

JS: Quite expensive. And I do believe that started the whole problem, the American factories, companies just priced themselves out of competition of foreign cars.

PP: What do you think about young people being trained to do perhaps more than one kind of job?

JS: That's a good idea. Well, with computers these days, I don't think there's anything ^{safe} to say. Any one certain classification. Maybe getting back to skilled trades again maybe an electrician, because if you have computers you got to have electricians too. Just any kind of laborer work, I guess what we would call hard labor, I guess you'll always

JS: have it, road construction or any kind of construction.

But to
They do with factories and they're talking about robotics all over and this and that so you don't know if your job

PP: Are you interested in anything like that, robotics or computers.

Robots (JS: I hate to see it come. A lot of people out of jobs, as far as factories. I don't mind computers, they make work a lot easier.

PP: You don't like them?

JS: I said I don't mind them. They make ^{your} jobs a lot easier, if they can get them to work with people instead of taking people's places.

PP: How do you rate the importance of a man's job to himself? As compared to the rest of his life?

JS: If a man's got the right job it should be the most important thing there ~~is~~ is, as far as work is. Not counting family or anything like that, I mean if you have to work, if you can find what you like, it's got to be important to you. But if your working in something you don't like than I guess you really don't give it your all.

PP: Have you heard of any people that have been laid-off, that have had problems of sickness which could be contributed to the lay-off?

JS: Directly, no. I'm not saying there isn't any. ^{we} We had people get injured maybe hurt their back or something like that or get a hand cut off but maybe they couldn't work, but they got compensated for it.

PP: No, I was thinking of a person that got laid-off actually and perhaps got severely depressed.

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Imp. of job to man.

JS: No, I don't. It's a big place. Say you got 4000 people
working there
you may get to know 20 real good. They're friends. Every-
one else you know by face.

PP: You've worked there now for almost 23 years so you must
know a tremendous number of people.

JS: I know quite a few. But there's still alot, like I say
there's alot of them you still don't know their names,
just faces you see everyday, every day, and everyday.

PP: What do you see as the future of Gear & Axle?

JS: I think they'll always be there. I think there is only
5 Gear & Axle all over the United States and I do believe
the one in Hamtramck-Detroit, I think the line splits our
plant, Detroit and Hamtramck. they'll just be there.

Detroit
I believe it's the biggest out of the 5, not that they'll
make money for them all the time. They may not be the
top ranking ~~money~~ Gear & Axle Plant but since the situation
they are the biggest and I would have to think it would be
harder to close it than any of the others.

PP: So, in other words Gear & Axle is going to go on and on.

JS: I believe it will.

PP: You hope.

JS: I hope it will.

PP: I think that's a nice note to end *with*, thank you very much.