JOHN MANDO INTERVIEW
8/14/84
Tape 1, Side 1

Q: . . . Where you were born and raised and if were your parents were involved in labor.

JM: Yeah, my Dad was involved with the United Mining Workers back in Pennsylvania where I was born and raised. I left there at about age nineteen and I came to Detroit to apply for a job at several locations, including the Ford Motor Company. And I got hired in Ford's in September of 1940, I believe it was. So I had a little bit of experience of working in a factory before it was organized.

Q: Which building were you hired into?

JM: I was hired into the--well, the Rolling Mill and Frame plant was combined at that time. The Rolling Mill and the Frame plant and the cold-heading plant. The frame and cold-heading plant they called it. And they separated those two plants several years later. But I hired into Ford's--actually I started while the Frame and Cold-Header and Rolling Mill was one plant. I was assigned to the Frame and Cold-Header section when I first started there. And left the--well they organized Ford's in June of 1941 I believe it was. And I did a little stint in the service. I was away for about four years and when I came back, like about late '46. Because I went back to Pennsylvania for a while. I had these personal problems back there, family problems. I got that straightened away and I came back out here and I was reinstated. And at that point, the Rolling Mill and the Frame and

Cold-Header was just on the verge of separating. And I was fortunate enough to go work in the Rolling Mill

Q: What was your position; what job in have in the Rolling Mill?

JM: Well I first--when I started, I started on the frame line. I used to work on the end of the frame line with three other guys and as these chassis frames came off the line, assembled, we would straighten them up and put them on hooks, and they would go through the paint tank. And there were a lot of frames that came off in the course ---

Q: Sounds like heavy work.

JM: Yeah. And then I--they asked me if I wanted to serve as a utility man, a relief man. And I took that job. I used to do that as well as relieve other people on the frame line putting it together before the finished product. And that's the last job I held before I left. And when I came back I went to work in the Rolling room. I went to work as a hooker. A hooker is not the kind . . . . I was a crane hooker. One of the guys that would direct the crane as it came down tie up the bundles or barrels or whatever, and give the operator the signals as to where to drop it and so forth and so on. And after some time at that, not a great, not a long time, it was 1947, it seems like middle 1947 or the latter part of 1947, there was an opportunity for people to work--qualify as crane operators so I took a crack at that. And I

worked as a crane operator for '47 up until--actually, I think, the first time I got interested now to accept the nomination was in '49.

Q: Was that a skilled job?

JM: Crane operator? No, it's not classified as a skilled job as we consider skilled jobs. The skilled trades are comprised of electricians, millwrights, tool and die workers, and that sort of. And the crane operators were kind of in-between. They were semi-skilled. They never, they were a couple of drives on to try to get crane operators including the skilled group but it never quite actually came about. But in 1949, I think, was the first time, and believe it or not, I had to be talked into accepting the nomination; honestly, I was not all that enthralled with the notion of being an officer or a committeeman. But I got involved with some of the people in office who used to drop down to the committee room, and I'd chat with them.

Q: And they are the ones who convinced you to run?

JM: Yeah, they convinced me along with some of the crane operators. And then the fellow, one of the committeemen who represented the crane operators as well as other segments--other classifications, he used to ask me to serve as his replacement when he would take a vacation or he took a leave of absence for any reason, and that's how I got started

in the thing. And it was in--the first office I went for was Recording Secretary, in the Rolling Mill, and I didn't make that.

Q: That was in the late '40s?

JM: That was in 1949. In 1950, I ran for Office of District Committeeman on the Afternoon Shift. I got elected to that job. And in 19--I served from 1950 to '51 and in '52 I didn't finish out my second term. And in 1952 I ran for the position of Chairman of the Unit. And got elected to that job. I served as a Unit Chairman from 1952 until September of 1962. That's when I went on the international staff.

Q: That's a pretty large building, the Rolling Mill?

JM: Yeah.

Q: How did you get yourself known around the plant; to get recognition for an election for chairman?

JM: Well when I got elected as a committeeman and the constituents that I had, the people that I represented, appeared to be quite satisfied with what I was trying to do on their behalf, and they spread the word. You are doing a good job for a group of people in a district and they will talk to other people on the shift and they will talk to other people on other shifts. And at the point that they became displeased with the top leadership in the unit, well then they start--

well they won't even bother to ask you if you are interested in the job. They start talking up. See, we've got a guy maybe that should be doing something different. We're not happy with the guy who is serving as unit chairman maybe if we make a change, that's the way it goes. And the more active you are, the better the job you do of course, the better known you become. The more publicity you have. And then we had a situation in 1949, actually the Rolling Mill workers, in fact, the steel workers not only the Rolling Mill, it was the Open Hearth as well, they used to have the same overtime provisions as they did in the rest of the plant. Time and a half for Saturday, double time on Sunday. Now the Company instituted an incentive pay system back in 1945 and actually that incentive pay system didn't really take hold until the 1950s.

Q: This was just in the Rolling Mill?

JM: It was the Rolling Mill and the Open Hearth. Steel Division. And as the workers began to take hold and began to put out extra production in return for the additional pay--that's what the incentive pay system is all about, you know--and as they started increasing their earnings, then the Company began to complain in the negotiations that their labor costs were escalating in the Ford Steel Division and that they were not competing too well with the outside steel makers.

Q: Now doesn't that incentive pay mean that the larger unit that the worker produces, the lower the pay per unit, but the worker gets more money, right?

JM: Right. You see, actually, the incentive pay system results in a savings to the Company. While they pay more money to the workers as they are producing more, actually you're right, you see. Your getting more of the product but in the negotiations, you know, you put your best foot forward and when everytime the union would advance a proposal for an increase or an improvement, the Company would point to some areas where labor costs were already high. They tried to keep the lid on them. So its just, you know, its just good, smart negotiations. While they were getting more than a fair return for what they were paying--you know, you use the numbers to your best advantage.

Q: Yeah.

JM: Which is just like right now, unemployment is over seven percent. But there are more people working today than ever before. So, you know, which side of the argument do you want to take? We've got high employment, or you can say well we've got more people working, right? So you use the numbers to your best advantage depending on where you sit.

Q: When did they start complaining about labor costs?

JM: Well it was right about '48 and '49 because actually it was in 1949 that the unions and the Company agreed on the first pension program in the Ford Motor Company. And the quid pro quo of collective bargaining, you know, you just don't go there and hold out your hand and say, you know, when are you going to fill it. The Company looks for relief in certain sections or sectors, and what happened is back then, the Ford steel workers, the Rolling Mill and Open Hearth as well, lost their overtime pay provisions. In return for a pension plan at the bargaining table, the UAW bargaining team agreed to institute the same kind of overtime practices that existed in the steel industry. And there is no--I don't think there is even now--double time for Sunday as such. The only overtime provisions were time and a half for hours in excess of 40 in one week. If you worked seven out of seven days a week.

Q: So that was a set-back for ---

JM: Yes, it was a kind of tradeoff. And the reason I mention that is because that led to a lot of dissatisfaction in the Rolling Mill, animosity. When you take something away from somebody, they are very resentful. If you negotiate and come up with a settlement short of what you were seeking, and short of what people were expecting, you could get that ratified and you would have a happy constituency. But when you get into the area where you take something away, well, the concessions that were made, here not too many years ago, which I'm sure you are familiar with, that has resulted in so much resentment in

the rank and file, throughout the UAW that a lot of good people holding positions of leadership in different local unions across the country were defeated. Not because they were dissatisfied with the kind of leadership that was being provided, but it was the member's way of showing his resentment to the concessions. People just kind of resent going backwards. They'll stop short of what they are seeking. But to take something away that they have, they just don't understand that. They just won't accept that. But that was one thing that led to a lot of resentment in the Rolling Mill unit.

Q: Now what year again did you say that they had the setback. Was that in '49.

JM: It was in the '49 negotiations. The Company agreed to the pension program. It was a $100 a month at that time. And the UAW negotiating team agreed to institute the overtime practices in the steel industry. The outside steel industry. Now they couldn't agree on what those practices were, so they had Umpire Harry Schulman, one of the real, real highly respected umpires make the decision. And he, in May of 1950, I believe it was, came out with an umpire ruling, its, No. A270. And the umpire ruling set forth the overtime practices that existed in outside steel which by agreement would be put into effect in the Rolling Mill unit as a result of the agreement in the 1949 negotiations. And that was the one that took away the double time for Sundays, as such, and any overtime that you got was overtime that you have worked in excess of forty hours a week. And that stirred up a

lot of resentment. It was in 1950 that I first got elected as a committeman, as I mentioned earlier. What was happening is that there was so much turnabout, so much resentment, that the leadership in the Rolling Mill at that time was concerned more with putting the blame on somebody, of course other than the leadership of the Rolling Mill at the time.

Q: Was that Gene Prado at the time?

JM: Gene Prado was the Chairman of the National Negotiating Committee in 1949 when this tradeoff was made. And Gene Prado was a former chairman of the Rolling Mill unit. And I don't know if he really understood exactly what he was doing and what the committee was doing. I don't think that they felt that they were going to go backwards as far as they did. But anyhow, the leadership in the Rolling Mill unit concentrated on shifting the blame for what happened on the international union and specifically Gene Prado as a chairman of the Committee. They really blackened his name.

Q: Oh really?

JM: Oh yeah, they really did. And now some of us took that opinion A270 and tried to make it work as effectively as we could. And it was surprising some of the things that we were able to pick out of that. So I was the committeeman on the afternoon shift and wrote a number of grievances. For example, one of the provisions was, that once you

instituted a schedule, you could institute a schedule over a seven-day week with two days off during the week, and work Saturday and Sunday straight time. But once you instituted a schedule of a seven-day nature or a six-day nature, you could work from say Monday through Saturday with a Sunday off and a day off in the middle of the week. That's what we considered a six-day schedule. But once you set that schedule, say you set it on a seven-day basis, you could not back off that. If production dropped off, or production requirements dropped off, they could not go back and say alright we are going to work the sixth-day schedule now for a period of time to meet production requirements. They were stuck with that and forget now, I think it was thirteen weeks. Once they set that schedule they had to stick with it for thirteen weeks. If they backed off, then they were liable for the days worked on weekend at overtime as such. So I wrote a grievance on that and I had the privilege when I became unit chairman of presenting it to the arbitrator and we won that one. There was another one that went to the change of a schedule. One of the things in that umpire's opinion was that you cannot change a person's schedule after Thursday of the preceding week in order to avoid overtime pay. For example, if you are scheduled to work say Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday, you've got Monday off and Sunday off. You work those five days in between, and they come around on Friday and they say okay, we want you now to take off Tuesday and work the following Sunday. Or to take off Tuesday and work Monday. We brought a grievance on that one. Again I had the opportunity or privilege of presenting it and we won that one. That the Company

could not change a worker's schedule after Thursday of the preceding week in order to avoid overtime pay. So there were a number of things in there. You know that if you kept reading through it and kept looking for something, while, but everyone was so distraught over the fact that premium time pay provisions was taken away, that instead of looking and maybe trying to find something in there that was beneficial, if there was anything beneficial. As I said before, everyone was concentrating on shifting the blame for the loss of the premium time. So, those were the circumstances.

Q: You say that the workers were real disgruntled after this decision. Were there any specific ways that they demonstrated their dissatisfaction?

JM: Oh yeah. Yeah, they had--there were some wildcat strikes. There was a commmittee organized in the Rolling Mill and they had some people from this group who got elected as delegates to the convention and they went around collecting, it was like a $1 per worker, and they had some professional writers prepare some brochures which they were going to take and distribute at the convention. I'll tell you they had something really going because fortunately or unfortunately, as the case may be, I don't know which, Reuther talked them out of it at the convention. He told them that he realized that that thing didn't turn out the way that they thought it was going to turn out. He realized what an adverse effect it had on the membership and that he was going to set the thing right in the next round of negotiations. (?) And he

convinced them that he was going to do something, towards correcting that, and in return he asked that they not distribute those brochures. So they just, you know, they struck a deal and they did not pass that stuff around. To pass that stuff around would have been well maybe not devastating but it would really have had an impact on the convention.

Q: How long did it take the workers to get over that?

JM: Well it took, I would say, oh maybe three to five years and as they lost out on the premium time issue, they concentrated more on increasing production to earn more in the way of incentive pay to compensate. When the first incentive pay system was put into effect in 1945, it was put into effect with the idea that the potential in the plan would provide you with the opportunity to make a 125 percent which is the equivalent of two hours of pay. (?) the pay. Well over the years the employees learning shortcuts and so forth and to compensate for the loss of premium time, they were in most cases, averaging 150 percent and more. And, in fact, we went through two modernization programs between 1950 and 1962 and as they modernized the mills and, in fact, got even more production, as part of the negotiations we reached an agreement with the Company that the so-called 125 percent potential, which is obsolete because people had been exceeding that by a substantial amount, that they would build a potential in comparable to what they were accustomed to. So where you were talking a 125 percent, you were talking, depending on what the

earnings level was, some places were 150 percent and some places were higher than that. I don't know, I haven't checked on the Rolling Mill lately, but I know that the earnings level--the production increased, the earnings level increased to the point where the Company took the position that they had to have some relief in high labor costs or they were going to have to sell the mill, or if they couldn't sell the mill, they were going to have to just go out of the steel mill business. In fact, they had the thing up for sale and were negotiating with the Japanese.

Q: (INAUDIBLE) (SOUND WENT VERY LOW)

JM: Now this has not been too long ago. Now this has been--oh the concessions in the mill were made in the 1981 negotiations. Yeah, but actually they didn't make the concessions in 1981 but that's when they first started talking seriously about making concessions. And they started talking, the Company was saying if we don't get concessions we are going to go out of the steel making the business. They were negotiating with the Japanese to sell the plant and so forth. And it was, I think, in 1982 that they actually, late in '82, somewhere in '82, that they actually struck an agreement to--well . . . . There again, I've been out of there since 1962 so I have not been involved in any of their negotiations since then. So I'm not all that familiar . . .

END OF SIDE 1

BEGINNING SIDE 2

JM: (CONTINUING). . . somewhere in the area of $1.50 - $1.60 an hour.

Q: Now compared to the rest of the plant, the rolling mill has _____? relatively high wages, is that right?

JM: Oh yes. You see even making the kind of concessions that they made they still are one of the highest group, if not the highest paid people in manufacturing in the Ford Motor Company.

Q: Now where did that originate? Was that always true as long as you were there or did that come into the incentive pay?

JM: It's the incentive pay really that triggered that acceleration in earnings, of course--the Company (?) increased the labor cost. You see in 1945 the Company opposed putting in the first incentive pay system on the fourteen inch bar mill and that was resisted very strenuously.

Q: In the Rolling Mill?

JM: In the Rolling Mill they didn't want any part of that. It wasn't, actually, it wasn't until 19--even in 1949, and 1950, many operations in the Rolling Mill were not covered by the incentive pay system. As the fourteen inch mill being the first one, as the workers began to

take hold of it and make a fair return with their increased efforts, as the Company tried to institute it in different other locations, once they got the their foot in the door in the fourteen inch mill, once they got that working, then people were not objecting quite so strenuously, they thought they'd give it a try. And then, of course, as we got into, when we got into, 1949, 1950, and lost the premium pay then people were much more receptive to the incentive pay system for reasons that I mentioned. It was an opportunity for them to make up for the loss as a result of the loss of premium time pay.

Q: So if is a higher paid building, was it a desirable one? Were the workers generally aspired to be workers in the Rolling Mill?

JM: Yeah, you know, it took a complete turnabout because at one time anyone was faced with the prospect of going in the Rolling Mill and he shied, or she, it was mostly he shied away because that seven-day operation stigma. But as the thing turned around because of extra earnings through the incentive pay system, it accelerated things as the years went by, then it became one of the choice places. Everybody was trying to get into the Rolling Mill.

Q: How did the workers go about getting a position in the Rolling Mill?

JM: Well, back, it was kind of a hit and miss project initially. And subsequently this, its been years since I've been out here, --they use the promotion system. It's a good system that skilled tradesmen could

bid on jobs in the Rolling Mills. It's considered a promotion. But previously, they, if you were on lay off, in the Rouge labor pool, the Rouge plant labor pool, and there was a need and everyone was working in the Rolling Mill unit and they needed some people, for example, for the vacation season which is most likely the reason they would be taking on additional people. They would just take them from the labor pool. The Rouge-wide labor pool. So we went in just by chance. And of course, as I mentioned subsequently, they worked out some arrangements where because it was a preferred unit, preferred jobs, they would worked out a promotional system.

Q: When did that promotional system come in?

JM: Now I don't--I'm not sure. I couldn't pinpoint the year. I would say maybe about fourteen - fifteen years ago. Somewhere in that range. Don't hold me to that because I may be off a couple of years.

Q: Well that's close enough. But before that there was no senority system or or anything like that got, it was strictly chance?

JM: Strictly, chance. Oh, you've got--if you worked in the Rolling Mill and got laid off from the Rolling Mill, you had recall rights back to the Rolling Mill. Now if you were offered a job in some other unit when you were laid off, then you lost your recall rights to the Rolling Mill unit. So those people that were laid off in the Rolling Mill, because it was considered such a preferred unit, they would

refuse job opportunities until--they would wait and stay on laid off for months wanting to get back to the Rolling Mill. It was not by chance how they got back. They just waited it out. But anyone else who didn't work there before on a job assignment, they'd go into the Rolling Mill, they were not familiar with what was going on there and what was happening in there, so they just landed there by chance. Of course as years went by, it became more public knowledge, so to speak, that it was a preferred unit and people became more and more interested in getting in there. Eventually, as I mentioned it worked out as a promotion unit.

Q: There was not much transferring from different units in the earlier days?

JM: No, not too much. In the '40s and in the '50s things were going pretty good. Ford at one time used to use about sixty, maybe more than sixty percent, of the steel that they produced. Ford used to use it on his own cars. And then probably about maybe, sixty-five percent would be more like it. And while the automobile industry was booming, not only was he supplying his own company with steel manufactured by his own employees, but he was able to sell a portion of the steel manufactured on the open market. So, we were not having a great deal of movement up and down cutbacks, layoffs and so forth during that period of time. It was later that we started to do that. In the recession periods.

Q: For the 1940s, some people have characterized the different units for me in terms of the type of workers that worked there, for example in the foundry they had a large black population. In the Motor building, a lot of Poles and Italians. Were there any ethnic groups that were more common in the Rolling Mill?

JM: In the Rolling Mill? We had, in the Rolling Mill, I think, was the Melting pot. We had a sizeable black population, a sizeable ethnic population. It was just a real mixture there. The blacks, while there was a good number of them, they were short, you know, in the majority. They were less than the majority. If you are trying to single out any ethnic group, the population was greater than--I think the best way I can describe it is just a little bit of this and a little bit of that and it was just one big melting pot. We had Italians, Poles, blacks, ethnic, you name them, the nationalities, they were in there.

Q: How about the politics of the unit? I know that in the rest of the Rough plant, slates ran at every election the right wing versus the progressive slate.

JM: Yeah.

Q: How was the staff, _____ was the progressive and the right wing slates pretty active in the Rolling Mill?

JM: Well the Rolling Mill unit was always considered a right wing unit. It was always pretty well identified as a Reuther slate. An international, alligned with the international. That's been the history of the Rolling Mill. And it is still the history of the Rolling Mill but during that period when I ran for unit chairman, I ran against a gentleman by the name of Frank Kenny, who has since passed away, who was considered the right-wing candidate. Leading the right-wing slate.

Q: Was he the former chairman?

JM: Yeah, he's the guy that I beat. And I did not run as a left-winger or as a progressive or as part of the progressive slate. I ran as an independent. And it was during that time that Carl Stellato broke with the International Union. And we formed a coalition, not that particular election, but after the election, we formed a coalition with Carl Stellato. Well it was a kind of interesting time, and I think it may be a little difficult for me to explain this because we were not really opposed to the International Union but we were closely alligned with Carl Stellato.

Q: Did you say this was in the early '50s?

JM: Yes, in the early '50s. And we used to have, oh, I particularly had a great deal of problems because in our caucus we had people who were pro-International, or of course anti-International, and people that

were pro-Stellato and anti-Stellato, and we had a constant turmoil, so much so, that we could never for several years--back then we used to have our conventions every year and then they used to have one every two years and then they went to every three years. So we were having elections quite often at that time. We used to have a great deal of difficulty trying to put a slate together because people were tugging in both directions ---

Q: What caused people to side with Reuther versus Stellato?

JM: Well, as I say, the Rolling Mill unit was a right wing unit way, way back when. Actually, it would have remained a right wing unit all the way through except for that flap, the loss of premium time. That's really what created the division.

Q: So people who were not supporting Stellato were people who tring to pin the International with premium pay issue?

JM: They were anti-International because they lost the premium time. More so anti-International than pro-Stellato because of what happened in the '49 negotiations. It was so difficult to put, we would be allowed 4 delegates and the unit chairman, normally, would be a candidate heading the slate.

Q: For a convention:

JM: For a convention.

JM: And we used to have such a rhubarb that I refused to run as a delegate for several elections because there was--I just couldnt' reach a meeting of the minds. So we'd wind up where we tried to compromise the two groups within our caucus by saying okay we've got four delegates. We'll say we are going to elect two delegates that are pro-International and two delegates that are pro-Stellato. And we tried to do on that basis.

Q: Where did you fall on that controversy?

JM: Where I fall?

Q: Um ha

JM: Well I was just trying to keep the thing together. I was taking the position--look, we can get along with the International, we could have coalition with Carl Stellato, and still get along with the International union. This was the best way to provide service to our members. So rather than get into this dogfight, the political dogfight, concentrating most of your time on politics, so and that worked. We got good cooperation from the International Union, we had good cooperation, excellent cooperation, from the local leadership, Carl Stellato in particular. Carl Stellato, in my view, was the most dynamic, most competent, local president that we have had. Not only

in Local No. 600, but throughout the UAW. He was a real firey, he was really . . .

Q: Did you support his election against Reuther? He ran against Reuther at one point didn't he?

JM: Well he didn't, now, you are talking about at the convention?

Q: Convention, right.

JM: Now he did not run against Reuther, he ran against a Reuther slate. He accepted a nomination at one of the conventions to run as the vice president against the Reuther slate.

Q: Did he get Local 600 behind him pretty much in that attempt?

JM: Yes, he had Local 600 behind him pretty much at that time. In fact, that was one time where I had to make a choice between the International and the Local. I held Carl Stellato in such high regard that I voted for Carl as a vice president against the wishes of the administration of course.

Q: Did the administration let you know besides the obvious that they didn't want you to vote, did they have correspondence and so on that--they encouraged?

JM: Well yeah they had staff guys going around (?) get you off in the corner and try to get you to vote for the International slate, specifically against Stellato, because Stellato was an anti-adminstration guy.

Q: Do you think they tried to do that with all the delegates, or especially with local 600, do you think that they, selected who they were talking to when the did that? Do you think _____. They figured you are in the right wing caucus or an independent and you are a more likely candidate than, for example, somebody in the progressive caucus?

JM: Well I think they may have spent more time talking to people like myself and others in Local 600 than they would in some of the other locations because people in most of the other locations probably didn't know Carl, obviously didn't know him as well as we did. But they were voting for him more on the basis that they were opposed for one reason or another against the International rather than voting for him because they were aware of his record and his contributions. You know Carl, you probably already know this, but Carl ran for president of Local 600 as an International representative. He was the Assistant Director in Region 1A and he left that post to run for the president of Local 600 against Tommy Thompson.

Q: How do you understand his break with Reuther--given the fact that he did originally run as a Reuther candidate?

JM: Um boy, I really don't know what the dickens, was at the bottom of that to tell you the truth really. Except, to make a guess, that it was politically opportune for the president of Local 600 to be opposed to the administration, to be opposed to the international union, rather than be supporting it.

Q: Because of the internal dynamics of the union?

JM: Yeah, you know Local 600 was such a huge local union, and still is a good size but nothing compared to what it was at the time. And all those units in there, and all those political factions in there, you had to be a Hudini to work out a coalition of all those different units and all those different caucuses. That's another reason why I--thought he was an amazing guy, Carl Stellato was, _____ along with the fact that he had all of the qualifications that you need for a leader in the UAW. Very dynamic He also had that ability to talk to people and convince them to form coalitions. An amazing talent in that respect. A very personable guy, he had everything going for him. He was an exceptionally good speaker. A very intelligent guy, very knowledgeable. And he had that ability and talent to get along with people. A very charming kind of guy, really.

Q: You mentioned that the Rolling Mill was a right wing building throughout its history. Was there any other building that you were in the Rouge plant as a whole that stayed right wing, throughout?

JM: Yeah, the--I don't want to say say throughout?

Q: Well the '40s and '50s.

JM: Let's see, I started in '40 and from '42 to '46 there was a war. And so, but from say '47 to '62 and maybe it was pretty much the same, yes. There are some buildings in there that are considered right wing, they have been alligned with the administration over the years and there are some that have been opposed. I can pick out the ones that are opposed, that have been consistently opposed. I can of course do that. The old--Stamping Plant used to historically a right wing building.

Q: Is that Press Steel?

JM: Stamping? That's Press Steel now. They used to be considered the right wing unit.

Q: In the '40s and '50s also?

JM: Yeah the '40s part of the '40s. And I guess the Glass Plant, was another one that was considered pretty much right wing over the years. And the Transportation unit was another one pretty much considered right wing. Now Maintenance and Construction, now they fluctuated somewhat. They were not consistently right wing, they may have been more right wing than in the left, but in elections, they would swing

back and forth, in one election with the administration in the next one they may not be. The Tool and Die unit historically has been identified as left wing and has been a thorn in the side of the International Union.

Q: Have people talked about how that came to be?

JM: I don't know. You know, my wife may be able to provide some insight on that. She, _____. She worked as a secretary at Local 600.

Q: Oh she did?

JM: Oh yeah, yeah. Let's see--Velma. She's outside feeding the birds. If you think she might provide some insight, I'll ask her to come in. Want me to?

Q: Okay _____.

JM: I'll tell you, she knows as much or more about the political line than . . . .

Q: Oh, yeah.

END OF TAPE 1

JOHN MANDO, TAPE 2
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Tape 2, Side 1

JM: (Continuing) . . . The die-hard of the left wing building was the Motor building also. Those were the two, over the years were consistently anti-administration, considered the left wing.

Q: When you consider that progressive versus the right wing caucus Rouge-wide, would you say that neither one of them was dominant over the years or was one of them dominant over the other?

VM: John, honey, wasn't Pressed Steel left wing too, with Lee Romano?

JM: No, well not, they may have been ---

VM: I thought once during the war.

JM: Well they may have been for a short period of time but over the long term I think they were considered more right wing.

VM: Well, Tool and Die was left.

JM: Well come on in here for a minute.

VM: Well I'm feeding my birds. (LAUGHTER) And besides I'm too tired to battle left wing or right wing anymore.

JM: Velma used to--it's funny the secretaries used to line up.

Q: Oh really?

JM: Oh yes, there were secretaries in there that were considered the right wing secretaries because they were more friendly to the so-called right-wing buildings. Some secretaries--she was identified as a left winger.

Q: Oh really?

JM: Oh yes she was considered--one of the progressives. Her favorite buildings were Tool and Die and the Motor building. And it was funny, it wasn't funny, but there used to be friction between secretaries as a result. This thing carried right down to the secretaries.

Q: And they weren't even in the union, right? They were organized by the Office and Professional Workers.

JM: That's right. _____.

Q: I've got a list of some other buildings. Let me see if I can list them and see what your impressions are. How about the aircraft--oh, you probably don't have too much experience since it was basically a war time plant.

JM: Yeah.

Q: Yes, after the war that aircraft plant became the engine plant.

JM: Yeah.

Q: Is that the same as the Motor?

JM: Yeah.

Q: And then the Jobbing Foundry.

JM: Well the Jobbing Foundry--you see there was the Iron Foundry, Jobbing Foundry . . .

Q: It was a smaller foundry. I think maybe it was restricted to the earlier period, it could have been that it wasn't in existence when you came back from the war.

JM: Yeah because I don't recall it being identified as the Jobbing Foundry.

Q: That's where Zack Benford and old Harold Johnson were Chairmen. Old Man Johnson.

JM: Old Man Johnson, right.

Q: He later became chairman of the Iron Foundry after they closed the Jobbing Foundry.

JM: Let's see, there was the Iron Foundry and there was another foundry.

Q: Specialty?

JM: Specialty. Yes. Now was the Jobbing Foundry in addition to that, was that what you were saying?---

Q: I think that the Jobbing Foundry was there before. Then may be the Specialty Foundry took over from that.

JM: The Jobbing Foundry? I think that's what happened, yes. Now, Velma remembers Old Man Johnson. I don't. You see when Velma was a secretary there in the '40s, before I even got involved I actually didn't get involved until 1950. And then that was strictly on the unit level. It wasn't until 1952 that I got elected as unit Chairman and I became part of the local Executive Board. Then began paying attention to other units. Prior to that, as far as I was concerned, the only unit was the Rolling Mill unit. But you learn ----

Q: So the Specialty Foundry, do you have any impression about that one? That's where a Buddy Battles was the Chairman.

JM: Yeah, Buddy Battles was the Chairman. He got elected to the local office, from the Specialty Foundry. Your probably aware that he was elected as a Regional Director. Now I do not know too much about the politics of the Specialty Foundry but I was on the International staff

when Buddy Battles was aspiring to the position of director of Region 1A. _____. And the decision was made. Carl Stellato was interested in the position. Jack Pelligrini as the assistant director of Region 1A was very much interested in the position. And really, the two candidates that were in the forefront, Carl and Jack. And this Carl--Walter Reuther was still alive at that time and the dog fight started getting out of hand. They started getting a little vicious. Campaigning against one another tring to get the (?) so to speak. And it was as a result of that fight between Carl and Jack that Reuther intervened and said, "Look, you know, if we can't settle this in an amicable fashion, if we are going to have this kind of a rhubarb, then what we have to do is discount both of you and look somewhere else and see if we can find ---. And that was when the decision was made to run the first black as a Regional Director.

Q: How is that position voted on? Is that at the convention?

JM: Yeah. The Regional Directors are elected at the convention except in those situations where the Regional Director may have passed away or he may have retired, then you hold a special election in that Region to fill the vacancy. Of course, Joe McCuster was the Director and he passed away in midterm and so it was a question of filling the vacancy.

Q: So how did Reuther have authority over who could and couldn't run for the office?

JM: Well he didn't have authority over who could or could not run, but he had a great deal of influence. And the one thing about Walter is that he was very much the kind of a guy that--look, let's work together. Let's do this together, you know. We've got an election here. Let's make this election, you know, you go on about it in the most effective way you can. Try to gather the votes. He'll stay out of the way, you see. But at the point to get into the name calling, and the point that you get into the mud slinging, and at the point that you get vicious, and he views it as possibly being damaging to the organization, then he will intercede. Look if you can't do this on a high level, if you are going to campaign in the low row, so to speak, then we're going to have to do something about this. He was a very, very persuasive guy. So, naturally he would not get involved until it got into that kind of a dog fight. But at the point that he became displeased with the way the campaign was going, he would then exert his influence. Not necessarily pick somebody else, but start looking at other candidates, you see. Select from those candidates rather than the two that was creating the furor.

Q: Had Stellato and Reuther made-up their differences at that time or were they still on opposite poles?

JM: At that point, there was no division. They were pretty much lined up together. You know Stellato actually, I don't know if you know this, he actually wound up on the International staff.

Q: I think I heard that once but I forgot about it.

JM: Yes, you see. He left the International staff as a Regional Assistant Director to run for Local President, and they had their differences there for a few elections. And patched up their differences and, in fact, he was placed--he was selected by Ken Bannon. Ken Bannon was the Ford Director, and he selected Carl to his staff with the blessing of Walter Reuther.

Q: So he was on the Ford Bargaining Committee?

JM: Well when he was on the Ford staff, he was not on the Ford Bargaining Committee. He was on the Ford Bargaining Committee before he was selected to the staff. In fact, I think, that is where they patched up all their differences. He was on the Ford Negotiating Committee a couple of times.

Q: That must have been in the '60s, right?

JM: Let's see. Yeah, the early '60s. And he of course is retired now. But he did a good job as a member of the Bargaining Committee, the Negotiating Committee, and they patched up their differences.

Q: How about the Open Hearth building? That's one that's really close to the Rolling Mill in the type of production?

JM: Yeah, the Open Hearth was part of the Ford Steel Division. The Rolling Mill, the Open Hearth, and the Miscellaneous unit comprised the Ford Steel Division.

Q: Did all three of those go into the incentive plan?

JM: Well the Miscellaneous unit--yes the Miscellaneous--is coke, it's real name is Coke Oven, Blast Furnaces. It was called Miscellaneous, its really Coke Oven. It is now known as Coke Oven Blast Furnace. That was the only unit in the Steel Division that did not have an incentive pay system but eventually got one. It was very late in coming. In fact they didn't get the incentive pay plan in there until after I left, it was in the '60s, the 1960s.

Q: What side did they fall on politically?

JM: They fell pretty much pro-International they were considered right wing.

Q: And they were a relatively small unit?

JM: Yeah, they were a very small unit. The Frame and Cold Header was another one that was predominantly left wing.

Q: That's interesting. And that was the building that was originally together with the Rolling Mill.

JM: Part of the Rolling Mill, yeah. When they split it up, then they leaned more to the left more times than they did to the right. They supported the Interntional Union. They supported the administration at times, but most times they opposed.

Q: Did that unit have a lot more production jobs and lower-paying jobs than the Rolling Mill?

JM: Yeah.

Q: Did they have more blacks?

JM: Yeah, I would say even when the Frame Plant, Frame and Cold Header and Rolling Mills was one, that there were more blacks in the Frame Plant and Cold Header than there were in the Rolling Mill. And even after divisions, after the division, the percentage of blacks increased in fact in the Frame and Cold Header. Because when the plant first--when they first split, Gene Prado was president of, Chairman of the Rolling Mill Unit and George Knight, another white fellow, was elected chairman of the Frame Plant and Cold Header. And that, in 1947--let's see that was just about in 1947 that that split occured, I think. It was shortly after that--oh, let's see, George Knight defeated Gene Prado. That's the way it was. George Knight defeated Gene Prado and it was shortly after that election that they separated the Rolling Mill from the Frame Plant and Cold Header unit. And it was shortly

after the election that Gene Prado went to work with the International Union.

Q: So all of these guys that were elected to the Frame and Cold Header were at one time members of the Rolling Mill? Including the left-wing leaders.

JM: Yeah, they were members of the Rolling Mill.

Q: Was that the unit that _____ Morgan was Chairman of?

JM: Joe Morgan. In fact, Joe Morgan beat George Knight. He was the first black to get elected as chairman of the Frame and Cold Header unit.

Q: So Knight split over with, he went with the Frame and Cold Header unit?

JM: Yeah, that--he was out of that section. So while he was the Chairman of the Rolling Mill and cold-heading, Frame and Cold Heading, unit when it was one, when it was split,--because his classification in his department was part of the Frame and Cold Header ---

Q: Oh, no choice of his.

JM: He had no choice. He went there when they elected Frank Kinny, ran for Chairman and was elected in the Rolling Mill. And he served until

1952, I beat him. And you see the fact that Morgan got elected and that, it became, well even after Morgan was--let's see I don't recall who succeeded him. Maybe you've got the information but it was another black. Blacks have been in there ----

Q; It wasn't Hogan was it?

JM: No, no. Hogan was not in the Frame and Cold Header.

Q: Well that's strange to think how that unit had been part of a right wing building a number of years and then when it split it became left wing.

JM: Yeah, it is strange. I don't know how you can account for that except for--the number of blacks, percentage-wise, were increasing to the point where they were the a majority, they had a majority. I'm not saying that all buildings or all units, that are predominantely black automatically elected a black and whites likewise. It seems pretty much that way. But not necessarily that they vote along racial lines. I don't want to create that impression. But it seems to turn out that way.

Q: We were talking about the Open Hearth unit and I don't know if you gave your impression of that. You said that that was part of the steel complex. Can you characterize that politically.

JM: The Open Hearth had a workable incentive pay system right from the beginning. And the Open Hearth was strictly a seven-day operations unit to begin with, and was not effected by that tradeoff in '49. Subsequently, the opinion of the umpire, the umpire decision A270 as I mentioned. They were right wing from day one and stayed right wing all the time I was there. And I think even now they could still be considered right wing.

Q: You mentioned that in connection with the incentive system, do you think that the incentive system had any role in the election of right wing officers?

JM: Well, no I don't think that that in itself. I shouldn't say that in itself but where you have a satisfied membership in the main, it seemed like they were pro-Administration, right wing, where you had a satisfied membership. If something cropped up like the loss of premium time, is what had a drastic effect on the Rolling Mill unit. It had no effect on the Open Hearth because the Open Hearth wasn't effected by it. So they just continued as they were. Now, when I say satisfied membership, I should say satisfied membership and leadership because in the Tool and Die unit, for example, the people in leadership were constantly, may be rightly so, I certainly can't be critical of them, but they were trying to advance the best interests and welfare of the skilled tradesmen that they represented. And they were constantly hammering away that skilled tradesmen were not getting a fair shake. And that the International Union was not giving the

kind of consideration to the skilled tradesmen that the skilled tradesmen were entilted to. That they should be paid more, there should be a legal variance between--as far as the wage scale was concerned. Between the skilled tradesmen and the production workers and that was all what was behind this progressiveness in the Tool and Die unit.

Q: Now the Maintenance unit has a high proportion of skilled tradesmen also doesn't it?

JM: Yeah.

Q: Were they involved in any of that?

JM: Yes, to a degree. But not to the extent that the Tool and Die. The Tool and Die unit historically, they wanted to beat the drums on that. They opposed the International Union for that reason. Now they would get some people in the Maintenance unit to join with them from time to time, but not to the extent where the maintenance unit was known as the progressive or left wing unit.

Q: So were they pretty much the most skilled unit in the plant?

JM: I would say so, yes.

Q: Were there any others that came close besides the Maintenance unit?

JM: Well I think the Maintenance unit came closest. You know it takes, you've got to undergo some training, considerable training and schooling, in fact, to qualify as a Tool and Diemaker. They considered themselves more like professional people than workers because of the training and schooling they had to undergo in order to qualify for the jobs they held. I suppose, you know, it depends where you sit. What side of the table you're on. You go through one of these programs and you figure well, maybe I'm entitled to more. Considerably more than what they are offering in the way of a difference compared to the production guys. Of course, the production worker is saying, look, we think that you are entitled to a fair share but not at our expense. We want a fair share too. That took a great deal of skill on the part of the people like Reuther, Woodcock, and Fraser to keep that together. To keep peace in the family, so to speak. Make advances on behalf of production workers as well as the skilled trades, and keep the skilled trades a little ahead but not too far ahead so that the production worker is not too resentful. So, you've got to be good with mirrors.

Q: Did the Tool and Diemakers make anywhere near the money that they made in the Rolling Mill?

JM: Well in base wages they exceeded the base wages in the Rolling Mill. But there was a great deal of resentment because skilled tradesmen who were not under the incentive pay seystem--we had some skilled tradesmen who were working in a department in the Rolling Mill that

were actually under the jurisdiction of the Tool and Die. And they benefitted from the incentive pay systems. So they got not only top wages but they were under the incentive as well. They were the very highest paid skilled tradesmen in the plant.

Q: How big a unit was that?

JM: That department you mean?

Q: Yes, the department inside the Rolling Mill.

JM: Well, let's see, it wasn't really a big one. I would say about 150, 170 people, I think. But there was always that resentment. You know people, the Tool and Die people who didn't participate in the incentive pay system always resented the fact that the Tool and Die, the Rolling Mill workers, because of the incentive pay system actually took home more money in the pay envelope.

Q: Did you talk about the Transportation unit?

JM: I don't know if we did. But the Transportation unit has been more or less a right wing unit over the years.

Q: And they have both railroad workers and ----

JM: Truck drivers.

Q: So they were semi-skilled mostly?

JM: Yeah, engineers and locomotives and firemen.

Q: And they were also a pretty small unit?

JM: Yes, they were a small unit. And they were struggling, they were trying very hard to get anyone that was in any way connected with the Steel Division, under the incentive pay system, they wanted to benefit by it too. In other words, a truck driver that drove his truck into the Rolling Mill unit, the fact that he drove the truck into the Rolling Mill unit, was the basis--they took the position that he should get ---

Q: Did they win on those?

JM: No, no. They may have in recent years. I would say in the last ten years they may have gotten some people in incentive pay system. But they never won that argument--the fact that you drove into the Rolling Mill you will now become entitled to incentive pay earned by Rolling Mill workers or the guy, the engineer, that drives the engine into the Rolling Mill, you know, that he is a Rolling Mill worker too. That never--you have to make--the position taken by the company was that you have to make some contribution as far as production is concerned in the Rolling Mill unit. They have standards and people, direct crew members, are the ones really that were responsible for how much of the

product came out. And there were indirect crew people who would be making contributions such as the crane operator, you know, getting the steel in position for them to process it. And of the banders that would band it as it came off and the crane hookers who assisted in transporting the coils in position to be run and so forth and so on. The fact that you walked through the mill doesn't necessarily make you or give you a good claim to be part of the incentive pay system. You had to contribute in some way. So they had some difficulty. But I think now they do have some people who are participating in that.

Q: In the Transportation unit?

JM: I beg your pardon?

Q: Through the Transportation unit?

JM: Yeah, there under the jurisdiction of the Transportation unit. They make some contribution. I'm not certain, just that it is kind of like heresay.

Q: Yeah, that seems kind of strange that incentive pay is something that labor has historically fought against. And in the Rouge plant has seen it as an advantage or as something that people are working get into.

JM: I'll tell they --- END OF SIDE 1, TAPE 2

JM: (CONTINUING) . . . system, incentive pay system. And it took years.

Q: You mean in '45 when they introduced it?

JM: Yeah in 1945 they got it introduced on the 14 inch mill and it took a number of years before they got it introduced in other locations, you know, got people to actually accept it and go to work under it.

Q: Would you say that most of the wildcats that occurred in the Rolling Mill were over that issue of the incentive?

JM: Well some of the wildcats were over the incentive, the loss of premium pay.

Q: Yeah.

JM: There were all kinds of ----

Q: So the pay issue seems to be prevalent in causing disturbances in the Rolling Mill?

JM: Yeah, one either in the form of incentive pay or in the form, of the loss of pay through the loss of, the change in the premium pay provisions that I mentioned. The working conditions were never bad, as I could remember, in the Rolling Mill. It wasn't a question of bad working conditions.

Q: Do you think that they were superior to other units in the Rouge plant?

JM: In that respect, I think so, yes. Particularly in comparison to the foundries, the Dearborn Stamping Plant ---

Q: Was that just because of the nature of the production, do you think?

JM: Yeah, I think that has a lot to do with it. In the Rolling Mill most of the workers operating machinery which had been the product of--the indirect crew people, of course, they had to speed up. As they speed up the machine to get more of the product, then the indirect crew people, you know, they have to physically speed up their actions. So there is no assembly line type of operation. It is mostly machines and mills, furnances and stuff like that. Whereas in the Stamping Plant it is in many cases a machine, but you are operating, one man or two men, are operating a stamping plant and it is a far more distasteful type of operation. Or the assembly line. The Frame Plant, the frame line, for example, where they were running the chassis frame down and putting rivets in it. And getting the position going through the machine to smash those rivets so that they hold. I say smash them but they've got--the word I'm looking for is the forms, dies. They'll round it off on both ends so that they've got the rivets properly inserted, inserted properly, attached.

Q: That is in comparison to the Steel Mill or the Rolling Mill when they, did they work in groups more or more individually or ---?

JM: The Rolling Mill. Yeah, I would say the Rolling Mill is--there's more teamwork. It's more of a group operation. For example, we have--just to name one--we have a tandem mill operation in the coal mill where they run coal steel. Where they process coils of coal steel. You have three stands and you have operators on each of the stands. And you will have the roller. And you will have a guy at the start of the operation getting the steel started in the first stand. In a case like that you might have a six or seven man crew with a utility man who will be leading them throughout the day you see. So they form a close knit team. And everybody's got to be on the job and everybody's got to do his part. If one guy messes up, he can mess up the whole operation.

Q: Oh.

JM: Bust a roll or get the speed up too high, you get the tension too tight on any one of the stands, it will tear that coil and you've got a breakdown. You've got to change the rolls and your down maybe sometimes a half hour, forty-five minutes, maybe an hour.

Q: So the incentive is all tied in with that group?

JM: All tied in, yes. And then all of them, that small group that I mentioned, are direct crew members in which there are standards for that particular mill. And they all participate in the earnings as a result. Whereas now in the Stamping Plant, it is more of an individual type operation. Say you operate the stamping machine, well two people might be operating the stamping machine.

Q: Were there there any other buildings in the Rouge, that you know of, that had similar type operations where people worked in groups versus individually?

JM: Well, maybe the Open Hearths would be probably closest to that concept.

Q: So the steel operations were pretty set aside in that regard?

JM: Yes, I think so. I think you would find more of that teamwork concept in the Steel Division. That small group of teamwork concept in the Steel Division than you do in most other places.

Q: Okay. We talked about the Glass Plant. Last time you mentioned that that was basically a right wing building.

JM: Glass Plant, yeah I always considered it as such.

Q: Okay. How about the Assembly Building?

JM: Well on the Dearborn Assembly, I would categorize that one--well, as more left than right. Not as left as the Tool and Die in the Motor Building, but I would categorize them as more left wing.

Q: Okay. How about the Spring and Upset Building?

JM: That one is ---

Q: That was an early building?

JM: Yes. I don't remember much about that.

Q: Do you remember the Plastic Plant?

JM: Well that was another one that was a little early too, as far as I was concerned.

Q: The Parts and Accessories. That was very small. In fact, there was Parts and Accessories and Lincoln-Mercury Parts which later became the Central Parts Depot, I think.

JM: Yeah, there were parts--I don't know if they called it Ford Parts Depot when I was in there. Mike ---

Q: D'Agostino?

JM: D'Agostino was the unit chairman of the Parts Depot when I was on the Local Executive Board and that definitely has been categorized as right wing. In fact, Henry McCusker, if I recall correctly, is a former Chairman of the Parts Depot. And Henry was a brother, of course, to Joe McCusker, who was Regional Director. And Henry served a good many years on the International staff after he left the Parts Depot. And that's pretty much right wing over the years.

VM: In the Lincoln-Mercury Parts, I'm not sure which years, but Lou Rinaldi was the Chairman.

JM: That's right. I would not categorize that unit as exclusively right wing although it probably leaned as much to the right, or more to the right than to the left. Yeah.

Q: The Foundry Machine Shop. Now that might be another early one, I'm not sure.

JM: Yeah, but--so there are two foundries in there, the Specialty Foundry and the Iron Foundry. Now any foundries prior to that may have been called by a name that eventually became the Iron Foundry or the Specialty Foundry.

Q: I think this is the one where John Poole was the Chairman for a number of years. Does that ring a bell?

JM: No. You see that was before my time.

Q: And in the last one I have is Gear and Axle.

JM: Well that's another that goes back.

Q: I think that later they called it something else.

JM: Yes, I'm sure that they did because I don't ---

Q: That's where Alex Simeon was the Chairman for awhile.

JM: Oh yes, I remember Alex Simeon. Was that the Gear and Axle, was he . . . . It may have been, but the name changed.

Q: The Rear Axle or something. I think that "Gear" was dropped. Something like that.

JM: Maybe Velma would know. Whenever I get stuck . . . . That's another one that I'm not too familiar with. I remember Simeon, as I say, he was the Chairman there at some time.

Q: And Dave Moore was the Vice President.

JM: Yeah, Dave Moore. And Dave Moore, that was strictly left wing. Both of those guys were known as progressives, particularly Dave Moore.

And Dave Moore actually wound up on the International staff too. Do you know that?

Q: Okay, could we go back for a minute, into, the politics of the right wing caucus or the party. Were there any groups that were active in that? Some people said that the Association of Catholic Trade Unions was active in the right wing. Did you notice their activity in your building?

JM: Well, I'll be honest with you. I was not all that much involved in local or national politics. In fact, as I mentioned, I ran as an independent. And I just refused to be dragged into that. I maintained a good relationship with Stellato and the rest of the Local officers. And also maintained a good relationship with the folks downtown. The fact that I left out of the Rolling Mill. In many cases these fellers would get beat and then would be picked up as staff guys. And I left out of there before my term expired. In fact, I had to get--I had a job offer, oh, for almost a couple of years. I just kept putting it off. So, I maintained a very good relationship with the Ford Director and the International Union as a whole, as well as the Local and I just--I just didn't get involved. You see, if you were interested in running for some local office, then you got involved in all that stuff. But if you weren't interest in that, in many cases, at least, you didn't get involved.

Q: Did you run as an independent all of the times that you were elected?

JM: No, after a couple of terms I formed a coalition with the Stellato forces. We had joint slates. A joint slate I should say.

Q: Was there a name to that slate?

JM: Yeah, well we started off with a Rank and File Slate and when we joined forces with the Local, we still maintained that same identification. Eventually, we worked out their differences and it wasn't unpopular to support Stellato.

Q: That wasn't called--oh, the other one was called the Green Slate. Right? The other was the Reuther Slate?

JM: Yeah, they used to call the Reuther Slate the Green Slate.

Q: And which one was the Unity Slate?

JM: The Unity Slate was, I think, was the Stellato Slate. You know, my memory--on the slates and the colors and stuff--you know, connected with the elections, is not as sharp now as it used to be.

Q: Well that's a while ago.

JM: Yes. It's 32 years.

Q: Now in the Rolling Mill, the right wing predominantely won the elections. Were there progressives running against the right wing slate through the years?

JM: We didn't have much of that in the Rolling Mill. Even when we had contests, it wasn't a question of right versus left. It was a question of a split in the right-wing forces in the unit opposing one another, or an independent running. But we didn't have the kind of thing in the Rolling Mill that you would have at the Local level. You had the right and left allignment. I'm going to be calling time on you here pretty soon. (LAUGHTER)

Q: Okay, let's see if I have any other -- Do you think that there was a lot of democracy in your unit? In the way that they ran the unit, and in the Local itself?

JM: I think so. You're familiar with the structure. You have elected officers. You have an Executive Board. And you have membership meetings. And there was a procedure. We just couldn't do anything that we wanted to do without first running it through that procedure and getting the necessary approval.

Q: Did you get highly attended membership meetings?

JM: Well, that's one of the problems. That we not only had in the Rolling Mill but that's one of the problems that we had throughout the UAW.

Our meetings never have been very well attended. I think worse so now probably than ever. It seems like the only time that you really get people out in force is when there is a highly controversial issue. Now when things are going well, they don't won't out. They figure well you are watching the store and as long as you take good care of the store, things are fine. But they don't--but at the point that something is taken away from them, then they start to participate more.

Q: So even in the '40s and '50s you didn't get that good attendance?

JM: Well you know, when you say, good attendance, what would you consider good attendance. Would you consider, say, 5 percent of the--if you got 5 percent of the membership, does it mean a good percentage? Would that be good attendance?

Q: For the Rolling Mill that's about a hundred?

JM: Yeah, for that we would consider a pretty good attendance in any particular meeting.

Q: Back in the '40s that was good attendance?

JM: Yeah, and of course, it drop off, over the years as I recall. It was dropping off. People would--well we used to have Labor Day parades in Detroit. And they were discontinued. They were discontinued for one

reason only--they just couldn't get the people to come down and participate. So it got so bad that we decided that rather than have a Labor Day parade and not make a good showing, we're better off not having a Labor Day parade at all. So for whatever reason. And you know, it is not a question of people not being interested in the union. Number one, they won't come out if they think things are going well and things are being taken care of. And number two, over the years as you continue to make progress for workers, particularly as you create more leisure time for workers, particularly as you create better earning power or higher earning power, they want to go out to a lake, some of them can afford a boat, and that sort of thing, you see. So when you think in terms of a worker's got some time off and he's got a little bit of money, the last place he'll go is to a union meeting. He'll go out some place where he can enjoy himself with his family. So that's really what has created the kind of situation you have here.

Q: But you did get a pretty good turnout for the voting in those days?

JM: Oh yes, yes indeed. That's one thing we always got good--and that's another reason why--if the interest is there to come to the polls. You can somehow find a excuse for them not coming out to the membership meeting which in most cases is a very dull affair. And you can understand why they might prefer to go to a lake with the family or something like that. Go down to the ball game, or some place where you can enjoy yourself.

Q: Would you say that the workers in the Rolling Mill were--read the Ford Facts regularly and kept up on union affairs and that sort of stuff?

JM: Yeah, I think they did. Not only--of course everyone had one delivered to his home. In addition to that, they used to bring in some extra copies, they used to lay them around, they were in convenient locations where they could pick them up if for some reason they didn't get one at home.

Q: Let me ask a question. Up to now we've been interviewing people that had labeled themselves, you know, left wing, right wing. Henry McCusker is in the right wing _____. Paul Boatin was in the left wing. Now you are the first person we have come across that said, hey, I don't want anything to do with that battle in there. This may even be a hard question, but as far as the Rolling Mill, do you recall a large percentage of the workers that more or less took your position of saying, hey, this is too much, this antagonistic thing. We're just going to play independent.

JM: No, I wouldn't--you see, you don't find that kind of a thing amongst the Rolling Mill workers. Where you find that kind of an alignment is among those holding an elective office, or those aspiring to the office, you see. And very frankly, while I ran as an independent, and got elected as an independent, and found out that I was able to operate more effectively by being cooperative to both forces, actually, historically, I have been alligned with the right.

Q: Um.

JM: I've been alligned with the right, but I just took the position that I was not going to get caught in that kind of a situation, where, you know, you are pressured from this side and pressured from that side. And I thought that you could operate more effectively, and we did it. And we made tremendous progress in that now over the years. And we got the full support of the Local union and the International union. If there was anything that I needed in the way of cooperation, I was never turned down.

Q: So would you describe the Rolling Mill workers, the rank and file, as pretty much right wing?

JM: Yes, the building over the years has been pretty much indoctrinated with the right wing philosophy.

Q: Were the foremen cooperative or more antagonistic? Was there much of a struggle between worker and foreman?

JM: Well when once the incentive pay system began working well, and that was started around 1950 and there on, you know if you get a group of satisfied workers who are working together closely and who are being paid for the extra effort that they are putting forth, they almost need no supervision. There were very few conflicts.

Q: Very few grievances filed?

MJ: Yeah. All the grievances--there were tons of grievances, tons. But there were hundreds of grievances filed in the early--beginning in 1950--after that A270 thing that came out. And then for several years, in fact, until we got things cleaned up. And we got some ground rules established and so forth. But outside of that period, the number of grievances in the Rolling Mill subsequently have been few in nature. Most of them are like health and safety things and then they'll get that cleaned up for you. And may be somebody claiming improper rotational overtime for some little thing like that. The management team in there was very tolerant if you had a problem, you were given an opportunity to straighten out the problem. For example, if you became a habitual absentee because of a number of reasons. They'd give you a chance to correct your problem. They would give you more of an opportunity there, I would say, than anywhere in the Rouge.

Q: How did the Rolling Mill workers react when Reuther put the adminsistratorship over the Local in 52?

JM: Well the Rolling Mill workers didn't react quite the same way as the members in the so-called left wing unit buildings. It wasn't--as I remember it, it was not, it didn't have any significant effect. They were aware that there was a change made and they probably didn't, was

not in favor of a change being made, but the fact that it was made didn't effect them all that much.

A: You were in the Presidency at that time that the administratorship was put over, weren't you? In '52?

JM: Yes, I just got--let me see, that was the year that I was elected as unit Chairman and just let think now, did that occur shortly after the election or was it in effect when we had the election?

Q: I think that the year that they had it they had elections late because it was six months or so. There was some controversy over how long an administratorship can last and they kept on for a couple of months and then they had the elections in October or something like that.

JM: Let's see, Jack Conway was the administrator and I have a very vague recollection of him being around the local unions for a very short period of time.

Q: So it did not have much of an effect, then? Okay, I've got one more question: in 1948, when Henry Wallace ran for the Progressive ticket against Truman, was there any kind of political activity within the Rolling Mill around that campaign?

JM: Not on this left versus right wing. We didn't have the kind of rhubarb in the Rolling Mill.

Q: So there wasn't any activity for the outside Wallace campaign inside the plant?

JM: Well now you're getting back into the--let's see that was what year?

Q: '48.

JM: '48? You see now that was even before I was elected to the committee. I was not elected until 1950.

END OF TAPE 2