ARCHIE ACCIACCA INTERIVEW
August 1984
Tape #1

Q: ...history archives at the University so that if anybody is doing research similar to this that they can just listen and--

A: How do you want to go about this? Are you going to ask me questions?

Q: Yeah.

A: Okay.

Q: Well the first question I have is just to ask you to give a general statement, first of all, about where you were born and raised and how you got involved in the labor movement, whether your parents were involved--a general statement like that.

A: Do you want it very brief? I can talk a long time on that subject.

Q: Just state whatever you like. Just start off.

A: Okay. I was born in 1913 in Detroit, Michigan, the first of seven children, both my Mom and Dad come from Italy. As a matter of fact, I was born about three or four months after they arrived here, five, how long, well, shortly after they arrived here. Out of mere necessity because my dad was not a factory guy, he loved country too, out of mere necessity he went to work at Ford's and he only worked there about five years I think until about around 1918.

Q: At which plant did he work?

A: Ford at Highland Park.

Q: Highland Park.

A: That was the big plant at that time because the Rouge was not in operation then; Highland Park was the big one. He went to Ford in

Highland Park and, as I said, he worked there five years and he just couldn't hack it. At that time, let's see, there were four children and he come upon a guy that was willing to lease or share crop a farm because he had no money, none at all.

Q: He was working on production there at Highland Park?

A: Yes. We went on this farm which was located in what is now Madison Heights, on 10½ Mile Road and Deglender(?), right on 10½, there were 80 acres there. He gave the guy some of the crops and maybe a few dollars but he was, the owner was a heck of a nice guy and he just let him get by with whatever he could. So anyhow we stayed there and there's where the other three were born, my other brother and two sisters, and I went to work at Ford's in 1935, January 3, 1935, at the Rouge plant on production.

Q: How did you get in there?

A: Well in those days it, to people like you and a lot of young people you tell today it's almost unbelievable the way Ford was run. It was a real gestapo setup. Terrific, you've heard of these things. I don't know, for some people it's hard to believe but I'm putting it in on facts and I know. This guy Harry Bennett used to have his servicemen, most of the servicemen were guys that he got out of jail and he controlled with an iron fist, you know.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: And he had something over them and they were his servicemen, what they would call security or plant protection or what have you, but they were called servicemen and they were rough. You had to toe a real line in those days.

Q: They just stood around and watched for--

A: Oh yes, their job was just walking around in plain clothes, you didn't know who they were. In their plain clothes and they watched if a guy was loafing a little bit they thought or goofing off or stalling, and they'd go to the toilets and check the toilets if they see somebody is staying too long, or smoking, you couldn't smoke in those days. They were turned in and they had the authority to fire. Anyhow I got in not by going on a line, there's very very few people who are able to go on the line and go to work. I got in, my dad knew a realtor that was pretty well up on the West Side, a fellow by the name of Frischcorn(?), a nice guy, very nice. He helped my dad get a lot of his friends in. And this Frischcorn knew somebody at Ford's, I don't know who in the heck he knew, I don't remember, some wheel at the Employment Office I think. So he gave me a letter, as he gave a lot of others and with this letter I brought it to the Employment Office and I got into work at what was then known as the Pressed Steel but now they call them Stamping plants. I worked there for, well, my real physical work was only in the preunion days because after the union came in I was a union representative all my life, all the rest of the time I spent with Ford's. But from 1935 to 1941 I worked there and off and on and hard to get back once you you got laid off.

Q: Oh really.

A: Seniority didn't mean a thing for call back rights, nothing whatsoever and--

Q: A lot of layoffs too?

A: Oh yes, I'll tell you something else. When you got to be 40 years of age, I wasn't 40 at that time, you just forget working in there you're too old to work already. They'd think that they got the best they could get out of you by 40 and there ain't no more work.

Q: Yeah.

A: Oh they were rough, they were really rough. A lot of poor guys and I knew some of them that bought cars to get a job, and they'd work a little while and get laid off and lose the damn car. They didn't care, that's the way it was. A lot of guys bought their jobs, a lot of guys paid $75 back in those days, well it was just recently the big Depression went through they paid $75 to get in there and work a little while and out they went.

Q: Was this money being pocketed by the people, you know, somebody like the guy who'd hire, not the Company itself but by these people, the manager, the supervisors who were hiring people or was it going into the Company?

A: No, I think it would be the individuals at the Employment Office. That's my guess but I don't know. I knew guys that paid, where the money went I don't know, it was rough.

Q: So the layoffs came with the model changes or even more often than that?

A: More often. Model changes almost sure but more often if you would have a--like I remember '38 was a bad year for us and I worked very very little in '38. But then in '39 things got picked up pretty good and I got back in '39 and I worked, well then in '40 we started to get the union in there and then '41 was our first contract.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: In June of '41. After that why seniority prevailed and--

Q: Now when they did the layoffs it seems it would be to the Company's advantage to have people who were experienced, but did that only matter if you were skilled? You know if you're calling back people, you'd want people who were--

A: Mostly the thing mattered as to how a person got along with the powers in there, that's what, if you were real friendly to your foreman or a guy that's above you, see a foreman could, through the Employment Office, call for certain people.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: Saying that he's a good worker, I want him back, you know. Even if you weren't too too good, as long as you got along with him real good in various ways, that used to help. But there were a lot of unscrupulous ways they operated very much and I remember working the production line. There were no fair standards set. Man, you just worked and worked hard. If you had to go to the toilet you better get permission and make sure somebody would replace you because they would never think of stopping the line, you would get into some serious trouble.

Q: You worked on a line in the Pressed Steel?

A: Yes, yes.

Q: On the presses mostly, you know, press lines and, man, many a time I would go home at night and I was tired. I mean tired and I was just a kid.

Q: Can you explain a little bit about the work process on that line? How was it set up. Did you work in teams or indivdiuals in the line just moved by or...

A: Well, see, back in those days, in the thirties, that's what I'm familiar with when my work operated, automation as we know it today and all the technological improvement that they've been going through the last few years were not there. If you were on a large press, let's say rooftop for example, that takes a big sheet metal, they would have two people feeding, manually feeding the press and two people ejecting the stock out and to activate the machine all four had to push buttons. Do you understand what I mean?

Q: Uh-huh.

A: Say three pushed buttons and the other guy wasn't ready or something it wouldn't go, all four had to function together.

Q: Was there much time to converse with the other people you worked with or there's...

A: You better not, no way.

Q: Too many people watching?

A: No way, oh the foreman was always around. It was his job to see that those guys kept going, ain't no talking on the job, no way. Oh no, lord, no.

Q: Did you get to know the guys that you worked with?

A: The immediate guys we got to know pretty well, yeah we got to know them.

Q: Did most of the people live in the same area outside?

A: Well we lived, let's see in '35 I lived in what is now Madison Heights on 10½ Mile Road in the general area where our farm used to be. But most of the people lived in the Detroit area, a lot of them out of Dearborn because that plant is in Dearborn and in those days Dearborn was going big and a lot of people lived in Dearborn.

Q: So in your neighborhood, for example, there were a lot of people who worked at Ford's right living around you?

A: Yes, there were, a lot of us would ride together going to work. Today's driving you see, and I keep tab on it when I go out myself, you know, during the busy time you see I would say about 8 or 9 out of 10 cars with one passenger, just the driver. In those days we used to run 3 or 4 car pool, more so than they do today, much much more so.

Q: That's interesting.

A: We would all pitch in a little bit, you know, and pay the driver. Sometimes I'd drive and another, we'd take turns but more would carpool in those days, much more. Yeah, well, because our income was less. See in those days the little bit we made, I worked at 50¢ an hour from 1935 up to about 1939 and then I think I got a little raise there and we went to $6 or $5 something, got a little raise in '39 and then in '40 again. But when we were getting 50¢ an hour that's all we had, nothing else was paid. Our medical, we had to take care of our own, our life insurance, even if you worked on a different shift it was the same pay, like on afternoons. People working afternoons now they get a premium, you know, not in those days, even if you worked midnights the wages were all the same and they assigned you one, if you didn't like it, you didn't have to work.

Q: Which shift were you working on?

A: I worked afternoons and days both. As a matter of fact, I think I worked a little bit on midnights. The reason we liked to work midnights the big bosses weren't around.

Q: Oh yeah. That's hard though socially, isn't it?

A: Oh yes, yes, that's not good, the best times is days for raising a family.

Q: Were you involved when, in the 1940 and '41 when the union started to organize?

A: Well in 1940 the big drives started coming on at Ford's. Well let me back up a little bit. General Motors and Chrysler were already organized, they organized I believe it was in '37. They were already organized and Harry Bennett and his goons were doing a terrific job in Ford's, oh a terrific job. They put the scare, the fear of God into people that you join a union you're going to get fired and all that kind of thing. A lot of people believed it, they had me believing it for a while, but then we got going and the momentum looked real good so most of us started joining up and this is about 1940 when most of us got going.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: And started talking to people and seeing meetings getting bigger, you know, and a lot of people participating. So the election came out in '41, was it around April, early April I think it was in '41. I think it was in April of '41 when the election came out, why of course the domineering Ford plant was Rouge because I think there were more at Rouge than all the other plants put together at that time, we had

around 100,000 people. So anyhow the election carried and we got our first contract in June of that year and then we were, well let's see, in '41 under our first contract we got, the Company had us select, they agreed to select a company and they would match their wages. I think for a Stamping plant if I remember correctly we selected Fisher, Fisher's at General Motors, to compare wages so I got I think a 25¢ an hour raise all at once which was real good at that time.

Q: Yeah.

A: And we started getting security and we started, you know, living like human beings and if we thought something was wrong we'd have something to say about it, before you could never say it. Some things there started getting better, and in the very first contract we didn't get a heck of a lot we just got recognition mainly and a little bit of seniority protection, not too much. But as the contracts started coming out we got more and more and more and we got a lot of nice things today. I'll tell you what, in 1940 or when we first got a union I never dreamt that we'd have pensions, vacations as we got them, subpay as we got them and paid medical things. I never dreamt that we'd get what we have today, never, never never would I have dreamed that we would have got them. Our union has done the working people in there something real wonderful, wonderful. The wages I'm not going to say they're the best in all the industry but there as good as any and I think they're getting good security now. As you know they're in contract negotiations now again, but that's going to work out real good. In the preunion days, as I said, other than the wage we were getting--I got 50¢ an hour--you got exactly nothing, no

vacations, vacations were for the big guys up in the front office. I don't think even the foremen got vacations, paid vacations.

Q: Oh yeah.

A: We got nothing, honest to God I some time think back of all the things we've come through and try to tell some of these younger guys today but it goes in one ear and out the other. They think it's automatic. They think the Company's giving them all these good things which is a lot of malarkey. Everything that we've gotten we had to battle for, everything.

Q: Were you involved with the signing up people in the preunion days?

A: Yes. In 1941, early '41 or '40 we got around to it and we started putting people in there. Some of them were, as a matter of fact, there were some guys and some were my friends, the Company was putting on a big drive with the AF of L.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: They worked out a deal, Ford Motor worked out a deal with the AF of L to get in there.

Q: Uh-huh, yes.

A: They knew that was going to union, they were smart enough to know there was going to be a union. They figured if they can get the AF of L in there they would have it easier than the UAW. So a lot of people, I won't say a lot of people, some people fell for that and they were campaigning for the AF of L.

Q: Which building was that movement strongest in? Who do you think?

A: Which one?

Q: Were there any buildings that seemed to be more leaning toward the AF of L more than the others?

A: Yes.

Q: Which ones were those?

A: In the black covered units, buildings.

Q: The foundries.

A: The Company had mislead, somehow got to the black guys and there were some good black guys, oh some of them they really stuck their neck out, but the biggest percentage of AF of L guys were in the black units, the Foundry, Production Foundry was the worst and, man, we had some good guys in there that had their heads banged a couple of times.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: Because they were UAW guys but a...

Q: Who were they? Do you remember who some of those black guys that were working for the UAW were?

A: Yes, Shelton Tappes, one of my best buddies. Have you interviewed other people before?

Q: Yeah, we interviewed Shelton Tappes last year.

A: Oh you did.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: Well Shelton Tappes was one of them. He was a good guy and other guys came around there like Horace Sheffield but I don't know exactly all he done, he might have done something in there. But Jim Watts was in there and I don't know if he done too much, but the one that I know outstanding in there was Shelton Tappes, a ferocious guy. Didn't he tell you that he had a hard time in the black group at the time?

Q: Yeah, in the beginning, yeah.

A: That's right, but after we got a union they, the blacks today I think are more prounion than whites.

Q: Uh-huh. Where did Moore work, do you know?

Q: Moore worked in the Axle, we interviewed Dave Moore.

A: Dave Moore.

Q: Yeah, he was in the Axle.

A: Dave Moore was another, Dave Moore was in the Axle when we first organized and then he went to the Engine plant. He retired from the same department I was in. I retired out of Ken Bannon's staff, the Ford Department, so did he. But he's another one that stuck his neck out, Dave Moore did, but he was not in the Foundry. The Axle building was a good building too, he campaigned there for the UAW. Well they all were except the foundries and that was because they figured that they owed Ford something because Ford gave them a job, you know.

Q: Yeah.

A: It's understandable.

Q: Were there some units that you could say were more strongly for the UAW than others that were just predominantly in favor of the CIO?

A: Well the strongest UAW units, the one I come from, I don't remember the results per unit, I don't even know if they had them. I think they might have had them but I don't remember. I know the Engine plant was very strong, the Stamping plant was, Axle where Dave Moore was. Funny I don't think the skilled guys were, the Tool and Die building.

Q: No.

A: They weren't as, they were UAW but I don't think as strong as these production units.

Q: What about the Rolling Mill?

A: The Rolling Mill I believe was, yes.

Q: Now the Rolling Mill, did that have a lot of skilled workers or just highly paid?

A: Well, see, the Rolling Mill is a steel division, they made steel there if anyone's told you, I don't know all the interviews you've had. They started from scratch, they started way back in the Open Hearth all the way through, and I believe that some of them steel operations are considered skill. I'm not too sure, I don't know too much about the steel operations. But there were a lot of production people in there too. See the guys that I think they call them rollers that roll the steel on down and then they flatten it, out and they got to run these big machines and they put on a certain gauge on each sheet metal. They want different gauges, you know?

Q: Yeah.

A: I think those guys would be in the skilled category but not they were not skilled to the point that overall skilled like a tool and die maker, or a electrician or a plumber, you know, not that kind of skill.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: But they do have those in there though.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: They're in every building, those skilled people.

Q: Yeah. So how did you first get elected to your position in the Pressed Steel?

A: Well, let me see now. We had on April 1 or early April we had a strike and it started, if I'm not mistaken it started in the Rolling Mill. We being right next to the Rolling Mill got involved right away. See they started in Open Hearth then the Rolling Mill or the Steel division and then into the Stamping. See that's the way they had the metal running, understand?

Q: Yeah.

A: Okay. So we went, of course we had no contract, we had no nothing and they would call it a wildcat strike and, well, one thing I want to tell you something. Of course fortunately it didn't phase any of us. While it's on my mind I'd better tell you that. Back in the and I didn't know any of these people and I don't remember the exact year, but these Company goons--I'll get back but now I'm cutting off from what you said about getting elected and all that, I'll get to that and I'll give you a little of my history real fast like all the way through, okay?

Q: Okay.

A: That won't take long too long. But back in the I think around the mid-thirties there was a hunger march.

Q: Uh-huh, the Ford Hunger March.

A: Yeah, Shelton knew pretty much, maybe more so than I did about this, I was not involved. There was a big march in Rouge and they, Harry Bennett and his goons, and he then controlled the Police Department at Ford, at Dearborn, Harry Bennett he was the chief, somebody else

called the Chief, he was just by name he didn't, was not, Harry Bennett was the big boss. Anyhow they heard of this march and they come out and this was in the wintertime with hoses, guns and to stop this march at the Rouge. They pinpointed it as being communistically controlled, the Communists were running this show. That's where they started with the Communists are the union guys, the leaders in the UAW are a bunch of Communists. As a matter of fact, when the campaign was going on they were trying to put out the AF of L were the good guys and the UAW guys were the Communist guys, see?

Q: Uh-huh.

A: So in this march five guys were killed. You've been told that?

Q: Yeah,

A: Good unionists, five of them were killed and to the best of my knowledge that gave birth to the Company's outcry of Communism domination. Communists were dominating the unions into these plants and that prevailed quite a bit until after we got recognition and things started going, then of course it was all over with they couldn't do much about it. Then they got some in, this Communist thing got involved in some of our internal politics. I don't know if you got any of that.

Q: Yeah later on in the forties and fifties.

A: Later on at Ford's we were called left-wingers and I was part of the left-wing group and there were right wing; Shelton Tappes was a left-winger too.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: And there were right- and left-wing groups, you know, and some of those right-wingers would call us some Communists or the Communists front. It got dirty, oh my our politics got rough, dirty. But that leveled off after a while, after Reuther got involved he started--I don't know if I'm ahead of myself here now but anyhow Walter started, to make a long story short Walter started figuring, hey, we need these left-wingers like we need the right-wingers. See the right-wingers supported Reuther when he got going big, you know.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: And he kept a lot of guys on staff that were identified as left-wingers before his time and he started kind of welding the thing together and Shelton Tappes and I were, we were always in the same, Dave Moore, wewere always in the same group.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: Anyhow Walter got through to us and Shelton got on staff before I did and Dave Moore got on after I did, but they started welding everything together and bringing, hey we better have one happy family here in the best interests of unionism, you know?

Q: Uh-huh.

A: I guess he convinced us enough that prevailed. Okay, getting back to your question about my union activity started in 1941 under the very first election. When we were on that strike, maybe this gave it birth I don't know, but they were asking guys to participate in the Flying Squad. And I had, four of us were driving in my car and we'd drive around, help guys at the picket lines or if they needed something then the Flying Squad would drive around and kind of keep things in order.

Q: You were a member of the Flying Squad?

A: Yes. And I moved around quite a bit and spent a lot of time, some away from home when the strike was on, I was again not keeping too much time at home, so we kept pretty active. Then as soon as we got our contract the contract spelled out the structure of the representation. There were committeemen, chairmen, building committee and all that kind of stuff. Well some of the guys started telling me why don't you run for committeeman, I don't know, I don't know. At that time one committeeman had to represent an average of 550 people, a lot of people.

Q: Yeah.

A: And so they convinced me, so one of the guys from the local union conducted the election. The departments were put together to form pretty much of a 550 structure.

Q; Uh-huh.

A: I remember we went down to the lunch room, they had a great big lunch room, all got together and they started nominating guys and I think about five or six got nominated. Then one guy, some guy would say, oh don't vote for him because he didn't do nothing blah, blah, blah. Another guy said, don't vote for him because he didn't do too much. Another guy says, I wasn't even told, no don't vote for him because--how was it put? I was too close to some supervisor or something, I don't know what it was, some doggone thing. One of the guys who was on the Flying Squad with me got up and, oh man, did he tear him apart. He said, this guy here worked night and day and campaigning for the union blah, blah, the Flying Squad and all that. I guess that's all I

needed, I didn't ask him to but he got up and he was kind of teed off the way somebody was branding me, you know.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: Anyhow I ran away with the election and by that, I think it's because of what that guy said, mostly anyhow.

Q: So most of the workers were there in the lunch room when that was going on?

A: Yes from that time and they were yearly elections, from that time on every year election I never lost an election. First I was the District Committeeman, the next opening was the bargaining commitee. At that time we had bargaining committeemen in the building, three in each shift, three on days, afternoons, and midnights. I happened to be on afternoons at that time and I ran for Bargaining Committeeman in the afternoon shift and got elected there. Then the, of course you know the war was going on at this time, this year you're talking about '42, now '43.

Q: In '43 you were on the Bargaining Committee?

A: I was on the Bargaining Committee for the unit now.

Q: Right.

A: And then we were having an election for officers and in my caucus they picked me to run for Vice President when the President was a guy by the name of Tamoor, and I won the Vice Presidency so then I had to go on days. Then I became Vice President for two years, now these are still all one-year elections. I went on days and after two years that Tamoor was there I ran for President and I got elected for President in my building, and I was elected then for I think it was in 1948 for

then five consecutive years I was elected every year, single-year terms, till 1953. I was elected five years as chairman of the building, president, and in '53 Ken Bannon who was a Ford Director offered me a job on the staff and I talked it over with some of my guys, the guys who were on the Bargaining Committee--

END OF SIDE ONE

A: ..with me and they said, well if you go down on Ken Bannon's staff we'll put Joe on as president of the building. So we worked it out and we done just that and I went down on Ken Bannon's staff and Joe became President. We had a pretty good, we had a good caucus. We had a good strong group of guys sticking together and we used to win our elections pretty well, didn't have any trouble. I don't think you want to name names here do you of guys that got involved?

Q: If you want it's okay, either way you prefer it.

A: I know it's a lot of guys. I don't know what you're going to do with this. If it gets out and I name some guys and other guys I don't mention they might feel offended. I wondering if I--

Q: Well, no, if I would use names in this project it would be like if I'm talking to people I'd gather information on who were the organizers, who were the strong leftists, who were the rightists and different categories and then just compile all the information I get if I have enough. I'm not sure if that is what I'm going to do but that would probably be the kind of thing.

A: Uh-huh, you see I could name some names but I'm wondering if I would remember enough of them, we're talking about 35 years ago.

Q: Yeah. It's a while ago.

A: Well let me put it this way and if you want to come back and we want to give some names you tell me. So then in '53 I went on Ken Bannon's staff and I retired in '75, the end of '75.

Q: From Ken Bannon's staff?

A: Yes, from Bannon's staff. That will be almost, well this is my ninth year that I'm retired I guess. In the meantime we used to service, our job was of being on the staff to service the Ford locals. My specific job was to handle rates and classifications and see that the rates were appropriated properly in the different Ford plants and we also used to handle some of their grievances and sometime at the umpire and things like that. He would assign us some plants and we'd take care of them. My main job on plants other than rates and classifications was to cover all the Stamping plants. See Ford had five or six Stamping plants and also Engine plants. What we used to, these plants are broken up into subcouncils and subcouncil 4 I believe it was, was Stamping, Engine and Foundry and I used to handle pretty much there.

Q: So you had a lot of traveling to do, had to go to different Ford plants all around the country?

A: Oh yes, yes, a lot of it to Cleveland because Cleveland's got a Stamping plant, two Engine plants and a Foundry in that area.

Q: Those are the plants that were constructed during the Ford decentralization plan.

A: Yes, the Rouge decentralization.

Q: Yeah.

A: Yes, they come up at that time. Well one of the first Stamping plants other than Rouge was Buffalo Stamping and the Company put in some substandard wages in there, rates of pay, and when I got on the staff that was one of my assignments that Ken put me to work out rates equivalent to the ones that we were getting at the Rouge. So when the very first contract came out we got to that and we got them pretty well straightened out. Their rates were somewhat lower than what we had at Rouge. Then another thing that came along, let's see when was that now? Somewhere in the early sixties I believe it was, there was a drive on in Canada to get parity with the United States on wages. I think somewhere in the early sixties and when their contract came up I had the assignment to work with, with the Canadian guys. I wasn't the only guy because they run their own show in Canada, understand?

Q: Uh-huh.

A: And to work with that committee to set in equal rates for equal pay that we have here. We were ahead in the United States compared to Canada so that was one of our jobs. That was a little tough because they have different classifications. If a classification will work in the States was the same as in Canada and the work content of that classification was the same in both places it would be very simple. But some of our classifications are different than theirs and then to compound the problem the work content, what that individual did was even different, so we got it worked out pretty good. I don't think there's much problems and it took more than one set of negotiations,

we went through it--I don't know-- for three or four years, maybe five.

Q: Wow.

A: But we started getting it in there, the very first time we got some of those people some good wages, some good wages. Yeah, man, it worked out real good.

Q: Okay, you told me about the different positions you've held. First you said you were District Committeeman and then Bargaining Committee. That was during '43 that you were Bargaining Committee or around there?

A: '43, yes, '42 or '43...

Q: What kind of grievances were normally handled at the--you were at the third stage, right, of the grievance procedure?

A: The one that's in the first stage is the Committeeman. He's on the first stage on the ground floor.

Q: Yeah.

A: When a worker is penalized or something for various offenses, maybe the boss thinks he's not working long enough or maybe he had some absentee problems or even drinking problems, regardless of what the problem was if he didn't get, if he figures he didn't get all the money he had coming or his rate of pay wasn't right or things like that, the original case the worker takes it up with his committeeman and then they talk it through. If they can handle it with the foreman, take care of it, all well and good. If the they can't, the committeeman writes a grievance for the individual.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: If the individual wants a grievance the committeeman writes it and they try to settle it in that first stage. If they can't, after putting it in writing if they can't settle it, they appeal it to what we call the second stage and in the second stage is where the unit bargaining committee gets involved, understand?

Q: Uh-huh.

A: Okay, and in the second stage the unit bargaining committee meets with higher-ups in management and labor relations office there and what have you, and there again they try to resolve it. Some of them they convince the committee that it has no merit and they'll have to close it, and if they feel it still has merit after its denied, why they can appeal it to a third stage where the chairman then gets involved.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: And somebody from the local union would get involved. Now Local 600 had a review board grievance setup. All locals don't have that but 600 did because it was so big. I think, I'm sure they still do have. That would be the third step. There again if it's either closed out, it's granted or closed out because of no merit, fine; if not, and it's going to be appealed then it goes to the umpire and the umpire is final, his decision is binding on both parties. And at the umpire, why you can bring down your witness down there on the case. If it's a discharge case he can come down or whatever it may be you can bring your witnesses down and that case is heard there.

Q: Now all the dealings in the committees even at the lower stages of the grievance, do you think that it made a difference what kind of political caucus the committeeman was aligned with on how he would

fight for the grievance? Did it matter if you were right or left? Was everybody...

A: No, no, we didn't, there might have been some, but I honestly. You hear that every once in a while, oh they don't belong to the right caucus, but the gang that I was with, the group that I was with, we played no politics with the workers' problems. That's what made us pretty strong all the time, we never played politics with a worker's problem. It either had merit or it didn't, if he had merit he could be a right-winger, left-winger, he could be a Communist, we'd take it up, no, no problem.

Q: What about for the committeeman himself, did it matter, would a right-wing committeeman act differently when he was fighting for a worker on a grievance rather than a left-wing? I mean did one of them pursue a grievance more thoroughly or try to pursue more grievances or anything like that?

A: Well I had a feeling and I sometime wonder if I was right. I had a feeling that the reason I belonged to the left wing is that they had more vigor, more drive, more fight for the workers, but I've seen some right-wingers too have some drive. I don't know, that was my feeling at that time, that left-wingers were more vigorous and would fight for the workers' cause.

Q: Can you tell me a little bit about the caucuses in your unit and who made up the right and left wings? For example, the right wing, was that composed of people that were affiliated with the Association of Catholic Trade Unionists? Did they have that group in your unit?

A: I understood they were but I never was close to the right wing, never been to their caucus. I understood the, they called them the ACTU. That's what you're referring to?

Q: Right.

A: I understood that they had a lot to say to the right-wing group and where some people would say the ACTU had some say in the right-wing group those groups would say that the Communist Party would have something to say to the left-wing group. Now you see I'd say that they were wrong, knowing the left-wing group, that they were wrong with us but not knowing the right-wing group I couldn't say whether it was right or wrong that the ACTU did have something to--it could be. It's all hearsay by me.

Q: So were there any other groups that were strong in the unit that were affiliated with the different caucuses?

A: No, there wasn't, mainly left and right in those early days and gradually as the years went on they said, they got, they started merging and left and right was just down the drain.

Q: About ethnic groups, did you see any difference in the tendencies of different ethnic groups to either affiliate themselves with the right or left? I know there were some language clubs and things like that in Detroit in the early days. Were any of those organized within the unit?

A: Ethnic groups?

Q: Yeah.

A: Well in my unit the bulk of people were Italians, Poles, and blacks and even maybe in that order. But it started turning around and

predominantly black now, it went predominantly black, but those three groups were the big majority of the Stamping plant. And being of Italian descent you know politically I had darn few Italians that wouldn't go with me and I got along real good with blacks, real good. I got to give you a story about a black situation maybe that put me up higher with them, I'll give you that. And Poles, well I had some friends in Poles but whether I got the majority of Poles or not I don't know, but when it comes to Italians and blacks I had no problem.

Q: So then it sounds like that maybe the Poles were with the right wing more if they're voting against you.

A: They might have been but that would be a guess. They might have been, yes, but when we're right and left but after a while.

Q: Who were some of the people that ran against you on the right-wing slate in those early days?

A: In the building you're talking about?

Q: Yeah, right.

A: A fellow by the name of, well Szluk did once.

Q: Oh that was what I was trying to think of, I just didn't know how to pronounce his name.

A: John Szluk did once, of course he had no chance. There was another one before him.

Q: He was a pretty strong right-winger and outspoken, right?.

A: Yes, right wing. Yes, but he was of Hungarian descent. He was of Hungarian descent and he--let me see, I'm trying to give you a year about when he even joined our caucus. I'm trying to give you a time, I think shortly after he got beat real bad. He ran with me for

Recording Secretary on our slate so he got elected then. He was Recording Secretary when I was Chairman that one year or two years. Eventually after I left when I was on Bannon's staff Szluk got elected to the Chairman or President.

Q: Do you mean in the sixties?

A: Yes, it would have been, let me see now, because he went down and he went on staff for a few years and when he passed he was on staff. It was in the sixties, yes, yes. But then you see about 1952 or 3, in the early fifties, our term went from one to two years.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: I never had a two-year term, mine were all one year. But they went to two years and now they're up to three.

Q: Oh really.

A: So that helps them a lot. But getting back to why I said I got along real good with blacks, I used to socialize with them, I get along with them real nice. I was Vice President once, I remember real well under Tamoor, see Tamoor was, Armenian he was. Tamoor was Armenian. This was at the end of the war, I guess it would have been 1946 or 7, somewhere in that area, while I was Vice President, we had what we called a supercharger job. It was a part for the big Pratt & Whitney engines.

Q: Where was that located? I've seen a reference to that. It was a separate building, the supercharger plant?

A: It was in the Stamping plant but it was isolated, they had walls partitioning it by itself where every Tom, Dick and Harry couldn't go

in there. They had special guards, see it was government-controlled and the Army wouldn't let you in.

Q: They hired in the guys from Pressed Steel to go in there?

A: Oh yes, oh yes, the seniority was interchangeable, they took guys in there from the Stamping plant. Well, see, auto production went out totally during the war

Q: Uh-huh.

A: We were making this supercharger job, we were making parts for tanks, we were making various parts for defense and all the seniority was interchangeable. Anyhow, the supercharger job was going out and in our building there were two departments of the Aircraft building where we made Pratt & Whitney engines. There were two departments where they were assemblying certain parts for the Pratt & Whitney engine, and when this supercharger job was starting to take people off, phasing out, high seniority guys would come along and I had a job to see to it that they were placed, you know, replacing junior people. Well two black guys happened to come along, nice guys, that were inspectors and the youngest happened to have been in the Pratt & Whitney engine department. I don't know if they were men or women I don't remember, we had a lot of women in there too. But the two youngest happened to have been there and the representation came out of Pratt & Whitney that was a plant on its own.

Q: The Aircraft plant?

A: Yes. But since they were geographically located in the Pressed Steel they applied seniority with us, understand?

Q: Uh-huh.

A: Okay, so anyhow when these two black guys come through being inspectors and the two youngest were over there I gave them a slip to go down there and they replaced the two youngest ones. Holy Toledo, not only was it bad that they went over there but two blacks coming down there, there wasn't a black person in there. Two blacks went down there and holy, all hell broke lose and they had a wildcat over it.

Q: Wow.

A: I had a wildcat over it. Man, I told them no way, then I stood my guns all the more, you know. I told them those people are going to go in there. And I went to Labor Relations and said, you better not take them out of there and they wouldn't go back to work. They got people from the local union to come over and talk to them, I talked to them, but after a while they went back to work.

Q: How long did that Aircraft unit stay around after the war? Oh not too long, after the war it started phasing out fast.

Q: So was that when McCusker was the President over there, Henry McCusker?

A: Henry McCusker was the President of the Aircraft.

Q: Yeah.

A: Not of the local union. His brother Joe McCusker was.

Q: Yeah, so that he was heading the Aircraft unit when they had the wildcat over you sending these blacks there.

A: I don't know if it was Henry at that time or not. No, I think it was before Henry. Henry, being a right-winger, I'm sure that he would never take the, he would take the position that they would work there

I'm positive of that. But I think it was before Henry's time, Henry went in there at the tail end, just, I think it had all just about phased out completely. That's the Aircraft, see the supercharger job went out before that.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: They must have had superchargers ahead, I don't know.

Q: So who were these guys that were working in the Aircraft unit that were so racist, didn't want to work next to blacks?

A: I don't know.

Q: Do you know where they came from? Did they come from outside the plant when they were hired in or from other places in the plant?

A: Oh yes, oh yes, a lot of people came from down South.

Q: That went into the Aircraft plant?

A: Oh yes, a lot of them, oh that was a haven for people from down, both black and whites, a lot of whites and you know the feeling at that time. I think it's changed a lot now but it was bad.

Q: Was that the highly skilled job in the Aircraft unit?

A: No, not what I'm referring to, inspectors. No, they'd learn that in no time.

Q: So that was just a building that was set up just for the war, right?

A: The Aircraft?

Q: Uh-huh.

A: Yes, the government built that, that Aircraft building. They started building that I think in either '39 or '40, anticipating a need for it and then when the war was over Ford bought it for I think almost a song. Right now they're building some engine plants and engine, the

Ford engine's in there now, but not too many. I think they have either three or four floors on there and they're not using that building to its capacity, far far from it.

Q: That's the building where Larry Yost came out of?

A: Right.

Q: He led the movement against the no-strike pledge in the UAW as a whole, right? During '43 or '44, somewhere around there?

A: See, Larry Yost, my guys the left-wingers were in favor of the no-strike pledge. I don't know since you raised this you must have talked to somebody about it. We were in favor of the no-strike pledge and some guys, some guys, I think Reuther was for the no-strike pledge if I remember correctly. It's so long ago, I think Reuther was for it. But some of these extreme right-wingers and Yost being one of them were against it. See we figured that during the war, hey, our country comes first, you know, and hell right away those right-wingers start tying us in that hell that's Russia's baby, you know, it's Communist-dominated guys pushing for the good of Russia not for the good of this country. I'm telling you there used to be some good ones around.

Q: So what was their rationale for wanting to repeal that no-strike pledge? They thought that, being right-wingers you'd expect them to be more patriotic?

A: You'd think so but they--I don't know, they got somebody in their group started this to do away with the no-strike, but they didn't get anywhere, they made a lot of noise but they didn't get too far with it.

Q: It caught on in the Aircraft unit, did it catch on anywhere else? Was the right wing during that wartime strong?

A: Well there were some here and there. The Aircraft was and not all the whole Aircraft was for it, there were some left-wingers, see in those days there was left and right. The Aircraft had some left-wingers in there but predominantly they were right.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: Let's see, where else can I tell you? Tool and Die I don't know, they were fifty-fifty. Our building I think was 100 percent for it. The Engine plant was good, I don't know if they, I think they had some that were for it because a guy that was, a right-winger that was real popular in the Engine plant, a guy by the name of O'Rourke, and he was popular and he was a right-winger and I think he was against the no-strike pledge. He came out of there, but then there were the strongest ones in there at that time and they were Boatin and Gallo and Moore, Moore was in there, no, did Moore get in the Engine plant? No, I think he never did; yes, he did. Anyhow, the left wing had a lot of strength over there in the Engine plant.

Q: During the war did the goings-on in the shop change much? For example, the grievances that were pursued or the way that, the speed that the workers worked, anything like that, did it remain the same or did they have speed-ups during the war and did they stop pursuing grievances as strongly?

A: Oh no, we still pursued grievances. But during the war, you see there's something else, I imagine most all companies, I know Ford was, that they'd get an order it was all on a cost plus thing.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: That's they were guaranteed a profit, you know, and they didn't push too hard. They were mostly concerned with quality, and rather than to push for quantity they kind of pressed, I think, more for quality than they did quantity. So the speed-up thing wasn't a big problem then, it worked out pretty good that way. But the overall work I guess was about the same, I think maybe not to a man but a lot of the workers were more loyal to their job, more concerned to put out a good day's work. Most of them, I'm not going to say all of them because there's always some goof-offs, you know.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: But they worked out real good.

Q: During the war as you mentioned earlier there was a lot of people coming up from the South and also a lot of women coming into the plant, how did that affect the union politics?

A: Well in the Stamping plant prior to the war there were no women. The war brought in women and people from outside the Detroit area. Women started to get to be quite a political power in there because they're--

Q: In the Stamping plant?

A: Oh yes, yes, so we in our group and others did, too, around they would put them on their group somehow, something, some of the positions, maybe not any of the major ones like but, you see, we had the President and Vice President, Recording Secretary, Financial Secretary, Guide, Trustees and all that.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: Somewhere in there you could find a spot for a woman and then one place we had a woman as a committeewoman, they were a majority and she got to be a committeewoman, it worked out pretty good I'll tell you they were happy to get in there and get equal wages. That's one thing we've never had any trouble, even a fight, today at this late date when I read about women not getting equal wages compared to men.

Q: Yeah.

A:: Man, I've seen that for over forty years, equal. As a matter of fact, a little bit more than equal. I'm going to tell you a little story now that I was involved in. I was the only guy named in a $3 million suit against us. I'm glad we started talking about women and this one come up, and this was a part of the politics, too, in our setup.

[END OF TAPE #1]

ARCHIE ACCIACCA INTERVIEW
August 1984
Tape #2

Q: I had just asked about Southerners getting into the leadership.

A: Yes, they did get into some. '49, I believe it was or '48,'49, I was President of the building, I was number 1 responsible guy for the union in the Stamping plant.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: Of course there's others too, there's our Bargaining Committee, but everybody points to the Chairman, the President. We'd had some bad layoffs as a result of the war ending, everything phasing out and the--

Q: Somewhere in the mid-forties, '46, '47.

A: Yeah, '46 and '47 was when everything went out and then the layoff come, the big layoff come in '47 or '48, somewhere in there, '47 or '48 the big layoff. I don't know if we had just already started the automobile production, we might have but there was something keeping us down from going, you know, pushing everybody, getting everybody back to work and, of course, we had, I think we had many more than the Company absorbed, we had many more during the war than the Company could absorb after auto started going again. So we had this big big layoff, a lot of men a lot of women laid off, and they went out in the street. No problem, nothing was heard, and then they were getting Unemployment Compensation and while they were getting Unemployment Compensation everybody was pretty happy, they had a little income, you know, sit home and having a little money coming in. When that started

running out, the women started complaining about when are they going to get back to work, when are they going to get back to work. They said that we hear that there's some men in there working in there with less seniority than we've got. They started, they went down to the International Union, they went to the local union, they went to the International Union downtown and Solidarity House complaining about men working in there with less seniority than women. Well women I used to get along with real real good during the war, everything was real nice. As a matter of fact, I think I got majority of their votes. But when this thing hit the fan about men working with less seniority than them, I said, okay, we're going to do something about this. First thing I did was call a meeting and publicize the hell out of it and let everybody know what we had done, there were three jobs on the loading dock, Ford used to load side panels into box cars to ship to the Assembly plants, it's a complete side assembled with the components inside of it, understand?

Q: Uh-huh.

A: All the braces and what have you. Three big healthy men used to handle it, pick it up off, take it off the conveyor and put it, they had two layers of cars, understand?

Q: Uh-huh.

A: Two big men, three big men used to do that. Another job, rooftops, they were heavy; and another job was floor pans, when the floor pan, there's a front part and a back part made separately and when it's put together it's very heavy and awkward. So when we were having these layoffs the Company got a hold of us and said, look we've got these

men over there that have less seniority than these women who are coming through, you want to send those women over there to bump those men? They said, they're going to get disqualified, they're not going to be able to do the work. We said, we don't want to do it that way because here's what would happen. I've got to explain this one. We had a lot of women with 1942 seniority.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: 1942 seniority. They would be sent to bump the youngest in their group, follow me now.

Q: Yeah.

A: The group of classifications. They've got to bump the youngest. They don't have a choice who they're going to bump, they've got to bump the youngest and the youngest were these big strappy healthy men on these three different jobs I just got through mentioning.

Q: Uh-huh, okay.

A: That woman wouldn't go over there, she wouldn't try, she wouldn't even look at, it and say, I can't do it, at that point she's disqualified. Over here would be a 1944 woman working but she don't bump that woman she bumps this one because this one here could have '46 or '47 seniority, understand?

Q: Yeah.

A: So there's where your disqualification come in, we thought that was an injustice. We told the Company we don't want it that way. We had previous experience where Ken Bannon came from out of Highland Park where they disqualified a bunch of women out of line of seniority and we didn't do that. So we said to the Company, oh no, we're going to

separate those three jobs. We're going to separate, take and leave that side panel, rooftop and the floor pans alone, these women don't bump there. If there are men who come through that can handle that job they can bump there, these women will bump the youngest on the jobs that they can do and we got the Company to agree to do that. So we called a meeting, man, we _____ that on over this issue, women with a lot of seniority, I made a big bulletin. They went down to the Solidarity House complaining about being laid off, splashed it all over the building, big big turnout, men and women, good man, that's up my alley. So I says, here's our problem. Women are working with more seniority than some men on these certain jobs. If these women went over there they would be disqualified and they'd go out in the street. We assumed that they don't want to do that so we said, okay, you want to go strictly contract, do you with '42 seniority want to bump the youngest in a building and go that way and where over here could be somebody with '44, '45 or less seniority than those men. Oh no, no. When we explained the whole thing to them that hall was jammed. I said, I want a vote: either you're going to agree with what we've done in the building or you want to change it and go the other way. One hundred percent, not one person voted against us that we done the right thing. Everybody says we're doing the right thing. But what happened some politicians, there I don't want to name any names, got a hold of it and started hollering about women being laid off on the line of seniority. We were called down to the Solidarity House, we explained everything we done, we got a clean bill of health, everything was fine, no comment. But these shysters I talked of, they

were going to do something, they got up, and went outside and got a lawyer. They had a lawyer with signatures of 110 or 11, I don't know what they paid the lawyers or what have you, I'm sure that the lawyer took a little advantage of them. They take the case to court that these women got laid off on the line of seniority, they went all the way to the State Supreme Court. The State Supreme Court looked it over and I got a copy of this, that's one thing I'm going to keep. I throw a lot of junk away because I accumulate a lot but I keep this one. When the State Supreme Court got it and looked into it they threw it out, they wouldn't even hear it and that was the end of it. Oh our politics got rough, yeah I went through a lot of things.

Q: Did you spend a lot of money in legal fees to go through all of that?

A: Not a penny.

Q: Oh really.

A: The union took care of it. See the Solidarity House got their own attorney and they took care of it. When we explained to them what we did, not only were they going to give us hell, hell they come to bat for us and they supplied the lawyer to take it up.

Q: You mentioned that when you made this plan of what you were going to do and then you took it to the meeting and had a referendum vote on it in your unit, was that how you made all the decisions, that you work things out and then the workers voted on it? Is that how most...?

A: Most decisions, anything of major issues is done that way, yes.

Q: Do you think that was the case in all the different units or was it up to the chairman's discretion?

A: It was up to the chairman and the committee to handle it either, you know in some cases they don't, they even take their grievances to the meeting and explain them, you know?

Q: Uh-huh.

A: But I think legally they might have got into trouble and they might have stopped it, because if you think you've got a grievance and I write it for you as your committeeman and then I pursue it, now if I close it out or and this has happened in some cases, then you will get an attorney, see we've had some of those problems. I've never faced too many, I don't ever remember facing, other than this one woman issue here I don't ever remember getting into, involved in. But, you know, our grievance procedures gets bogged down too much, too many grievances go up, I don't know what they're going to do with it. I understand that still a lot of them go to the umpire, it takes a long time to get a hearing.

Q: Uh-huh. So how would you describe the democracy inside the Pressed Steel unit? Were there a lot of rules and regulations that were set up to insure that democracy ruled or was there...

A: Oh yes, oh yes, oh yes, the local union had a set of bylaws and we had a set of bylaws that we, each unit was required to have a set of bylaws that you'll abide by it.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: And those are all brought up through the membership in their respective buildings and ratified there before they're put into effect.

Q: So that would cover things like when you're making a decision, a major decision that affects workers in the plant that it has to go up to a referendum vote or something like that.

A: That's part of it, oh yes, oh yes. You see we have a lot of people with a lot of complaints around bitching and oh all that, but I'll tell you what our union is one of the most democratic and I've interviewed a few of them. Of course the one that gets the worst publicity I guess and I hate to see it is the Teamsters. I question that they're all that bad, I guestion it very much. I don't think they are, but anyhow in the UAW where they claim that they get a lot of things crammed down their throat that is not true. Not a contract has ever been accepted, told the Company this is the contract we're going to have, that's it, like it or not unless the contract is ratified, the membership is going to vote on it, every one of those things and that goes by unit agreements too. See each unit has got its own agreement that prevails to their own related problems. See something that could be going wrong in the Stamping plant under their way to operate maybe wouldn't work in the Foundry or wouldn't work in an Engine plant or in a Glass plant and they got different setups. So each unit's got its own local agreements and no one is crammed down any one member's throat unless it's ratified by the membership.

Q: How about the initiation of ideas to go into a new contract? How do the committees that end up arguing for a new contract get the ideas of what we're going to struggle for and what we're going to fight for at this contract? Does that come from rank and file suggestions also?

A: Yes, ma'am. Some time, maybe three or four months, five months before a contract expiration time, each local union takes a survey of their membership of the ideas that they've got. Now they got to clear it through their local union, understand?

Q: Does this happen at the unit level or the local level?

A: Well in the Rouge they start at the unit level, but some plants they don't have only but one unit so I was referring to the overall. Okay, we start at the unit level, submit our demands as to what we want, we bring them up to the membership meeting, go over them, what the heck they're all about and they discuss them. From this point they go to the local union, now, see, the local union then could have maybe five or six units have the same idea on one thing or, anyhow they put them all together and then they submit them to the Ford Department and then the National Ford Department takes all the local unions together. They have a committee, what the heck do they call it? A contract committee that deals with, anyhow they have this committee that comes in there and then it isn't just the Ford Director or anyone on the Ford staff, but this committee comes in and they've got many hundreds piled up there, you know, maybe thousands and they go through every one of them and put them altogether.

Q: Is this committee made up of people from all the different locals?

A: Oh yes, oh yes, and these issues they've got to clear through the National Ford Council and there's a representative from every local union that goes to this National Ford Council and they put, they submit all their demands together and they go through the National Ford Council and once they've cleared it through National Ford Council

they then start preparing to give them to the Ford Motor Company and then they bargain one way or another.

Q: Yeah.

A: Then who knows what the end result is, I don't know.

Q: Yeah. How well were the meetings generally attended?

A: Well I haven't been to any for a long time now, but in the early days we used to have good attendance, good attendance, they were good enough that we'd have to get some big high school auditoriums and sometimes even fill them up. But as the years went on they started dropping down and down and down and as of late in my experience there was very few attending, maybe 40 or 50 or 60.

Q: Per unit.

A: Per unit. If they'd get 100 I think they'd be lucky.

Q: And what kind of numbers did you get back in the forties in a big auditorium? What? 600 or something like that?

A: Oh yes, oh yes, you could average up close to 1,000.

Q: Oh yeah, so that's about one-sixth of the membership then. In Pressed Steel you had around 6,000.

A: Yes.

Q: That's a pretty good proportion.

A: Yes, it was.

Q: But how did the other thing about one shift was on during the meeting time, how did they work that?

A: No, we'd have it on Sunday.

Q: Oh on Sunday. They closed the whole plant on Sundays?

A: Yes.

Q: So you had one-sixth of the membership coming out on a Sunday then.

A: There are some units, some units like the Steel Division that's a seven-day operation, they have shift meetings, but we're not a seven-day operation.

Q: Okay, let me see. Oh, going back a minute to one thing that I started to get at before but we went around and took another route, the ACTU. Now they represent Catholic workers and just determining by the nationalities of workers there, there's probably a lot of Catholics in the plant at the Rouge because they are a lot of Southern Europeans and, well, the blacks were probably Baptist, do you think that the ACTU had much influence over the average Catholic worker in the plant?

A: I'm not too sure they did. I'm a Catholic myself and I knew a lot of Catholics that were left-wingers, a lot of them. The ACTU had some influence, I would say a minor influence, not much. I would say the answer would be no, they don't have much.

Q: So they didn't bring their politics into the church or like when you went to church on Sunday you didn't hear that kind of stuff or things like that?

A: No, no, no.

Q: They kept that separate, okay. I have a question here about the group which you think was dominant in your unit during the forties and fifties and just by the fact that you were elected so many times it sounds like the left wing or the Progressive Caucus was dominant in your unit pretty much throughout.

A: Yes, it was.

Q: You said that in the later years there started to be some unification, that happened within your unit also?

A: Yes.

Q: How did that work?

A: You mean how did it come about?

Q: Yeah.

A: Well I told you that, see Reuther was, when in the first election Reuther ran against R. J. Thomas, the left-wingers supported R. J. Thomas, the right wing supported Reuther, and Reuther had a ferocious gift of gab, he could really speak. I don't think you've ever had the experience of hearing him.

Q: No.

A: But he could really get anybody's attention and R.J. was a blub, blub, bluber, you know, tobacco in his mouth all the time. Anyhow he was the left-wingers' candidate and Walter worked real hard and he went around a lot of these local unions, he was VP at the time and he got enough support that he beat R.J. at the convention. In what year was it? '40, mid-forties somewhere. Did you get anything?

Q: Yeah, I think it was '46 but I'm not sure though.

A: I was going to say '46 also but it's in the mid-forties. Okay, so when Walter took over then, on staff were a lot of left-wingers R.J. put there.

Q: Yeah.

A: Well Reuther must have done some real soul-searching because he didn't fire them, he could have.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: He put a lot of his friends on there but he kept these left-wingers and these left-wingers had the influence in these various local unions, are you following me?

Q: Yeah.

A: Okay. So that started dribbling down and Reuther started telling them about having unity, about getting along, welding our people together, welding the leadership together and I want you to do this, blah, blah, blah, and it started trickling on down into the units. This is in the best interest of our membership, in the best interest of our union and fighting the enemy, which in our case was the Ford Motor Company. Well, we'd better just forget our differences and weld ourselves together, and it started getting closer and closer and closer and by I'd say the early fifties it was in pretty good shape.

Q: How would you see the administratorship that Reuther put over the local in '52 in that light? How does that fit into his attempts to unify?

A: Well he sent some guys in there as administrators over the local union, I think there was something like four or five and I don't know if he got any names, that started being friendly with everybody.

Q: Started being friendly.

A: They were, look, even my name had been mentioned about being removed, I was not removed. In my building, I don't think there was anybody removed in my building but I was mentioned.

Q: How about McPhaul? Was he there at that time, or is that earlier that he got...?

A: McPhaul come out of my building, McPhaul, I don't remember now. McPhaul, now he, well I could tell you good and bad about him so I'd better not tell you. He's one of the guys that when we were talking about AF of L, you know, he was in that category but let's not go into that one. I don't remember if McPhaul was removed or not, I don't remember. He might have been, he might have been.

Q: So you were out at the local at this time, were you in Bannon's camp?

A: No, no, at that time I was Chairman, President of our building, that was in '52, '51, '52. I was Chairman of the building and I had met with this fellow that Walter had there a few times and we worked out our problems, and to me personally I think it helped weld the local closer together.

Q: Oh yeah.

A: Yep.

Q: Do you think that it did harm to the Progressive Caucus or actually it got to the point where it's not around any more but?

A: No, I think the Progressive Caucus was having, they were on real slippery skids at that time and it was just about nil then and I don't know if it affected them much, it might have, it might have but not much.

Q: How about the House UnAmerican Activities Committee when they came to Detroit? Do you think that had any influence on the politics in the local?

A: I was one that was called down there by the way. It was about, let's see how many did they have down there? seven or eight. A funny thing, most of us that were called down there ended up being International

representatives, most of us. I won't give you any names but one of them got to be even the President's Administrative Assistant.

Q: Reuther's?

A: No, Reuther was gone by then, Reuther died in, I think Doug was in there when he went in. What year was it Reuther died? Reuther died in '60, the mid-sixties.

Q: Something like that.

A: Yeah, the mid-sixties. It was after Reuther, either, I think Doug was in there then, Fraser. But I don't think that House UnAmerican Activities Committee had, I know that quite a few of us and I was one of them blamed somebody who was on the International staff for playing politics with our local union, but nobody really mentioned Reuther. See when this committee come in they started, they're rough, you know, they started feeling around all over and they get some of the weak ones that are going to start talking, maybe they think they'll save their own skin and because of the politics named a few guys and but nothing come of it, nothing.

Q: How did you see Stellato in relationship to Reuther and his ideas about getting a unified caucus?

A: Well, I think he, when you weigh the whole thing, I think Carl tried to unify people. He played around, he played his politics all over. See he beat Tommy Thompson as Reuther's boy, Carl was.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: He was on the staff and they claimed that through the International Union and I understand even Bannon had a hand in it, the region had a hand in it, they put Carl in there to beat Thompson. I supported

Thompson, nevertheless Carl got around quite a bit and as soon as he got in he started making friends with everybody.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: And right away we got together and had no trouble supporting him. He was riding real high in Local 600. As a matter of fact, one summer this must have been about '54 I believe, we had a rally _____ and invited John L. Lewis down and I don't know if anyone told you about this.

Q: I read about that in the Ford paper.

A: Oh, we had a heck of a rally there and he invited people from other unions but nobody in the UAW so that wasn't quite fair. He started having outs with the UAW administration and then after a while he got back with them, he got even back on the staff so--

Q: Stellato did?

A: Yes, Stellato went back on the, after he left the local he went back on the staff. He's been around, he's been all over. He's had good and bad in him like I guess most of us. I must have had some bad in me somewhere, I don't know.

Q: Do you think in the early days the presidents that were elected to the local presidency, were they generally left-wingers or right-wingers in the early days?

A: Other than, the early days, now you're referring to early forties, in the forties?

Q: Yeah.

A: Other than Joe McCusker who was a one-year president in, now wait I've got to back up some more. Our first official local president was Paul Ste. Marie, I guess you've got that name, haven't you?

Q: Uh-huh.

A: He was on the right side, then Joe McCusker come in and he was on the right side, two one-year guys; other than those two I would say all the rest were left-wingers. Tommy Thompson come in there, he was on the left side and he was there for a few years. Who else was in there?

Q: Grant.

A: Bill Grant was a left-winger.

Q: And Llewellyn.

A: Llewellyn was a left-winger. That's, I think, the three others up until about 1950, '51 when Carl beat Thompson I think that was it: Llewellyn, Grant and Tommy; I think that's the way it went.

Q: Do you think that in '47 when they voted in the Taft-Hartley Act that that had much of an effect on what was, the way the union was run? Did they have to make a lot of changes because of that law?

A: Yeah, it made some changes, but because of the law I don't know if it didn't pull us closer together. See when you got something hurting labor, it would have a tendency to bring the leaders together and it might have done that too. It could have but I don't think it hurt us, it didn't do us any too much good but I don't think it hurt us too bad either.

Q: Now when they passed that law, and the referendum vote in Local 600, that everybody had to sign a non-Communist affidavit that Bill McKie and John Gallo both resigned from, I think McKie was one that--

A: I think Bill McKie did but I don't know about John Gallo. Bill McKie is the only one that I know said that he was a Communist. I don't think Gallo did. Did someone tell you Gallo did?

Q: I think I read it in the paper, there's two people and I think it was Gallo. It was in Ford Facts.

A: Maybe you're right. I know about McKie and what a heck of a nice guy. I'm telling you he helped the union a lot.

Q: Yeah, that's what I heard, he seems to be very well liked.

A: He helped the union so much in his early days, what a good guy. He's gone by the wayside too.

Q: Oh he was older at that time even, wasn't he?

A: Yes he was up in age. If I'm not mistaken, wasn't he an Englishman?

Q: Scottish.

[END OF SIDE ONE]

A: I would say he would be one of the very very first.

Q: And how did he get to know so many people around? It seems like he was a--

A: Well as you get meetings, you know, you start bringing people together why, he was always outspoken and he got acquainted, he was an easy guy to be friendly with.

Q: Do you know what he did once he resigned from, I think he was guide at the time that in '47? Did he stay at the plant? That would mean he would have to go back to work, right?

A: As a guide he worked too, I think.

Q: Oh really.

A: Yeah, a guide is not a full-time job.

Q: So he did production work up until he was--

A: No, he was a tradesman, I'm not sure what he was. I think he was, he was out of the Maintenance unit and he was some kind of a trade.

Q: Oh so he was in the job that he went all around the plant just during his job.

A: Yes, yes he did.

Q: Do you think that that has an effect on the ability of a person to get well known and elected if they have a job that they can move around like Tool and Die or the Maintenance.

A: That gives them a better chance, yes, to get around and see people, definitely.

Q: Did a lot of those guys tend to become people who ran for office and political?

A: Yeah, but, you see, these guys that travel all around we call the Maintenance unit, they go all over the Rouge plant they can't run in every unit. Their unit is the Maintenance unit.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: They run for an office in that unit. They can't run in the Stamping plant and the Engine plant and the Glass plant and all that.

Q: Uh-huh. So did many of them run for a local office?

A: Yeah, well let's see now. I know McCusker was a tool and die maker and I think Paul Ste. Marie was too, and Llewellyn was out of the Engine plant, Grant was out of Tool and Die, Tommy I think had hired right into the Aircraft building so--

Q: And what about Stellato?

A: Stellato was out of the Engine plant.

Q: Engine plant also. So it seems that there are a couple of plants there that are dominating the top positions in the union, Tool and Die and Motor.

A: The Engine plant had quite a few, the guys that're in and out with Maintenance.

Q: There were a lot of elections going on, there were elections for the local, elections for the unit, elections for delegates to the industrial councils and the UAW conventions, did there tend to be a lot of people who got involved in being a representative or did basically the same group of people get elected to a lot of offices?

A: Well I don't know about the same--let me explain elections a little bit, I don't know how much information you got. In the earlier days when they were one-year elections, when we first got going and it was a one-year term we were almost voting the whole year. Now let me tell you how it happened. First, it would be the election for the local officers all the way down, after the election you would have to have a runoff, that's the way it was up.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: That's with the bylaws and what have you and got changed. If you know the structure maybe I don't have to tell you.

Q: No, I don't know all of it so go ahead.

A: Do you want me to tell you?

Q: Yeah.

A: Then they'd have the runoff, maybe not for all offices, even if it was just one you still had to have the runoff. Okay, so that's going to take three to four weeks, a month or so or maybe a little bit more. Then you get into your unit elections. First, you've got to elect the officers, President, Vice President, the same old setup as at the local, your officers. Then you have your runoff, there's another month or so gone. Are you following me?

Q: Yeah.

A: Then you'd have your election for your Bargaining Committee.

Q Three people elected there.

A: Three to be elected there, the election for the Bargaining Committee. After that the election for all the District Committeemen in all the different areas, so there you're talking about one local, unit, bargaining, district--there's four different elections there, four different elections with runoffs in there every year, plus you could have convention delegates election.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: Convention delegates election, at that time we belonged to the state CIO, you could have that election. I told you General Council. Did I tell you General Council?

Q: No, that would make five.

A: General Council election, that's a representative from each building in the 600 Council. So you see how many elections there are?

Q: Yeah.

A: All in one year, man, we were voting all the time. So now they have a setup and it's only, I think it's every three years now. Most of them could be put into one: your local elections, unit elections and the committeemen's elections all in one. You get different ballots when you go vote at one time. That helps a whole big bunch.

Q: Yeah.

A: And sometimes in some years if it's a convention, there are some locals they can have their convention delegates' election at the same time too, if the convention falls in that year.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: One of the bad things of going the original way was, a guy would run for, he'd take a lot of shots at it. A guy would run for local office feeling there he would run in the unit office, feeling there he could run for bargaining committee, feeling there he could run for district committeeman, so you could see he could run for four different offices. Now you choose what you're going to run for and all the elections are at one time so they give everybody an even chance.

Q: Just about once every three years is about it then now?

A: Yes, with some other elections possibly, yeah.

Q: Do they still have representatives to the industrial councils or are they done away with?

A: No, no, we, now unless something happened since I've been away now in the recent years because, see, we got back now with the, we were independent for a long time. Well when we were back, when Reuther was

in there, the UAW was independent, we didn't belong to the--what am I trying to say?

Q: The Industrial Council.

A: Was it the Industrial Council?

Q: The CIO Council.

A: We didn't belong to the CIO Council but there was another name for it they come up with.

Q: What year?

A: The AF of L was in on it and everybody else.

Q: Oh.

A: Anyhow, we didn't belong and now we're back in there, so they figure that we could be stronger this way. I think we got back in there the year when Doug was President, yeah.

Q: So did you get a good turnout in those elections when you had the elections all year around? Did people come out and vote?

A: I think we used to have more so than they do now percentage-wise.

Q: More than now.

A: Before, yeah. Of course they get a good turnout now holding them all together at one time, because even if a guy's running for District Committeeman and he doesn't want to push anybody at the officers either local or at the unit he's still going to ask that guy to come out and vote, you know, and then he gets a vote for everybody. They get good turnouts in their elections, a much, much much better percentage than we have in our governmental elections, much better.

Q: So do you think that more people would have turned out for the unit or the local elections before? They were probably the two most important and the General Council, right? In the early days?

A: In the early days we used to turn out more.

Q: Did they have a tendency to go more to the unit or to the local elections or did they pretty much go to all of them?

A: I think they were pretty well covered in the earlier days, but then people started losing interest, you know.

Q: Why do you think people started losing interest?

A: I don't know, I just don't know. It seems to me like the more they got the less interest. It's unbelievable what we got in our contract. If you tell some guy that comes off the street that never worked anywhere and you get over and tell him everything that we've got in our contract, they'd think that, my god, we're ruining Ford's or we're ruining General Motors. And the first thing that comes to the eyes or minds of the average public, you know, that the workers are just ruining everything, they don't stop and think of these big profits that they make, you know, oh well. But they lost more interest, the more they get the less interest.

Q: Do you think that the reduction in the size of the plant had anything to do with it? Before you used to have 60,000 and now there's 20-some.

A: Yeah, at the Rouge, yeah. I don't know if they got 20 now.

Q: Or 17 maybe.

A: In the early days we were hitting 100.

Q: Yeah.

A: But now I doubt if they've got 20.

Q: Do you think that had something to do with having a place where there was 100,000 workers all in one locale?

A: A thought comes to my mind that, you know, could it be, could it be that it's just a general thing that when a person in general has something so long that they get tired of it or they lose interest in it? Maybe that's the word I should use. Could that be? Like even when somebody is driving a Cadillac all the time, they lose interest in that and want to try something else. Could that be it? I don't know, I just don't know, I don't know.

Q: Well in the early days you were going for the basic necessities, just a job.

A: You'd better believe it, you'd better believe it.

Q: Today it is, you know, they're looking at it well we've got all that so why bother.

A: Yeah, but they should stop to realize that they could lose that too. They could lose it. You take just what's happening right today what happened at Kroger. If they didn't have a union at Kroger they wouldn't get half of what they're getting in wages. They had to give up as it was what $1 something? $1.50 was it? But I'll bet you all the tea in China that if there wasn't a union they wouldn't be getting half of what they're getting. I don't know, I guess that maybe they haven't gone through the hardship times and they think that this is something automatic.

Q: Do you think that a lot of the workers who were there at the Ford plant in the forties went through the unemployment stage of the

thirties? Especially here in Detroit I know that they had the Hunger March and the Unemployed Councils were pretty active, do you think that a lot of the Ford workers had experiences like that that could have made them maybe more radical?

A: Yes, yes, I believe that, yes, oh yes, yeah, yeah they went through more hardships and a lot of them.

Q: How militant would you say the Pressed Steel unit was in terms of strikes and that kind of thing compared to the other units?

A: I would say that we were more militant than average.

Q: More than average.

A: More than average.

Q: And how would those strikes that would be normal for every day, not the big strikes that the whole local went out on but the smaller strikes that occurred, how would they normally get going? Did workers themselves start the small stoppages or?

A: Well if you're referring to wildcats and unauthorized strikes--

Q: Uh-huh, yeah.

A: That's what you're referring to, yes that's the way they would happen. The leadership most of the time does not get involved with it, they know better, you know, because you're subject to severe discipline in a wildcat strike.

Q: Right.

A: But sometimes some workers would get into some, it could be an argument with the foreman, it could be something about working too hard, some disciplinary action or something, and one word leads to another and workers start siding in with the one guy and then before

you know it you have a little scrimmage. But I'll tell you in our building though we had, I don't want to pat myself on the back but I was in good shape and I had good control over my people. One time on a shipping dock I remember real well the committeeman was a good friend of mine and we were two peas in a pod, he had a wildcat down there that day, they were making the workers load into the boxcars. See when you're using the sheet metal it could be very dangerous too, a lot of it is sharp and it cuts and it's hard to handle. Anyhow there was a safety problem that they figured that they were getting hurt and the foreman was pushing to get those cars out, they were in demand, they needed the parts. They got mad and they stopped working. I happened to have been in the building down at the other end. All the guys got down in the lunchroom and I went down there and the labor relations guy was down there already. And he started talking to me and I says, look, don't bother me. I said, no, in front of these guys--they knew I was with them--I told him, don't bother me, I'm talking to my guys and I'll see what the problem is first, see, I'm not going to get it from you. So I went over and I talked to the guys and I told them, I said, well we're going to take care of that, don't you worry about it. So I went and told the guy and I said, look, you're going to do it this way and the way that they want it or you are going to not get these guys back to work. But, anyway, in a little while I had them back to work in no time. We were a militant, but controlled, unit I think. We were in good shape.

Q: So they got the safety measures.

A: Yes, we worked it out, yes we did, yes we did.

Q: Was that a big problem in a lot of grievances, safety matters?

A: Yes, it used to be, more so than it is today. Today, in the contract that's another thing, we had a designated health and safety guide with the union and one with the company. A problem arises and that's all they've got to do is handle these health and safety problems. See the other committemen can take care of their other problems. Before the commiteemen had to handle health and safety along with all the other problems.

Q: So there's one health and safety guide for each--

A: Each unit at Rouge has one.

Q: Each unit has.

A: Yeah.

Q: Was speed-up another thing that was important for causing grievances or starting a wildcat?

A: Yeah, speed-up has caused grievances, yes, oh yes, but that got better because the Company got guys on, work standards guy, or people, and when a problem arises we go right to them and, you know, get them out on the job and try to work the thing out right there.

Q: I missed this a little earlier when I was talking about the Pressed Steel building, how much of the building would you say were composed of skilled workers vs. unskilled or semi-skilled workers?

A: Under the Pressed Steel unit as such?

Q: Yeah, just in Pressed Steel.

A: Skilled vs. production, well the skilled maybe about 20 percent.

Q: And that's not counting the Tool and Die guys that are in there?

A: No, the Tool and Die's another unit.

Q: Yeah, but they are located inside, right?

A: Right, right.

Q: How many, how big of a section was there for Tool and Die in your building? How many workers were with Tool and Die?

A: See Tool and Die at the Rouge and I think this is the only place in the whole country and I don't know how long it will last because the Rouge is getting smaller and smaller every year.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: Now they're even talking about the Assembly plant may be going out one of these days.

Q: Oh really.

A: That's an old one and the Engine plant they claim is obsolete and the Stamping plant is starting to get old. If they had of lost steel here a while back, they had to give up a lot of concessions to hold the steel operation, man, the Rouge would be almost all gone. But getting back to your question, the bulk of the tool and die makers are in the Tool and Die building. The Stamping plant properly or geographically if you want to call it that, has the next biggest portion of tool and die makers, more so than the Foundry, more so than the Engine plant or any other plant because in the Stamping plant they have a lot of dies.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: I would say that 75 to 80 percent of their work is die work, you know, because other stuff is welding equipment, spot welders, machine welders and all that kind of stuff and the die makers don't get on that. But I would say, you're asking me how many tool and die makers compared to the overall tool and die?

Q: Compared to the rest of the plant in Pressed Steel.

A: How many tool and die as compared to the rest of the production guys?

Q: In Pressed Steel, yeah everybody else in Pressed Steel.

A: Maybe 10 to 15 percent are tool and die makers.

Q: That's quite a bit.

A: About that, yeah. That's when I was there and if it's changed lately I haven't been in there for quite a few years. I have been in there a few times when I went on Bannon's staff servicing the plant, and I left it in '53, '53 it was around that and I'm surmising that percentage wise it's about the same.

Q: Was that real hard work in Pressed Steel compared to the rest? I know that the production foundries are said to be one of the hardest and dirtiest.

A: Stamping is pretty rough work.

Q: Stamping is hard too.

A: Yes it is.

Q: Okay. How were the foremen in the different units? Do you think there was much difference in the foremen that were located around the plants or were they all pretty much the same during the forties?

A: My guess would be and I was familiar to the ones in the Stamping plant or in Pressed Steel, but my guess would be they would be about the same.

Q: Were they pretty tough?

A: Yes, in the preunion days they were rough, but they simmered down real fast afterwards and they started becoming human.

Q: Okay, now I want to ask a few questions about the role of Local 600 in the union as a whole. It's been said that Local 600 is one of the more left-wing locals in the UAW as a whole, why do you think that they--

A: You're referring now way back and not today.

Q: Yeah, right, in the forties and fifties.

A: Yeah.

Q: That it was a left-wing influence in the UAW as a whole?

A: Yes.

Q: Why would you say that that happened? Why was Local 600 more of a left-wing influence than some of the other locals around?

A: Well, again I think it goes back to the feeling that a lot of us felt that left-wingers were more aggressive, more militant, more battlers for the workers' cause than right-wingers.

Q: Uh-huh. I know that Local 600 introduced a lot of important ideas for the UAW to pursue, for example the pension and 30 and out, and like that.

A: A lot of those.

Q: How did those kind of ideas originate in Local 600? Was it just that there were more people participating do you think, that they came up with more ideas?

A: No, no, well, there were more people but that idea could come from other places. I'm sure that other local unions had those ideas. A lot of ideas, there was the shorter work week, four-day week, that was a big fight too, pensions, guaranteed annual wage, a lot of those things went on. They were given birth by some individual or

individuals, you know, then they get together and it's a good thing to have and no trouble, even right-wingers would support it then, you know, heck nobody's going to fight against those kind of things. But the leaders in pushing those kind of things were almost to a man left-wingers in the early days, these things you're referring to. The so-called guaranteed annual wage was given birth in local unions, heck then it was taken over by the International Union. It was put in negotiations when we got this, that helped bring about this sub-pay thing, you know, where workers are getting 85 percent of their take-home wages, you know, which is good.

Q: Uh-huh. How much activity was done inside, again I'm talking about the forties and fifties, done inside the plant when it came to national politics? For example, in 1948 when Henry Wallace ran on the Progressive ticket? Was there much campaigning within the local to back his campaign?

A: Yeah there were some people pushing for Wallace, but the local as a whole did not, they did not. The local as a whole we were pro-Roosevelt.

Q: This was when Truman was going against, was it Wilkie? Truman was on the Democrat ticket and Wallace was on the Progressive ticket and--

A: Dewey.

Q: Oh yeah, Dewey was on the Republican ticket, this was '48 when Roosevelt had already died.

A: Oh yes, yes, yes. Wait a minute, you were referring to, let's see. Wasn't there a time when, who was it with Roosevelt?

Q: Oh you mean the Vice President on the ticket?

A: Yes.

Q: There was a deal with, Wallace was the Vice President for Roosevelt's first two terms.

A: Yes.

Q: Or first three maybe even and then Truman got to be the Vice President the term that he died.

A: Right, Roosevelt picked Truman, right.

Q: Yeah and then the next year that Truman went to election which is in '48, Wallace ran on the Progressive ticket because Truman got the Democratic nomination.

A: Yes, yes, the local as a whole, I'm sure that there were some Wallacites but the local as a whole supported Truman. Yes, you're right.

Q: Do you remember how much of a drive there was for Wallace at the local or was it just a minor thing or pretty good portion?

A: I would say it was minor but I honestly don't remember now, I don't remember.

Q: Was there a lot of political campaigning in the local? Did people, you know, talk about the outside political issues a lot either in the meetings or just in the shops?

A: You're talking about politics in government you mean?

Q: Yeah, the national government.

A: Oh yes, oh yes, we'd cover them, oh yes. As a matter of fact, I think I just got rid of it, of course you've probably--have you been over to Local 600?

Q: Uh-huh.

A: They can give you a lot of paper and all the propaganda, this last issue touched a lot on the coming elections too.

Q: The Ford Facts?

A: Yes, a lot of the different units touched on the candidates running. Yeah, our local gets involved a lot in outside politics.

Q: Do you think that it has an influence on how the workers actually vote?

A: Some of them, some of them, not all of them. I don't understand why but the way I understand it, of course I'm seeing it through my eyes and through my mind is, what Washington can do with things in general whether it's in the military, whether it's in the retirees or in the pensions or whether it's in the guys in the plant or whether it's unions as a whole, what goes on in Washington, there should be no worker, in my opinion there should be no worker voting against the unions' recommendations but they've got that right and there are some, yes, quite a few, more than there should be in my opinion.

Q: Well there's probably, well I don't know, would you say that the amount of workers voting Republican would be more or less in the Rouge than in other unions?

A: In the Rouge?

Q: Yeah.

A: Less, less. The Rouge has got a lot of blacks in it now and I would say somewhere between 80 and 90, depending who the candidates are, somewhere between 80 and 90 percent of the blacks are going to vote Democratic.

Q: How about in the early days, in the forties and fifties, do you think that they were still predominantly Democrat?

A: Yes, because Roosevelt had a lot to do with changing them over, yes.

Q: Going back to World War II for a minute, there were a lot of people coming up from the South and women coming into the plant, I guess it indicates that there was a lot of turnover, a lot of people leaving for military service also. Did that upset the solidarity or the feeling of people? After they work together a while they get a feeling that they know what's going on and they know how the union works and they support the union and so on, did the onset of the war and all that turnover that occurred change any of the things that the union was used to doing?

A: No, I don't think it changed much, no, no. The union as a whole, our union as a whole we supported the war situation, you know.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: I remember participating a lot in selling war bonds, you know, at lunchtime and at rest time, give a little speech in support of selling bonds around. We were pretty much going along with it and never had any trouble with any of the military guys in there. They knew their job and we knew ours, we got along pretty good.

Q: Was there a lot of shifting? Did a lot of workers get shifted to other plants once the war came and the production the--

A: When the war came?

Q: Yeah, and when they stopped producing cars and started producing tanks and aircraft and all that, did people get shifted to other buildings?

A: Oh yes, yes. When we went from auto to defense work a lot of our people went to the Aircraft, that Aircraft got to be real big. If I'm not mistaken they were up around 15-16,000 people, they were mammoth.

Q: They were voting in the right-wingers, huh, that Aircraft building?

A: Not all of them now, most of them, yeah most of them.

Q: So were the people who got shifted to Aircraft considered lucky? Was that a good place to be?

A: Yeah, it was considered a pretty good place to work, yes. Of course, you know, during the war now, as I said before there wasn't too much complaints about being overworked. They worked don't get me wrong, but they had to put out a more quality than quantity setup, it wasn't too bad.

[END OF TAPE #2]

ARCHIE ACCIACCA INTERVIEW
August 1984
Tape #3

Q: ...leaders in the union?

A: Yes, Southerners have become union leaders in that building.

Q: Which one are you talking about? The Aircraft and?

A: Either plant.

Q: And the others ones too. How did most of the workers respond to the administratorship that Reuther put over the local in '52? We talked about that a little bit before and I forgot to ask you what most of the workers thought about it.

A: Well the ones that I was familiar with of the leadership close to me now, being left-wingers, they were kind of cold toward them not too cooperative with them, but as they stayed there a little time, well we got next to them or they got next to us and we worked things out pretty good.

Q: I know the Ford Facts made a big deal about the fact that all of the previous officers that were in before the administratorship was put over were reelected in the following year, that was a big deal.

A: Yes, yes, yes, that was the year I think that Carl, yes, that was the year that Carl started getting pretty popular.

Q: In '52?

A: Yeah.

Q: Okay, I have a list of the different units, can you tell me what your impressions of some of these units are? We talked extensively about the Aircraft unit before, but do you have any impressions about the

Jobbing Foundry? About the workers that were in there and the leaders that were generally elected in that Foundry?

A: Well the foundries, I think that during the war there was a Jobbing Foundry and then there was another one.

Q: Specialty Foundry.

A: Yeah, if I'm not mistaken. Is that the one the one that Watts is out of, Specialty?

Q: I think so, or do you mean the one where Peck and Watts ran for this office and there was a dispute over who won?

A: Yeah there were three or four different foundries and I, you know, the foundries are dirty jobs.

Q: The Foundry machine shop is that it?

A: Well the Foundry machine shop is, that got eliminated and got tied in with the Engine plant if I'm not mistaken and it's not as dirty as these other foundries, and I would say that the attitude of the people and the work conditions and all were pretty generally the same at that time.

Q: In the Foundries you mean?

A: Yes. Now here recently, no I won't say recently, about eight to ten years ago Ford closed the Production Foundry here and built a brand new one down there towards Flat Rock. Have you heard of this one?

Q: I don't think so.

A: They built a brand new one and I was in there three or four times and, man, that's a modern beautiful place. No dust goes out, everything is filtered, they catch all the dirt, all the filth going out, clean as, cleaner than my Stamping plant where I come from and Foundries are

known to be awfully dirty and dusty. It was very modern, very neat, no problem with the community about dirt. I'll be darned here about three years, two years ago, they closed it and they shipped all the work down to Cleveland.

Q: You don't know why?

A: Well maybe because of volume, see that's when the auto started falling down, you know, maybe now it might pick up I don't know, but they closed it.

Q: Boy, that's a big investment.

A: A modern plant, a beautiful plant.

Q: When they opened that up did they close the Production Foundry in Rouge?

A: Yes.

Q: So that's not there any more, still?

A: No that's closed, that's done away with, done, through. But that unit, that Foundry stayed under the jurisdiction of Local 600.

Q: Oh really.

A: Yes and all the people moved with it.

Q: How about the Open Hearth building, was that part of the Foundry production also, or that was with Steel?

A: Open Hearth, Open Hearth I think is considered the beginning of the Steel Division, where they start going through all those big furnaces and what have you and melt everything down, you know.

Q: Is that a hard job also in that plant?

A: Yes, yes, that's a hard job and hot by those furnaces, it's pretty rough. Now they're going to, during a process and I don't know what

it will end up because of the concessions the steelworkers gave, they're supposed to be coming up with one of the most modern steel setups in the country.

Q: Over here at the Rouge?

A: At the Rouge. They're spending many many millions of dollars, they're just getting started.

Q: So during the forties and fifties, did the Open Hearth generally elect progressives or middle of the road?

A: Yes, Open Hearth was one of the progressives.

Q: And what about the Production Foundries?

A: Yes, that's where Shelton Tappes comes from.

Q: Okay, and we talked about the Motor and Engine plant and what is your impression about the leaders of that? Were they left or right generally?

A: Motor?

Q: In Motor.

A: Mostly left.

Q: And how about Tool and Die?

A: Left.

Q: And Maintenance?

A: Mostly left, mostly.

Q: So Maintenance was a pretty good job to be on, you'd be a skilled worker most of the time?

A: Yes, mostly skilled.

Q: How about the Miscellaneous plant?

A: Miscellaneous, well, that took in, I think, the coke ovens, didn't it? Have you got coke ovens down there?

Q: No.

A: Well then that's where you come under the coke ovens. It's a pretty good job but hot again. It, well, let's see, how should I put it? For a while a right-winger was handling that was, depending on how wind blew he would go politically but after he left, I don't know if you ever got the name of Joe Berry.

Q: Yeah.

A: He was in there and he was considered a right-winger, but after he left, why it went I would say left, but then after that, when after he left or shortly after he left the lefts and the rights were about petered out, you know, gone.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: So I would put that one in I would say the right wing mostly before.

Q: Uh-huh. How about the Transportation unit?

A: Right, right.

Q: Now those men were pretty skilled also, right, the ones working on the railroads?

A: Well, yeah, but that took in the truck drivers, too, there's, if you want to call the truck drivers skilled, locomotive guys I would say, yes.

Q: Well how many, what proportion were railroad vs. truck?

A: I don't know, I think mostly were truck drivers, a lot over the road work.

Q: So they weren't in the plant a lot then?

A: Could be, some of them. You could transfer on rails in a plant and they could also transfer from one unit to another and maybe from one plant in this general area, the Detroit area too. Now they, well, of course in the original days they didn't have much of this over the road hauling but now they've got quite a bit of it, you know, great big semis. But Jack Pellegrini came out of there and he was a strong right-winger. He was on Joe McCusker's staff.

Q: He came out of Transportation?

A: Uh-huh.

Q: How about the Glass plant?

A: Well, my experience in the Glass plant I would say that they would go, the president that I know in my time was Bardelli and he was considered a right-winger. Did anybody mention that name to you?

Q: Yeah, I've seen that name.

A: I'm sure he was considered a right-winger.

Q: Is he Italian also?

A: Yes.

Q: And they elect Bardelli also?

Q: Okay, how about the Rolling Mill?

A: Right, Jim Prato came out of that and he was one of the right right rights.

Q: Yeah.

A: Yeah, he was.

Q: What about the work that was done in there? Do you know anything about the types of work that they did in the Rolling Mill? I know it was steel production but--

A: That's where they make the steel.

Q: Uh-huh, a lot of skilled workers?

A: I would say more than average because, I don't know if they put these guys that perform these machines, see when that iron comes out of the ovens red hot, they have to roll it somehow. I'm not a steel man I don't know nothing, I've seen them roll it. And then there's also operations where they take this bar of steel and they run it through machines to keep flattening it and they got to make it down to a gauge that they want depending on what they're looking for. Now if those people are considered skilled I don't know, they're high rated.

Q: Pay you mean?

A: Yes.

Q: So it's a higher paid building than most of the rest?

A: Oh yes, oh yes, and with their incentive, boy, they're way up high.

Q: Now how about even in the forties, were they highly paid back then also?

A: Yes, yes.

Q: I wonder if that has any--

A: I know a lot of people tried to get into the Mill all the time.

Q: Oh really. I wonder if that, being high paid had something to do with them electing right-wingers.

A: Could be, I don't know. It might because, I follow your thinking that the more money you make the more it makes you become a right-winger and I follow that thinking too, but then the Transportation unit is not high paid.

Q: So the Rolling Mill is one of the strongest right-wing buildings throughout the--

A: In the early days I would say that the Rolling Mill was the strongest, in the early early days.

Q: And that incentive system came in in when? '50?

A: Somewhere around in there shortly after the war.

Q: That's a pretty good sized unit also, right?

A: Yes it is.

Q: I wanted to ask you one more question about that, oh well I'll have to come back later. The B building, the Assembly plant?

A: How can I give you the B building? I would say that anything more evenly split between right and left, there isn't any more evenly split than the Assembly plant. I remember we went to the convention with four delegates and they had two left-wingers and two right-wingers. There was a chairman in there at one time when I was in the plant there, a strong supporter of Tommy Thompson, but he was also a pro-Reuther guy so I don't know how to put it. I would say that the B building, the safest thing to say is about fifty-fifty.

Q: And were they mostly production workers in there?

A: Oh yes, all Assembly.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: Yeah, I guess, I guess that percentage-wise between skilled and production the closest to the majority of production is the Assembly plant.

Q: And before the war ended they had a plant that was a Tire or Rubber plant but that was phased out?

A: Yes, they used to make tires there, yes, a rubber plant. That was a left-wing but it didn't last too long, then when they stopped making rubber I think they went to plastics, if I'm not mistaken, for a while. Have you got anything about plastics?.

Q: Yes, Plastics, the next one.

A: They went into plastics and the bulk of the Rubber plant guys stayed with that and it stayed pretty much, there were some right-wingers in there but I think the bulk of them were left.

Q: And what kind of work was that?

A: Well they were making some plastic parts for the car.

Q: Uh-huh, is it hard work or relatively easy?

A: Well, I would say it's not as hard as Stamping or Assembly plant or Engine plant, I would say better than average.

Q: Uh-huh. The Spring and Upset building?

A: Spring and Upset, the chairman in there, a guy by the name of Bill McIntosh, when I was in there as chairman, was a right-winger. Did anybody mention that name to you?

Q: Uh-huh.

A: He was a right-winger. One of the committeemen that come into the building because the Spring and Upset went kerpluck. Some of the operations moved to Canton and the Stamping plant absorbed everything in the Spring and Upset because it's right next to the Stamping plant. We absorbed them lock, stock and barrel that year.

Q: What year was that?

A: '48 or '49, I was chairman at the time. So we took everybody in, they had one of the best commiteemen in the whole Rouge plant, a guy by the

name of Bagrad Vartanian, an Armenian, left-winger, just as left as I was and a good guy, well liked, kept him on at the committee and he took care of everything there. I would say, I would say you take it for what it's worth, the chairman was a right-winger. I would put it fifty-fifty, maybe sixty-forty right.

Q: And so did that change Pressed Steel at all when they came in?

A: No, no, no, no.

Q: They couldn't have that much of an influence on the elections?

A: No, no, no.

Q: They were small.

A: They were a small majority, a small percentage compared to us. Heck, we must have been close to 6,000 and we only brought in about 5 or 600.

Q: Oh that is pretty small.

A: Yeah. Then another one we absorbed about that time also was the Axle building.

Q: Oh really.

A: Have you got the Axle down there?

Q: Yeah, that was the last one, Gear and Axle.

A: Which one do you want to talk about?

Q Gear and Axle is fine.

A: The Gear and Axle was again about fifty-fifty right and left and we absorbed it. One of my buddies, I made him a commiteeman when he first came over, John De Angelo. I still see him, I don't see too many of the old-timers but we play golf quite a bit, twice a week over

here at Sunnybrook. He was on the left side with Hogan. You've heard that name, Joe Hogan?

A: Uh-huh.

Q: He was on the left side with Joe Hogan. Then they had, Joe Hogan was one of the chairmen there. Then they had a chairman there by the name of Plawecki, another right-winger, strong right.

A: I would say, let me see, where I put the Spring and Upset sixty-forty right, put the Axle at sixty-forty left.

Q: What year did the Axle building come into Pressed Steel?

A: About the same time, it was either in '48 or '49.

Q: And how large were they at the time?

A: They were small too, because a lot of their jobs moved to the Engine plant and some of them went to a Sterling plant out here where they're making axles now.

Q: So they were no longer part of Local 600.

A: Oh yes.

Q: Oh they were still there.

A: But the unit was Stamping then.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: So when, see we absorbed those two little plants, that is Spring and Upset and the Axle.

Q: What happened to the guys that went to the Sterling plant? Did they--

A: If they went with their operations they carried their seniority.

Q: And they, was there a different local over there?

A: Yes.

Q: Okay. And then the two small plants that were Parts and Accessory and Lincoln-Mercury parts?

A: Yeah, well they're Parts Depots.

Q: Yeah.

A Politically how would they stand?

Q: Yeah.

A: I think they would be right.

Q: Those were pretty small plants, right?

A: Yes.

Q: And what kind of work was it, relatively easier or?

A: Oh yes, much easier. There's no production there at all.

Q: Were they skilled workers?

A: Well there are some skilled workers but the bulk of the thing is stockmen, where they'd either bring in the stock and put it away in the bins to store it or they'd get a call from some dealer that they want or they'd ship, they either receive it or ship the stock that's their line of work.

Q: So you say both of those were basically right.

A: Basically in the main.

Q: Uh-huh. And then the last building, the Foundry machine shop?

A: The Foundry machine shop, in my experience the Foundry machine shop was mostly left, yep.

Q: And was that like Foundry work or that's a little bit different?

A: No, it's a little bit different because it had machining operations. It was right next to the Foundry and the stock material would come

from the Foundry on conveyors into the machine shop and they would machine it then.

Q: I got some names of some leaders, if you want I can name off some names and you tell me whether you think they were well liked by the workers and whether they were right or left. Okay, if you want to do of if you don't, just say. You already talked about Carl Stellato and Shelton Tappes and Bill McKie, how about John Gallo?

A: Left, nice guy, likable guy, very likable, very friendly.

Q: And he was very popular among the workers? Which unit was he in?

A: The Engine.

Q: He was in the Engine also. James Watts?

A: James Watts, a very controversial right-winger. I don't know how much he was liked, he had an arrogant attitude. In my opinion, he wasn't liked nowhere near Gallo. I would put him in a negative category.

Q: Okay, and Thomas Thompson?

A: Nice guy, likable, he's out of the Aircraft building. See what helped him get elected, he comes from the mines, from West Virginia.

Q: Thompson did?

A: Yes and at that time when he was in there we had a lot of miners working in the Rouge plant and a lot of them supported him. He was a coal miner.

Q But did he use that as a campaign slogan or let it be known to the workers in his unit?

A: Oh yes, oh yes, he put it out, it was no secret that he was a coal miner. He was a left-winger.

Q: Do you think that helped because of involvement of District 50 or John L. Lewis?

A: Helped him get elected?

Q: Yeah.

A: Oh yes, positively. I'll give you a little story about coal mines after you're through with that, what I got involved in.

Q: Okay, well the next guy I think came from the mines also, Percy Llewellyn, I think he was a coal miner.

A: I think he did but way way before Tommy. Percy hired in the Engine plant and he was a left-winger but he, Percy, I think he hired in there in'34 if I'm not mistaken.

Q: Oh you mean Thompson came straight from the mines.

A: Yes.

Q: In the thirties he was a miner.

A: Thompson hired in Ford in either '39 or '40 or '38, he hired right into the Aircraft if I'm not mistaken and that didn't open up until '39 so that's when he hired in, I'm pretty sure right into that.

Q: Why don't you tell your story about the coal miners now.

A: Do you want me to tell it now?

Q: Yeah.

A: Back in 19--my wife was a part of this thing. Is she sleeping?

Q: I think so.

A: She'd probably like to be a part of this.

A: Are you talking to me?

A: Yeah, I was going to tell the story about the time we went with those, with all that food and money and clothes to the coal miners.

A: Uh-huh.

A: I thought maybe you'd want to be a part of it and tell--

A: No, you tell about it.

A: Oh, I can tell it.

Q: But she'll correct you every now and then.

A. Yeah, yeah, yeah, did this happen?

A: I correct him on quite a bit of...

A: Well come on over here and help me.

A: It's a long time ago.

A: I was part of all that when we went too.

A: It's a long time ago and I forget a lot of this stuff, you know. Back I believe, wasn't it 1950, wasn't it?

A: Yeah.

A: In 1950 the coal miners were in a long vicious strike, they were having a lot of problems, maybe you've got some history on this I don't know.

Q: In the fifties?

A: The fifties. Did you get information out of Local 600 on this? Tommy Thompson was President at the time.

Q: No. When I went over there Mike Rinaldi was President and they were not that interested in the project as a whole. They let me talk, and look at their files.

A: Mike has got a little arrogance in him too.

Q: Yeah.

A: But, anyway, I call them as I see them now, you know, I don't worry about nothing. Back in 1950 these coal miners were on a strike and

one, we were all sympathetic for them because coal miners help auto workers a whole big bunch.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: We were having a membership meeting one Sunday and at that time we were getting pretty good turnouts, fairly good turnouts. I would say maybe a couple of hundred which was, it's starting to phase down, you know.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: So one of my committeemen, this is a good cause so, he's done some bad but this is his good. Arthur McPhaul called me, you've had that name?

Q: Uh-huh.

A: He said, Archie, he says, I've got a friend of mine here from the coal mines, they've got a committee of three people, they would like to appear before our membership and explain their problems. I said, fine, I have no objections to that, fine. I said, you introduce him to me and I'll take care of it. I didn't want him in all that light because he and I were having outs at this time.

Q: Oh.

A: At one time we got along but we were having our outs, so I said, you be there a little bit early and you bring them over. So sure enough he brings them over there and I throw a little spiel and tell him who's here and tell him that we're going to have a few words from them and they spoke. And after they spoke, it's a common thing--somebody suggested passing the hat to help them pay their expense because they were in a real bad financial situation. So we passed the hat and we picked up a little money and we gave to them, to the committee. Then

I said, you know what I think we're going to do, and I said this out loud while I was thinking, we're going to really help these guys, we're going to put a drive on for food and clothes. I said, let's put a drive on for food and clothes and let's get the whole local to participate in it. And Tommy Thompson being a coal miner himself, man, he bought that lock, stock and barrel.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: So the next day or so I went and talked to him, a bunch of us went and talked to him, I think they were there too if I remember correctly, and I told him, look, Tommy, let's put on a big drive. Let's put on for anything they want to give, whether it's food in cans, you know, clothes or money. So sure enough we advertised it all over for a couple of days, we started picking up food, guys were giving money. We picked up five big semi-trucks of clothes.

Q: Wow.

A: Big semi-trucks of clothes and canned food and we had somewhere between $10 and $15,000, and I felt good, I felt like I should be up in heaven already. Of course everybody participated, not just me, I just done a little bit, everybody helped. So we had our gym in the old auditorium and before this gym, before this hall that you were in we had an old auditorium, we had all our clothes and stuff packed into that hall, it was just jampacked. Tommy negotiated with the teamsters to get five trucks for free, see so there's some good in teamsters too.

Q: Yeah.

A: He got from them five trucks, five big semis, we loaded them and we went down there. There was myself, Joe Hogan--his name was mentioned.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: And Bill Hood, was his name mentioned at any time?

Q: I've heard of him.

A: Bill Hood at one time was a Recording Secretary there.

Q: Yeah.

A: And us three were in charge of that thing, but Tommy told me to more or less, look off, you know, but you three go. A few other guys came along but they were on their own. So we went down there, first we went to Wheeling, West Virginia, and we got there kind of late. We had a breakdown, didn't we?

A: No, not in Wheeling, West Virginia, but in Steubenville.

A: Oh Steubenville. See she's correcting me. You're right, Steubenville, to Steubenville, Ohio, first.

A: Then Yorkville.

A: Then Yorkville and Morgantown.

A: And then Morgantown and then Wheeling.

A: Okay. So we get down to Steubenville, we got there kind of late, one of the trucks had some trouble or something. We got in there, of course they had had a bunch of guys waiting for us, but when we got in there there were a few guys around there, they make you cry. Boy, I get emotional at those kinds of things, you see, so they kept crying how thankful. So anyhow we went in, it was late so they come on over to the hall, they had a dinner set up for us and we ate there. I

forget if we left one or two loads there. They had told us that-- Morgantown we took two, didn't we?

A: And we kind of split up the money evenly, somewhere around $5,000 in each place we left. We left, I don't know if it was one load in Steubenville or two, the other one in Morgantown, and the other two in--

A: Yorkville, Ohio.

A: Yorkville. We split them up anyhow and, man, it made me feel so good. I think when I look through my achievements and what I've done for people around and I've done a few things, I don't like to brag, I'm talking about reality I'd tell you I'd write a book on it. I think that's one of the best things I've ever done and it came about as a result of one of my enemies, McPhaul, giving me a phone call.

Q: Yeah.

A: But he had a good idea too, his intentions were good and, man, it was wonderful. We made, we had some pictures and I've still got some where they had signs along the sides of these trucks. What did we put on it? For the coal miners or something?

A: I don't remember.

A: Going for the coal miners. Oh, it was wonderful. Of course it helped Tommy a lot too, and it was just before an election. He had pictures taken with the, coal?

A: Oh you're going to find those pictures now.

Q: So that would be around '48 then.

A: It was, I think '50.

Q: Oh so that was the year that he lost to Stellato.

A: I think that's the year, right. He lost a close one, so help me I guess maybe a lot of guys must have gone to sleep because they figured that Tommy was going to run away. You see to be branded an international representative coming into the local union running affairs is rough.

Q: Yeah.

A: That's a brand, that brand was against Carl and Tommy, being a pretty popular guy, and then with this kind of stuff helping him you thought he had a cinch and a lot of guys might have laid down, see, and not campaigned the way they were supposed to. That might have helped him lose, I don't know, but that's what happened.

Q: So the coal miners were pretty prevalent in the Rouge?

A: Oh yes, oh yes, at that time but not today.

A: ...Here's some of them, they're in here I think.

A: Oh, these are...

[END OF SIDE ONE]

Q: Okay, so before we started on the coal mining thing we were in the middle of talking about some names. The next one on my list is Paul Boatin.

A: Right or left you mean?

Q: Yeah.

A: Left, left, a good guy.

Q: And was he popular?

A: Yes, very popular, very popular, now he and Gallo were from the same building, the Engine plant, and they were always on the same political alignment, same team. Yeah, no question about him being a left-winger, a likable guy.

Q: The next is John Orr.

A: John Orr's a left-winger, John Orr is out of the Tool and Die. He is not as likable as the other ones you've mentioned but he had, he would have a little bit of arrogance in him. He would have a drink or two and then start, you know, belittling people or something like that but I'd say he's about average.

Q: He got elected quite a few times.

A: Oh yes, in Tool and Die. Yeah he went on the International staff too, he retired from there.

Q: Joseph McCusker.

A: Joe McCusker, a right-winger to the core. I think he's one of your ACTU guys, that I'm thinking.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: Of course he passed away a long time ago.

Q: Where did he get his popularity?

A: Very arrogant, very arrogant.

Q: Oh he was.

A: Very arrogant. He used to like to drink and when he'd have a few drinks, good lord, arrogant.

Q: What was the story we heard about him? I can't think of who told us that story.

Q: About Joe?

Q: Uh-huh.

Q: You're not thinking about his brother Henry.

Q: No, no, about Joe and Henry.

Q: Somebody--

A: Henry is not as arrogant as Joe.

Q: Somebody said that Joe went to some country in Europe and--

Q: That's what it was.

Q: And he said that--

Q: This was Walter Dorosh that told us this story.

Q: He said that--

A: Who told you--Walter?

Q: Yeah. He said that when he came back--

A: See they were in the same unit and there was a real feud between Dorosh--

Q: Oh yeah.

Q: Something about in Poland.

Q: Somewhere, he went to one of the Eastern bloc, Soviet bloc countries and he came back and he was surprised that he was more impressed than he thought he would be. He came back and even though Henry was saying, you know, the old red-baiting-type things that Joe wouldn't go along with that. He said that he had to admit that there are some good things and it's not all black and white and so on.

A: It might be, I don't know.

Q: I think that his point was that Joe was not as right wing as Henry was, he was more principled. I think that that was his point.

A: I don't know, I don't give, I didn't give Joe too much principle.

Q: Oh yeah.

A: Not in my book.

Q: Okay, how about Henry then, compared to Henry?

A: He's another right-winger, they're brothers and--

Q: Yeah.

A: We were on the same staff together, Henry and I both worked for Ken Bannon.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: But when you're down there you've got to work together and we got along pretty good but Joe used to like to drink a lot, even during the day, you know, when you're supposed to be taking care of your problems, you'd be taking care of problems and he'd be across the street at a damn bar drinking and--

Q: That's what it was, he had a lot of drinks and he stood up in front of the platform or something and started talking about how great Poland was. Do you remember that?

A: Maybe.

Q: That's what it was, that's what it was, drunk. That's what it was, Those were the greatest guys in the world or, something like that. It was a great, we could get into that story sometime, it was great.

Q: Okay, the next on my list is--

A: Let me go a little bit further though.

Q: Okay.

A: You know I guess with age, I guess with age and with time we all mature. I matured from the left toward center and they matured from right toward center. And I would say today, of course Joe's been gone

a long time, I don't know if Joe ever really matured because he went to quick, but Henry, he can get along with anybody now but he's an age, you know, he's just too old. I'm talking about even years gone by when he was capable of anything, he was getting along much much better, much better. Of the two to get along with as union representative, I'd pick Henry over Joe any time.

Q: Oh yeah.

A: Yes, any time. I wouldn't care to have either one of them, but if I'd have to pick between the two.

Q: Okay, how about Virgil Lacey?

A: Now he's one of those way way-backers. He was a left-winger.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: I'd say maybe an average guy, he'd get along with people but you're talking about upper-crust guys, see all skilled guys.

Q: Oh these are all?

A: Oh yes.

Q: All from the skilled, huh?

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: These are the names that pop up the most, you know, in reading the newspapers from back in that period, these are the people that I first got to know just by reading the history of the local.

A: Yeah.

Q: Okay, the next one is Lee Romano.

A: Well, in my opinion, of all the guys, he is one of the furthest left guys. He was way over to the left, he went way over to the right and he became one of the worst guys that I've known in my local union

towards his fellow man. One of the very worst as far as I'm concerned and maybe I'd better leave it at that, he turned out to be a bad boy. I don't know if anybody else told you anything about him, maybe more in detail than I'm telling you, but I don't know how a man in all good conscience could pull what he pulled.

Q: He was from your building, right?

A: Yes, he was. We were in the same caucus together as left-wingers. When he left the local and went on the staff he went over to the right and talk about a canary.

Q: When did he move over to the International staff?

A: About, see Carl got elected in '50, he must have gone there around '48 or '49.

Q: That's pretty early.

A: Right after when he left the local, he was Vice President, I don't know if he got beat or what it was.

Q: Vice President of the local?

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: Okay, the next person I have--you mentioned about Joe Hogan, that's the guy in the picture, right?

A: A good guy, a good guy, yes, left-winger, good guy.

Q: He almost, he had a pretty good showing against Stellato in what? '51 or '52?

A: Right, very close, very close, we supported--a funny thing, talking about, see, I hope it doesn't sound like I'm trying to blow my own bugle. We supported Stellato. Wait, let me back up a little back,

when I mentioned Joe Allen to you about running in my place when I left the plant in '53.

Q: Right.

A: In 1950 I chose to support Stellato and I asked my guys to go along with it.

Q: In '50?

A: No, wait, wait, wait, '5-, wait a minute now, '50 is the first year, no '51 it would be because I got elected until '52. In '51 it would be the second year. In '50 Carl beat Tommy, in '51 I supported Stellato.

Q: Against Hogan?

A: Against Hogan. My bargaining committee to a man, there was Tom McKeska(?), Al Wilson, I don't know if you've got any of these names from anybody.

Q: No, I've never heard of these.

A: And Joe Allen, all three of those guys supported Hogan and Allen ran for President against me in my unit. That's how that thing really broke up because of me supporting Stellato, and the rest of the committeemen most of them went with me, with Carl, but some went with Joe and I felt nothing against them. I said, look, everybody do what they want to do, let's not get mad at each other, let's do it right. Joe Hogan carried my building over Carl pretty good. I beat the hell out of Joe Allen and I was supporting Stellato, and he had two powerful bargaining committeemen with him, Al Wilson and Tom McKeska. So that made me feel so damn good, you know, when that happened.

Q: Yeah.

A: Me supporting Stellato which would be unpopular for me.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: And I still knocked the hell out of Joe Allen who was, you know, pretty good. Then right away we welded our things together and another in '53 he runs for President and I agree to go to the International and he took my place.

Q: So why did you support Stellato in that year instead of Hogan?

A: Well, I guess in talking to some of my guys and they were satisfied, that was a hard decision because I liked Joe, I liked Joe. Carl was doing a pretty decent job in trying to take care of things and trying to get guys together. Everybody didn't see it my way and I supported Carl. Maybe I made a mistake, I make mistakes too, you know. Maybe if I had supported Hogan, Hogan would have been President because it was a very close election, very close.

Q: Yes, I think, they both had 16,000 something.

A: It was less than 500.

Q: Yeah.

A: So that means 250 votes and I know I could have controlled 250 votes.

Q: Well that's interesting. Okay, I've got Harold Franklin down next.

A: Harold Franklin, I think that's the fellow from the Foundry, isn't he? Did anybody tell you?

Q: There's several Franklins. I think there's an Alfred.

A: Oh no, no, no, that was another Franklin.

Q: No, I mean Godfrey.

A: Godfrey Franklin.

Q: And Broches,(?) no that's Broches Godfrey.

A: What's this Franklin again?

Q: Harold.

A: Isn't he the one out of the Foundry?

Q: I think so.

A: And he's a left-winger.

Q: Yeah, yeah.

A: I never had too much to do with him, but he was a likable guy. He was on the Council if I remember correctly. He was out of the Foundry. And this Godfrey Franklin, he's out of, I think one of the foundries, but then he went and I don't know how he got out of the local. He was on staff somewhere, but here lately he's out of Highland Park and he was on some city politics there and I seen in the paper where he ran against the mayor and he got beat. But he was a likable guy, a likable guy, but he was a left-winger too, if that's what you want.

Q: Uh-huh. And Dave Moore.

A: A left-winger.

Q: A likable guy?

A: A likable guy, yes. He'd get arrogant, he was, in my opinion, too much pro-Negro, pro-black. he'd give speeches about the blacks being, Negroes are on the march and well whites get out of the way and, you know, that kind of rubbed me. I'm one that treated blacks real real good and my history shows that we worked together, we had them in our group and we ran together, my VP was always a black. We always got along real good, most of us did, especially left-wingers, and this guy's telling us all about the blacks are going to march, you're going to get run over. But anyhow he wasn't too bad a guy, but other than

being too much pro-black he was a pretty decent guy. He was on Ken Bannon's staff and he retired from there too, he and Ken got along pretty good.

Q: Oh yeah. And Ed Lock.

A: Ed Lock's a left-winger, a pretty decent guy, kind of a sort of a quiet guy. I think he was the President when there was a Tire plant and a Plastics plant, the Tire plant with the plastics. I think he was the President at the time.

Q: And William Hood?

A: William Hood, he's out of the Assembly plant, was out of the Assembly plant. He is one of the--remember when I told you there were four delegates going to the convention, two right and two left?

Q: Uh-huh.

A: He's the one I put in the left category. However, some time that could change, but a likable guy, a friendly guy. He was Tommy Thompson's Recording Secretary.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: A pretty decent guy and then he got elected when Tommy, when Carl beat Tommy and he stayed with Carl, he got along with Carl all right.

Q: We already talked about Art McPhaul, Tom Yeager.

A: Tom Yeager is a nice friendly guy. I would say he was left. I don't know, I wouldn't say too too much, maybe fifty-fifty. I would him in the left category, a decent respectable guy.

Q: Until Henry got a hold of him at the retiree's _____.

Q: No, he's in the retirees, he's elected to some position there, I don't know what it is.

A: They have a little committee there, yeah, yeah. No, Tom's all right, a nice guy.

Q: James O'Rourke? I think you mentioned earlier that he was a right-winger.

A: Yes, he was.

Q: And he was--

A: Out of the Engine plant.

Q: Engine plant.

A: Yeah.

Q: How about Tom Jelley?

A: Tom Jelley was a left-winger out of Tool and Die, and I think the only time he, I think he was only a committeeman, I don't think he ever got higher than a committeeman. He was, Tom Jelley was a committeeman in the Tool and Die guys in the Stamping plant right next to us.

Q: Oh really, oh.

A: So I knew him pretty good, a nice guy, a friendly guy.

Q: And Grant, W. G. Grant?

A: Yes, Bill Grant, yeah he's out of Tool and Die, a nice guy, a left-winger, a pretty decent guy.

Q: And Larry Yost?

A: Now I don't know too much about Larry. Larry's out of the Aircraft, wasn't he?

Q: Uh-huh.

A: If I'm not mistaken he was in the right category most of the time or all the time. He was not too bad a guy to get along with, friendly but, I'd say he was a right-winger yeah.

Q: Then I've got a few people that were connected with the local but they weren't in the local itself like the correspondent for the Daily Worker, Billy Allen, he was said to have been around the plant a lot because he was....

A: Billy Allen was with the Daily Worker, right. He was--

Q: Was he popular with the workers?

A: Not with the right wing he wasn't, but he'd get along with the left-wing guys pretty well. He knew how to handle himself, friendly, but I don't think too many of us had a lot to do with him.

Q: Did he peddle a lot of papers around there?

A: He peddled some papers, yeah.

Q: And then somebody else who wasn't actually in the local but that was affiliated with it was Stanley Nowak.

A: Stanley was I think, Nowak is a pretty popular, is that the Stanley Nowak that became state rep. here?

Q: Uh-huh.

A: Is that the Stanley?

Q: Yeah, uh-huh.

A: Yeah, he was popular with us. You see he, Nowak, even with the Poles, being a left-winger, I think he was a left-winger, you know the Poles still went with him and there were quite a few Poles around. You take the Engine plant had a lot of Poles, a lot of Poles. He was a pretty likable guy. May I glance through these names?

Q: Sure.

A: I think all of them are retired that you named, I don't think any of them are working any more and most of them are dead.

Q: Yeah I've talked with a number of them.

A: There is no worker in here, all these are retired and most of them are dead.

Q: I talked with Tappes.

A: Yeah, did you talk to Carl?

Q: He won't respond. I sent him a letter and the professor I'm working with called him one time and he apparently doesn't want to be interviewed.

A: He wasn't feeling good for a while and I don't know if he's in bad shape now or not. Let's see, one, two, three, four, five, six, some of these I don't know. I know them, I don't know if they're dead but there are six that I see are deceased and I'm sure they're all retired, every one of them.

Q: I know. Okay, have you remained active with the retirees' chapter in recent years?

A: I have not, no.

Q: So you don't what kind of attendance they get at their meetings?

A: No, I don't. Well I've been to some of them, it all depends what happens, if there are some hot issues come up or some main speakers come around or it's getting close to election time and there's issues involved you'll get good attendance. But if it's just an ordinary meeting, I don't think they get too many.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: I have not, I should be, that's one of my shortcomings, but maybe if we sell that place in Yuma we might stay here and maybe I'll get more involved.

Q: Okay, that's the end of my questions unless you can think of any other either stories or things that are fresh in your mind.

A: Well--

Q: Well you've said a lot.

[END OF TAPE #3]