Les Coleman Interview
August 29, 2000
Local 849 Union Hall
Ypsilanti, Michigan
Transcribed by Daniel Clark

DC: [talking about setting the controls on the tape recorder] I appreciate you coming in, and I got your message, via Bob, about rescheduling.

LC: I had to go up to my sister-in-law's. She's quite frail. Maybe you don't want this on the computer.

DC: That's fine.

LC: She's just quite frail, and we need to go up there now and again, and it happened to be that this was the logical time.

DC: Sure. Well, I start out with pretty basic questions. Like, where were you born?

LC: I was born in Mooreville, Michigan, which is about five miles out of Ypsi here—Saline, Milan, and Ypsilanti.

DC: Is Moorevile still there?

LC: Yeah. It's just got a store there or something. It's still called Mooreville. [about three miles NW of Milan]

DC: And when was that? When were you born?

LC: 1922. August 17th, if you want that.

DC: I was beginning to think that everybody here was from West Virginia.

LC: Or Kentucky?

DC: Or Kentucky. Yeah. I haven't found Kentuckians yet, but I'm sure they're out here. Were your parents from Michigan as well?

LC: Yes. They came from—I think my father may—in fact I'm looking into it right now, the genealogy. But my father and them were all in this general area. And I'm sure they were born in this area. I think my mother was born in Saline. So, my father could have been born here in Ypsilanti. I'm not sure.

DC: What did your parents do?

LC: My father, he worked in the factory awhile, but then he worked on a farm. I don't know just exactly—see my father was much older. I was the last one of twelve children. In the second family. He had seven in the first and five by the second. And I'm the last one, so I didn't really know my father too well. But when I knew him last, he worked for the city of Ypsilanti, cleaning streets. That was the last job that I know of him having. Before that, they were on a farm, and his first wife and her mother lived with him on a farm, and he had seven children by her. And then his wife died before his mother-in-law died, who was still on the farm. So the farm was divided up among the boys in the family, and my father had to get a new job. So that's when he came to Ypsilanti. I was a year old then; I'm 78 now, so it was 77 years ago. So, I really—and my father died when he was 63, and at that time I was 10 or 11 years old.

DC: Quite young. Do you remember anything about your mother?

LC: Oh yes, but the other thing about it is, I was not home too much because I sold papers on the street corner from the time I was 6 or 7 until I graduated from high school, practically.

DC: Really?

LC: Really.

DC: So you were on the street corner? You weren't delivering house to house?

LC: No, I stood on the street corner, and I got home probably 11:00 at night—10:30-11:00.

DC: Was that here in Ypsilanti?

LC: Yes.

DC: 10:30 or 11:00 at night?

LC: Yeah.

DC: Really.

LC: And I went to school in the morning.

DC: Were you working on your own, or were you with other people?

LC: I was working on my own, mostly, yes.

DC: So your parents let you stay up pretty late, huh?

LC: Yeah. They knew it. I had a boss who was a lady boss, and she kept track of me. If I was not where I was supposed to be, like on the street corner where I was supposed to be selling papers, she was around town looking for me.

DC: So what was the age range of your brothers and sisters?

LC: Well, my oldest brother was born in 1901, which would make him now 99, but he died. They were twins, actually. My oldest brother and sister were twins, and they died quite a few years back. And then it went down about every two years for the first 7 children. I mean it was two or three years. And then there was a gap there for a little while, and then the other five children came along. And then my mother—that was my real mother—and she died in, what was it, 1960-something. So she was about seventeen years younger than my father.

DC: So you sold these papers on the street corner. It sounds like that took up an awful lot of your time.

LC: It did. Besides school.

DC: Do you remember anything else about growing up in Ypsilanti in those days?

LC: Oh yes. Ypsilanti was a metropolis. I mean all kind of people. Fridays and Saturday nights the streets were loaded with people. The Salvation Army had their little band on the corner of Michigan Avenue and Washington Street. And they used to come out there every Saturday night and sing and play, and tell people to believe in Christ, and so forth. In fact, one of my brothers was involved in that at one time, for a short time.

DC: What did he do?

LC: He was a salesman. He sold furniture and just about anything you can sell, I guess. But he had a job with a furniture store here in Ypsilanti and sold furniture.

DC: So what did he do with the Salvation Army?

LC: What did he do?

DC: You say he got involved . . .

LC: Yeah, he would get up there and sing, and play an instrument, and like that. I don't know when he stopped, but I do remember him being involved with it. But that was interesting too. Early Ypsilanti, you knew everybody. The Mayor of Ypsilanti always come down and bought a paper from me. Actually, the people in the stores in Ypsilanti took care of me, you might say, because if I needed a haircut, the barber I sold papers to would get me up on a chair and cut my hair. And when I needed shoes, the shoe store fellow would set me down and give me a pair of shoes. Ypsilanti was good to me. Very good, yeah.

DC: Let's see. You say that everybody knew everybody. When did a lot of new people come into Ypsilanti? Was there any particular time that you remember? Because I've talked to other people who came from other places . . .

LC: Well that happened during the Willow Run era here. And I do remember a lot of them coming in, because they'd go to the cheaper restaurant, which I—when I did eat, I'd go get a hamburger maybe at a hamburger joint, and you saw a lot of those people in there. And you could tell by their accent that they were from a different area than Ypsilanti. So that was the influx of all these people. And then also they were building Willow Run, the dormitories, and things at Willow Run for them to stay in.

DC: When you were selling these papers, did you keep the money yourself? Or did you give it to your family?

LC: Each night, when I got done, I had to go to this lady, I told you. She was the boss, and her house was right on Fair St., which was one block off Michigan Avenue. And I'd go in there and pay her for the papers I sold, and then go on home.

DC: And then, would the money stay in your possession—the money that you made—or would you give it to your parents? Or how did that work?

LC: No, the money I made would stay in my possession. But most of the time I didn't have too much left, because I had regular people who didn't want to pay until the end of the week, so therefore a lot of times I'd go home with a nickel or a dime after selling papers for 5 or 6 hours. But I managed to buy my first bike that way—25 cents per week. That's another thing, see. I sold papers to the man who sold the bikes, and he—it was a hardware store, which was called [Condon's???] and then he trusted me—I guess I put a dollar down and 25 cents a week to pay for my bike, and I did it that way.

DC: Yeah. Well, he knew where you were.

LC: Yeah, they knew me and knew I'd be back the next day. They saw me every day. They didn't worry about it. And it also made you thrifty. You saved that 25 cents. You had to pay that bill. So you saved that 25 cents a week, and you paid your bill.

DC: Were there other kids selling newspapers on other corners?

LC: Oh yeah, especially on Saturday night. Most of the time during the week I was probably the lone person. Well, I say lone person—they had two different papers. They had the Detroit *News*, and they had Detroit *Times*. They had a *Times* boy that sold papers, and I was a *News* boy. And most of the places you could sell papers were in the restaurants, when people are setting down for dinner. So when it got to be around 4 or 5 o'clock, we'd run to the restaurants, the two of us—I mean we'd see if we could beat each other—and then we'd go to the restaurants more or less together. Or sometimes if we could sneak off and go before the other one did, or something. It was quite a challenge.

DC: Did any of your brothers or sisters ever help you?

LC: My other brothers—two of my other brothers, took most of the routes in Ypsilanti. They delivered to the different houses. The two of them delivered to most of Ypsilanti. So we were quite involved. That's probably how I got really involved, because of the older brothers that were involved.

DC: You would have been just a child when the Depression hit.

LC: Oh, I remember about the Depression.

DC: What can you tell me about the Depression in Ypsilanti?

LC: The Depression in Ypsilanti—well, I mean there was a lot of people on the street that would walk around, and if somebody threw down a cigar—a lot of people smoked cigars—they'd grab the cigar and clean it off a little bit, and smoke it, you know. We had quite a few poor people in Ypsilanti that were very poor. I mean they lived from Day 1 to Day 2. I don't know more than—when I see them I'd know them, and like that. Sometimes you'd find them in the doorway sleeping, some of them. But very seldom. Most of the police in Ypsilanti would go around and check all these things. I don't know where they'd tell them to go, but I know they didn't lay in the streets all the time, like they had in some areas. Because the police were very strict about it, seeing that they weren't on the street.

DC: How did your family get by?

LC: How did it get by? Well, we lost our first house. I know that, because we didn't pay taxes. My Dad evidently had enough money to start a house, but he lost that. And then we moved to an apartment over a meat market in Old Town of Ypsilanti. It's called 36 East Cross. That's where I lived for many years. And there again too, we weren't able to pay our monthly rent for a long time. I think we owed them money when we left. I don't know. I wasn't involved with that—I had older brothers and like that handled that kind of stuff. Like I say, my father died when we were at Cross St., in 1933. So that was right, sort of the height of the Depression—getting towards the end of the Depression, but 1933 was when he passed away. Then my brother-in-law and sister—the second sister from the oldest, first sister, I had two sisters only, the second sister, the youngest one, and her husband—rented a house and we all moved to that house at that time. There was just the five of us and my mother at that time, and we all moved to their house. That was a big house, so it could handle all of us.

DC: What did your Mother do during the Depression?

LC: She never—the only thing my Mother ever did was take care of the kids. Even in her older age, she was still taking care of kids when she was 75 years old—78 years old maybe. At my age, she was still taking care of kids. All her life she took care of kids.

DC: She had a lot of energy!

LC: She didn't have any other job, other than—the only jobs that she would have that would be paying would be one of my sister-in-laws would have her take care of her five kids. And then she'd pay her. But I don't think my Mother ever received very much money in her whole life. You know, she just took care of kids.

DC: How were you all able to eat during the Depression with your Father having died.

LC: Well, my two brothers and I would—well my brothers more than I, because I didn't help that much—but my brothers would put their money together and buy the groceries, and like that. Actually, my older two—of the last five, my older two brothers—I had three brothers who were working, a little bit here—of the last five, my oldest brother—that was all five boys, the last five—the oldest one worked for the city, taking over my Dad's job. My other brother was on WPA. So he worked on WPA for awhile before he got a real job.

DC: Do you remember any of the projects he worked on for the WPA?

LC: No I don't. I couldn't tell you about that. But he worked for the WPA.

DC: So when did you get your first job in the auto industry?

LC: In the auto industry? Well I was graduating from high school in 1941, and they made an offer of kids could go on apprenticeships. So I quickly put my name in for an apprenticeship, as a tool-and-die maker. That was what they were offering.

DC: Was that here at the Ford Plant?

LC: That was in the school, when they offered it. They offered it in the school, and I signed up for that. And then I had to go and talk to somebody to get the job, and I did that. And he sent me to the Rouge to get an examination, and like that.

DC: What kind of examination was it?

LC: Well, your eyes. And you had to have a doctor's slip saying that you're physically OK. You had to take a slip with you, that you're physically OK. Then, I can't remember, but I think we took—probably had a questionnaire that I had to fill out. And that was it.

DC: That was to get you into the apprenticeship?

LC: That was to get into your apprenticeship.

DC: And I trust you got in?

LC: Yeah! I almost brought you my diploma. I still got the diploma.

DC: I'd like to see that. How long was the—tell me about the apprenticeship. What was the apprenticeship like?

LC: You had to take—what was it, twenty or ten?—ten different courses in different things. Different mathematics. And you had to take—I wish I had brought it now. I could remember the different courses you had to have. Let me think, what was it? Metallurgy. Trigonometry. Well, the algebra and geometry I already had. That there, I reviewed those two. I guess there were a couple classes on metallurgy that you had to take. But anyway, it was about ten different classes that you had to take.

DC: Do you remember who taught the classes?

LC: I remember one man, but I only had him for one mathematics class, and I can't think of his name right now. I can't think of it. But he came—he worked at Ypsi Plant later on in years, and I got to know him real well.

DC: I was wondering if these were skilled tradesmen teaching the classes, or teachers in the school system?

LC: I think this man had a teacher's degree. I'm sure he did. It was at Dearborn—what's it called there?

DC: One of the high schools there? Maybe Fordson?

LC: Well it wasn't Fordson. It was Dearborn—I can't tell you—I know it's off Michigan Avenue there as you go into Dearborn. It was a building right in that area. I can't think of the name of it.

DC: So you traveled over there. How long was the apprenticeship program.

LC: The apprenticeship program ran four years. A little over four years, depending on how fast you could get through it. And sometimes—see, I say I went there to school, but again, they tried to make it convenient, and they had it over in Saline for awhile too, in an old mill building over there. I finished up over in Saline in a mill building. And they had it at Willow Run, in front of Willow Run bomber plant. I went there also. So my schooling moved around from place to place, really.

DC: OK, so you could pick up some of these ten courses at different locations.

LC: Yes, they tried to make it convenient for you.

DC: Now did they try to hurry things along, since World War II had started? Were they trying to get you through the apprenticeship program quicker at all?

LC: You know you worked in the apprenticeship. You worked all the while you were an apprentice.

DC: You worked full-time, OK.

LC: Full-time. So there was no hurry in getting your schooling done. Just that you didn't get a raise in pay until you got to a certain level. You had to have so many courses finished before you'd get a raise in pay.

DC: So you would go to courses on your non-work time then.

LC: Yes. You did it on your own.

DC: What was your shift?

LC: Well, there again, that's where they tried to make it convenient, but you'd be working three months days, three months afternoons, three months midnights, and then you'd go back on days, and afternoons, and midnights.

DC: You'd rotate.

LC: Yeah. Later on, they came to—I don't know whether it was a union thing or what—but later on you could freeze your shift. After the war, not during the war. It was after the war that they froze shifts, so if you had the seniority, you could work the day shift, or you took your pick. If you wanted to work midnights, you could work whatever.

DC: Well tell me more about that first job. You were working while you were pursuing the apprenticeship, while you were doing your courses. What exactly were you doing?

LC: Well first of all you learn different machines—like you worked on what they called a "shaper," that was one of them, and the milling machine.

DC: See if you can describe some of those things for people who haven't been there before. What would the shaper do?

LC: The shaper was a machine that had a tool in it that if you was going to make a square block, you'd put it into the vise—and the material was all rough—you'd put it in the vise and you'd clean it off and make it smooth. That's the shaper.

DC: How about the milling machine?

LC: The milling machine is usually something where you needed a pocket, so you could mill through—say, take that same block—and you can mill through the block to a certain width, in case you had to have a width in there. Or if you had to have a certain kind of a pocket, you'd have a vertical mill, which would come down, and you could make a pocket where you wouldn't go straight through. You could go in the top and make it square inside without touching the sides. That's a vertical mill. You learned that, and you learned to lathe—which you turned different things on the lathe. Let me think if I can think of something in particular that you did [pause]—I can't think of . . .

DC: Who would be teaching you these machines?

LC: You'd have a foreman that would set you up on a machine, but it was up to you to bring it down to size. He'd check up on you. In the beginning, he checked up on you a little bit until they could trust you with a machine, and so forth. They had leaders, also, that would come around and check out, see what you're doing. And if you got into trouble, the leader would come over and kind of get you straightened out a little bit.

DC: Would the leaders be working for the foreman, or . . .

LC: They were working for the foreman, but they'd move around to different—because at one time we had lots of apprentices, during the wartime.

DC: So were you working around a whole lot of other apprentices during that time? Or were you with people who already knew how to do the machines?

LC: At that time, I don't think it was—we had anyone—the only ones that knew how to do the machines were usually the leaders. They knew the machines, because they had a whole bunch—during the war they just brought them all in, to teach us. And so we had leaders. But then, later on, say the leader had to build a fixture or something. Well then he had a couple of apprentices working with him. And then each one of the apprentices would do the job that the leader wanted done. It was something on the lathe, you'd go and make something on the lathe. Or if it was the shaper, you needed to make something for the machine that you're building for the bomber plant, or whatever. So you were responsible. He'd tell you what to make, and give you the blueprint, and you'd go and have to make the part.

DC: So how easy was it to learn these jobs?

LC: Well, I guess it was—some people picked it right up, because I know I had a friend whose Dad had a shop—a jobbing shop on the side—and he'd come in there and he could run anything, of course. But for me, I didn't even fix my bicycle. So it was kind of tough for me to get started, you know.

DC: Did you ever think about giving it up?

LC: Never. Because that was my livelihood. I had to keep my nose to the grindstone.

DC: Did you enjoy it?

LC: Oh yeah—well, I say I enjoyed it. I ended up enjoying it a lot. But early on, they even had put me in for a foreman, early on, and that kind of made me feel kind of good. But I wasn't the one picked. I mean they picked three or four other people, and of course he picked another one for a foreman. But things like that kind of encouraged me on.

DC: When was it that they considered you for a foreman?

LC: I couldn't tell you that.

DC: Was it pretty early?

LC: Well, I thought it was kind of early on compared with the rest of them around there. It may not have been my ability to make the perfect part, but it might have been my determination to conquer the job, I would think probably.

DC: Well anyone who could sell newspapers until ten or eleven at night had some perseverance.

LC: Well you had to do your schoolwork in the morning before the first class. I was glad I had mathematics the first class because I could do my math. I seemed to be pretty good in math, and I could do enough of them to get by before the teacher called in the papers.

DC: You would have been starting this apprenticeship program right about the time that the union came in at Ford.

LC: Yes.

DC: Do you remember anything about the unionizing campaign here.

LC: It was in when I came.

DC: It was in, OK.

LC: 1940 was, whenever—they were striking at the Rouge whenever—the fellows stayed inside. They were locked in. Ford locked them in and they wouldn't go out. And if they went out, they couldn't come back. They were fired. See they fired everybody that left the plant. I remember in 1940, when my nephew and I went down to Detroit and watched them. We went around to the plant—just like—cars, lots of cars, went around, just watching and seeing the strikers and seeing what was going on down there, you know.

DC: What did you think about it all?

LC: I couldn't believe that those fellows would want to stay in there. They would see a union—somebody would run up to the window, maybe a woman even, run up to the window, give them some food or something, in the window that they had opened, or something. And those strikers that were inside—we thought that was quite amazing. We couldn't imagine—at that time you couldn't imagine why people would strike and stay in the plant, you know. You wondered what in the world is going on there? And then they kept saying that Ford wasn't going to give in, that all those people were fired, and all that.

DC: So when you went there, were you going . . .

LC: The union was already established.

DC: But when you would travel to watch all the goings-on at the Rouge, was it just a matter of curiosity for you, or were you actually interested in learning about the issues?

LC: No, no, it was curiosity.

DC: Curiosity, OK.

LC: I never thought—at that point I never even knew I was going to work at Ford's.

DC: OK. This is before you . . .

LC: This is before I even had an inkling that I'd ever get a job at Ford's.

DC: Were there many people who went over to watch the "entertainment"?

LC: Oh yeah. People were driving around there all the time. I imagine day and night they were circling the plant, just to see what's going on.

DC: So do you remember any similar activity at the Ford plant here in Ypsilanti?

LC: I didn't even care. I didn't know anything about that. Yeah I didn't—I wasn't interested, because I didn't—I mean, it was *here*. [laughs]

DC: You would travel to faraway lands . . .

LC: Well, that was a curiosity thing. That was something that was—that was really a historical thing, now that you think about it. That was very historical. And to think that you were able to see people, really, like run up to the window and give them food and stuff inside the window so that they could stay inside. It's kind of . . .

DC: Do you remember any of your friends, or fellow apprentices, ever serving in the war? In World War II? Did you ever get drafted?

LC: I was put in what they called [noise intervenes]. I was doing government work, so I wasn't drafted early on, and I was married at a young age.

DC: When did you get married?

LC: I was married in 1942, '43? 1943, I think, the first time. I've been married twice. I was married for about nine years the first time—1943 I was married. Although I didn't have any children until 1945. My first son came in about 1945. But by 1945 they were not taking parents that had children. So I wasn't in that. But whenever the war was over—1946 or '47, I think it was—they called me down to Detroit again. Well I went down to Detroit then, and they gave me a 4-FL classification—limited service classification, at that time.

DC: This was when the war was over.

LC: The war was mostly over, and they didn't take me in because they were filled up with limited service people.

DC: It sounds like before your son was born, your work was considered important enough that you were exempt.

LC: Oh yes.

DC: Right, OK. So being in that kind of defense industry work, OK. What did you end up working—once you learned how to run those machines, what did you end up working on?

LC: I was on the bench, building fixtures and dies, making dies and building fixtures. And also, the production plant here in Ypsi had different lines they were running. I actually took care of a line to make sure that everything on that line, like the welders and the dies, or the presses and the dies, and all like that—the dies in there was the toolmakers' job. The presses, if they went down, that was a machine repair job. But the dies I would take care of, and the welding fixtures, which would get all out of shape. And I had to take care of those. And that whole line was sort of—that was part of my responsibility, but also I was a leader in the tool room. So whatever assignment I had to do was what the foreman had assigned me to do. I was subject to go anywhere, in what they call the new plant and the old plant, anywhere they sent me that was my job.

DC: Wherever there was a problem to be solved.

LC: Right.

DC: That sounds like it would be varied and challenging.

LC: Oh yeah. Always.

DC: Different tasks every day. Do you remember what the parts were being manufactured for during the war? What they were eventually going into?

LC: [long pause] I did know, but you know, I haven't thought of that in a long time. I haven't. I can't—they were, I just can't think of what they were going into.

DC: What did you like best about that particular job? [some confusion] During WWII, when you were in charge of . . .

LC: The fixtures and stuff?

DC: What did you like best about that work?

LC: Well of course, the finished thing, to see it work. It's like conquering something, you know. I know I can do it, especially when you didn't get all the cooperation that you thought you were going to get, but yet you finished it anyway. You got your fixture going. It did what it was supposed to do, or your die performed what it was supposed to do. It's exhilarating. You kind of have a high head, you know, you feel great. "I *did* that. I *did* that!"

DC: You mentioned that you didn't always get the cooperation that you thought you were going to get. What did you mean by that?

LC: Well, sometimes you needed certain parts, and you'd go to a person that you'd think should be responsible for it—they didn't always get you that part. Then you had to go someplace else to get the information, and do it yourself. Certain things like that.

DC: So why would people not have the parts for you?

LC: Because they didn't think it was their job. In fact, this one fellow said, "That's why we gave it to you, so you could get it." And so, you see you either find a way to get it, or you make it, and that's the way it is. And so we had to go and make it.

DC: So why do you suppose there was that kind of animosity? Why did people not want to help you out?

LC: That there, it's just like—I don't know—if I can think of something. I don't want—because all of the people you deal with aren't that way.

DC: Sure.

LC: This is like, if you were an engineer, and you assigned this job to the tool room, and there's certain parts that have to be special-made, and you think that they can have that special made sent in with the job so that you can do it, because this is a crucial thing, and then they say, "Oh no, we can't do that. That's why we turned it over to the tool room. You guys go ahead and do whatever you can do. You're the ones who got this job now." To me, the responsibility, if you want to see this job completed, if you want the work completed the way you want it to be, and you're in charge of the engineering part of this thing, you want it to come out right. So you give all the help you can to do this. Well sometimes they're very lax. They were very lax on that.

DC: Was the laxness from management then?

LC: Well yes, I would consider that was lax. Now management might have come down—if his boss knew what was going on, he might have said, "Do it! Get it for him!" But you don't like to go higher whenever you can do it if you have to. I mean it's kind of a thing, you know. I don't want to blame things on management, because a lot of times you get a whole lot of cooperation from them, you know. It's just occasionally, you really need something bad, and it doesn't work.

DC: I wasn't trying to make a blanket generalization.

LC: I don't want to make a case out of it either, because it was due to the conditions.

DC: I was just trying to figure out what were some of the . . .

LC: Pitfalls?

DC: Yeah, pitfalls of the job. Can you think of any other pitfalls in that job?

LC: Well, it was like this particular thing that I'm talking about. I had to go to a quality control engineer there, and I was talking to him about—what it was is bending a pipe, so that you could feed sleeves through, and to bend it so there's no constant—any stoppage of it. It goes, nice and slides right through like that. Because it has to feed into a machine with a pin coming in through it, into the sleeve, and then push it into the generator, or the starter—I think it was the starter. And then you push it into the place. And this tube needed to be bent, so of course I went to the engineer and asked him if he had any ideas. And he says, "No that's why we gave it to you. You've got the job. Do it!" So then I had to go to a quality control engineer, and I said, "Is there any way that we can get some fluid that will fit in this pipe and freeze in there so we can bend the pipe without getting anything in there?" And he come up with it right away, and so that's what we went and did. And the job was completed.

DC: Some cooperated and some just. . .

LC: Just pushed you off.

DC: Said "Deal with it."

LC: Well it wasn't his job to do this. You know, he could have said, "Go see the engineer on the job." So this is one thing where I was really stuck, because I knew that if you bent a pipe, if you did bend a pipe, you're going to have some places that are not going to be just exactly right, and things like that—tubes or a pipe, or anything like that. I knew there had to be some way—and this was early on, when I didn't have too much to go by.

DC: You learned on the job.

LC: You learned on the job. Well that's the way it's always been. I've always had to learn on the job.

DC: So were you even aware of the presence of the union in the plant at that point in time? Did you interact at all with . . .

LC: Well I had run for committee—not during the war.

DC: I was thinking about during the war.

LC: No, not during the war, I wasn't involved with the union, other than I'd go to all the union meetings.

DC: What was it like at the union meetings?

LC: Well, there's always somebody had a gripe, and they'd start arguing about their gripe: "The company should do this," and "The company should do that," and so forth like that.

DC: Do you remember any specific gripes?

LC: No I can't. They would get discussing—but a lot of times we accomplished things that we set out for, places where they needed—that was mostly what they did, is find out what was going on: "My foreman doesn't do this," or something like that you know. "My committeeman, I went and called him and he wouldn't do anything," you know. This is the thing that went on. So later after the war, though, I ran for committeeman, and I got it, and I was on for awhile.

DC: Do you remember when you ran for committeeman?

LC: 19-probably—all I can do is just think back, when certain things happen. I can't remember exactly, whether it was '51 or'50, maybe even '52, somewhere in that area.

DC: OK, in that range.

LC: And I think—I went to the FDR-CIO camp, and got training there to be a committeeman.

DC: Where was that camp?

LC: At Port Huron.

DC: Do you remember what the training was like? What did they do when you went there for training to be a committeeman?

LC: Well they told how you had to give and take, you know, certain things you give and take. We went through a regular course, like you would talk to management, you know, and they'd give you a specific question of this man being picked on, or something like that, and what do you do. And the foreman says, "Well he hasn't done anything. He isn't keeping up with his production." And things like that. You go through what you have to do to satisfy both the company and the man too.

DC: How long was the training?

LC: I think we were there for just a week.

DC: Did all committeemen go to the training camp, or was that something that you chose to do?

LC: That was a volunteer sort of thing, at the time.

DC: We'll talk about that in a second, let's see, you finished your apprenticeship in 1945.

LC: '46.

DC: '46, OK. Did your job change at all after you completed your apprenticeship, or did you just get more money? How did that work?

LC: I just got more money. I was already—by that time I was already working with a leader, and I was taking responsibility for some of the dies that were going down. There are a lot of presses at the Ypsi plant—you can tell, I lost my hearing out of it.

DC: So it was loud in there?

LC: It was loud. They had a lot of presses in there, so you were responsible to change punches on the dies and do all that stuff. And if the punch broke, and you don't have another one, go make one, or whatever you had to do to maintain the production process and so forth. So if you had to buy one, you'd write a requisition, and "req" one out.

End of Tape I, Side A

Begin Tape I, Side B

DC: The question I was thinking of was what made you decide to run for committeeman?

LC: Oh, I don't know. I suppose—the only reason, I worked all over the plant, and I got to know lots of people, and they said, someone probably suggested it, "Why don't you run for committee?" And so I did. There's nothing I had—I wasn't trying to *get* anybody or anything, you know. I wasn't. I just thought that maybe I could do a good job representing the people. I thought that I was kind of fair-minded, and I could probably do a good job to do that. And evidently I had enough people on my side that voted me in.

DC: Do you remember how many people were running for committeeman that time?

LC: Quite a lot of them. I don't know. I don't remember, no.

DC: So did you—was committeeman a full-time job? Did you continue with your regular job while you were a committeeman?

LC: No.

DC: OK, you were just a committeeman.

LC: Yeah, committeeman, and we dealt with the company all the time.

DC: So how was it being a committeeman?

LC: Well it was enjoyable, because you'd go talk to the people who had the problem, and lots of time just by talking to the foreman, and talking to the person, you could get it settled, and like that. Of course a few times, whenever they really had a bad problem—one time, one particular time I can remember, the line went down because the people—I can't even remember what the fault was, but the line went down and the people had a *legitimate* reason for not working on the line. I mean, I can't exactly remember what it was. Oh, I know, they had run the line up too fast, and they couldn't keep up. That was it. They had increased the speed of the line, and they couldn't keep up. So these people said, "We can't keep up!" So they all stopped working. So it was a stoppage. And so we talked to management, and we said, "Well let's go back to where the time study had been prior to the speedup, and start over again and re-study, re-time-study this line to make sure that the time study is accurate." And management would have nothing to do with it. He said, "No, we've had it in there for a couple weeks or so, and we feel that they can make this amount, and so we're not budging on it." And so, in order—because it was a crucial part—so in order to run that line, they turned it on and they had the foremen work on the line, and do whatever they could do to keep the—so there wouldn't be a complete stoppage. And so at that particular point it was interesting because I got a time watch and timed it out, and wrote down the hours that they put in, doing these different jobs. So I time-studied them, and so this was part of the agreement. So they did slow the line down somewhat. They did increase the production, but they didn't increase it as much as they had prior to that.

DC: OK. All right.

LC: I don't know whether what I did did it. But they saw me out there checking all this line to see if even the foremen could perform as fast as they wanted. So that was one of those things that was interesting. But that was a challenge.

DC: Yeah. Sure. Did you get to compare your time study information with . . .

LC: Oh, they wouldn't give me theirs.

DC: They wouldn't give you theirs.

LC: No.

DC: Did you ever try to get theirs?

LC: Well, I probably did. I don't remember just exactly. I think I tried to compare them, but they wouldn't give me theirs to look at. They wouldn't.

DC: So how would they try to convince you that the time studies that they conducted were accurate?

LC: Well, they had time-study people all over the place, so it was—I don't even recall any more other than that the chairman—our chairman—went in and negotiated and said, "We're slowing that line down, and we have a time study against your time study." And so they just slowed it down a little bit. That's all. I mean they gave a little bit, and we gave a little bit. And the people went back to work.

DC: What did you think about the time studies? Did you watch the engineers conducting the time studies, or the time study technicians?

LC: Oh yeah.

DC: How did that work?

LC: They'd stand by the line, you know, and you had a regular—how far you reach—and if there's any—and sometimes they'd say, "they reached further than they had to, and therefore it was an inherent delay"—and they'd take that off. It was quite amazing how they'd do all that, you know.

DC: How long would they study a job?

LC: Oh, I think every job had a certain amount what the company wanted studied. I mean, they would set up the study and then the time-study man would go back, and he'd figure it all out, and say how much could be done. And the company would say, "We want to look it over and see if they needed it." But sometimes they'd have two studies. In other words, they'd have two different people study it.

DC: How would workers find out what the results of the time study were?

LC: They wouldn't know it until they jacked up the line and they'd start running.

DC: And if the workers were confused or upset about it, would they go to you, the committeeman?

LC: Oh yeah. "They're still running that line faster than they should." You heard that all the time.

DC: Now would you file formal grievances?

LC: Yes, if they requested a grievance, I'll say, "You want to write a grievance on that?" And they'd say yes or no. "No, I don't want to get my boss mad," or "Yes, I'll sign a grievance on that." I mean, you can see where these people could be pinpointed out if they signed grievances against the company and everybody else on the line says, "Oh, we can do it."

You just had to use all that—you'd have to go through and figure out what the people were going to do.

DC: Sure. Yeah. Do you remember other cases that stand out in your mind?

LC: Oh yeah. We had a case—I don't think I should give names, though.

DC: That's fine. You don't have to give names.

LC: OK, this lady, she was in this department. She was working on this machine, got a hammer out and started beating on the machine. They couldn't hardly stop her. They had to retain [restrain] her, and then they took her to first aid. Called her husband, had her taken home, and told him that he'd better have her checked out by the doctor. And she was off of work for over a year. Then the doctor approved her to go back to work, but the company wouldn't put her back to work. Said, "No, there's still something wrong with her." So we went to the umpire—you know there was an umpire between the union and the company—so we went to the umpire on it to get her back to work. The umpire ruled against the company, so they took her—they did go back and they did take her back to work. And she wasn't in there two weeks and they had her back out again.

DC: Really? What did she do?

LC: I don't know what she did a second time. I think her husband just committed her. But at that particular time, she—the umpire requested her; we took her right before the umpire, questioned her.

DC: Were you there that day?

LC: Yeah.

DC: What kinds of questions did the umpire ask? Do you remember?

LC: Not particularly, no.

DC: What was the case that you were trying to present that day?

LC: The case . . .

DC: for her . . .

LC: . . . that she had talked to more than one doctor. I mean there had been more than one doctor OK'd her. And the doctor in the plant, he was the one who questioned the fact that the doctors were doing it. And she had all these papers saying that she was able to go back to work. I didn't present it. See, we had a union lawyer that presented it. And he knew just exactly how to present it.

DC: Right.

LC: And of course, the umpire didn't rule while we were there, either. We didn't get the ruling until a week later. So we didn't know. But I was in listening to both sides—what the company were saying, what the union was saying. And I know at the time I thought our lawyer, for the union, presented a real nice case.

DC: Was that lawyer for the union from the national office? Or the regional office?

LC: Yes, from the national office.

DC: And where did they hold that hearing?

LC: It was in Detroit. I don't remember the exact place, but it was in Detroit. But of course we had several other ones to present besides that one.

DC: What were the other ones about?

LC: I can't remember, but that one, you asked me—that one stands out in my mind. There was probably—we probably had ten or twelve grievances that day. I think—I don't remember how it came out other than that particular one, and I know that our lawyer presented a very good case, and we won it. And you know all those were written up, written up for the future. So we got the umpire's opinions. And this is the thing that we used for—you know, had it in the book—for all the umpires' opinions. So we could go through the book and see if somebody had a grievance. We could look through the umpires' opinions and say, "Well we could . . .

DC: So you could get a sense of what the ruling might be?

LC: What you could win and what you couldn't win. And if they really had a grievance or it was just a complaint.

DC: How long were you a committeeman?

LC: About three years or so.

DC: And how many of your cases ended up going to the umpire? Do you have any idea?

LC: No.

DC: Was it just a few? Or a lot?

LC: [Pause] I really can't tell you, because, I mean I'd write the grievance to the best of my ability, you know, and if the chairman and all of us decided this was a case that we could take to the umpire, we would. You don't take every case to the umpire. What you do is you try to settle it within the plant. In fact, we'd go in with a few cases into the company, and

we'd say 'this is what we've got.' And they'd say 'this is what we're going to answer for that,' you know, and discuss it. You'd discuss the case, and they'd give you the answer that they thought, and then you'd give what you thought. "Are we going to proceed, or are we going to just drop this case because of 'no merit.'" We'd do that. So you'd really . . .

DC: How often were you able to settle things?

LC: Well we had a certain time schedule, but I can't remember what it was. I mean once every two weeks, or something of that nature. I can't remember exactly.

DC: I'm just trying to get a sense of how easily you were able to resolve these problems.

LC: Well, some of these problems we could take right away. If it was an emergency, we'd go right to the management right now, you know, and get it settled—like that one on the line speed. We went to management right away. "This is where we stand, and we're going to stay with it," you know. And so this is the thing we're doing, and this is the way it's going to happen.

DC: Did you like being a committeeman?

LC: Yeah, I liked it.

DC: What about it did you like?

LC: I don't really know. I guess I like talking to people and feeling a part of it, you know, a part of the organization. I felt more a part of the company then than I did when I was even working on the line. It'd give you a sense, a feeling that you're *doing* something, you know, something for people, I guess.

DC: Did you choose not to run again?

LC: No, I was defeated.

DC: Defeated. So what did you do after that?

LC: I went back to the tool room. No problem there. I went back, to work. And soon after that, soon after I had gone back to work—well it was not soon—about a year after I went back to work, they offered me a foreman's job.

DC: So that's when they offered you the foreman's job. OK. I think you told me about that. You said that someone else got the job? Is that how it worked out?

LC: No. This here was a foreman's job on production. I got that job.

DC: Oh, you got the foreman's job.

LC: Oh yeah.

DC: OK, so you were a foreman then?

LC: Yeah, I was a foreman for about another three years. And then I went back to the hourly.

DC: Well, tell me about being a foreman?

LC: [Laughs for a few seconds]

DC: What was it like to be a foreman?

LC: Well, what was it like to be a foreman? I thought I was doing one great job. But there again, too, here's—my boss was a guy I had bowled with, and I had done everything with, you know. When it came to being your boss, he was kind of difficult. He was difficult. And—I mean I felt—I thought I really had the job under control. But he was always down and messing around with my job, and I just couldn't take it.

DC: What kind of messing around would he do?

LC: Well . . . [hesitates]

DC: We don't know who he is, so . . .

LC: Yeah, all right. Well, we had tumblers. We had a bunch of tumblers, and they were kept—do you know what tumblers are?

DC: No, I don't.

LC: There are parts that has sharp—when they come out of the press there are sharp edges and so forth—and you have to—they tumble them in grit and so forth.

DC: Sort of like polishing rocks?

LC: Yeah, polishing rocks, so that they fit on the lines. And you do lots of them. We had three tumblers, and things like that. And this line over here wanted certain parts. This line over here wanted certain parts. And I couldn't do all of them at the same time, but I'd do a few of these and a few of these, and keep all the lines going as best I could.

DC: So you had to tumble parts for each of these different lines?

LC: All these different lines. OK. And it takes a long time to tumble parts in order to get it off, because you've just got grit rubbing like this [makes a rubbing motion]. About the time that I went about—this time they would say, "I need parts," and I'd say, "Well, we've got them in the tumbler. We'll see how long it'll take." I'd go over there and I'd find that there's none in there. They'd been dumped out and something else had been put in there. And this

line is going down [voice rises, in exasperation—laughing]. It was supposed to have been tumbled, and the tumbler—I asked the guy that's doing the tumbling for me, I say, "Why did you take those out?" "Your boss told me to take them out!" He said, "Put this in here. I got to have this right away." He didn't come to me. He told him to take them out of there.

DC: So you had a . . .

LC: Yeah, I had a timing [increased volume for emphasis], I had a timing plan I had to abide by. It was things like that. And then, here, this line goes down.

DC: Would he get upset then when that line would go down?

LC: My boss? Oh yeah [loudly], he was upset! I says, "Well I sent them over enough parts for this time, and they said they haven't got any parts." So he'd go over there, and he says, "Well, you give them some hours, and we'll sort the parts that they got over—some of these weren't right." So they got the parts. And then I'd have to take some hours from my people—and I only had a few people, but I had a lot of jobs to take care of. And he would do that. Then I'd take some hours off—and of course they'd keep track of your production, how many men you have, and how many hours you're using, and your production line. And so I'd lose hours on that, see? And I still—some way or another, I was going to pick up those hours, so some way—on another job, like your press has run so many, so much, why I could do a little overage, you know, and store those for a little bit, so that I could cover for some of this time that was lost, you know, and so forth like that. Well it came to a time—what really—what really ended my feeling of ever—I kept telling my wife at that time, "This job is just getting to me. I just can't take this anymore, this way that they're doing this." But we had some fiber parts now—the dies would punch out a bunch of fiber parts, different sizes, the same die—only it would feed through and it would make them smaller and smaller and smaller. OK, when you got down to the smallest ones, probably half of those were scrap, or what they would call offal. About half of them were scrap or offal. And we'd get in there and we'd pull that out and start sorting some of those out in there, and one day he said, he says, "I want you to keep track of all of those parts that should be in there in that offal there, and I want you to save more of those parts." Well it was impossible to do that, and I told him that. And that was the end. I says, "That's it." I had already—one day he told me, like during the lunch hour, no, the last of the day, the end of the day, the afternoon shift will follow—well we got, we said everybody should take care of their part. Now I had a die-setter that set a die, you know, and sometimes you had to set these dies in a hurry, and get it ready for the next shift, so that they could go ahead and start running parts right away. Because you might be short down on the line or something. So we discussed about it, everybody putting their own tools away, their own blocks, and everything, away. You had to block up these dies sometimes, to certain heights, and put a screw in to hold the dies in place. Well, it came to just before the late shift was coming in, and there's a die that needed to be taken out and another die put in so that the night shift could get started right away, because the parts were short. OK, I have this die-setter doing that, and he says, "Well, it's going to run overtime." And I says, "Well, we got to get that die in there. You do the best you can. Get it in there." So he gets it all in there and everything, but the bell had rang, and he spent about five minutes or ten minutes extra there. And he took off, and

he left a block, that he didn't take away. And my boss came down, "I want you to reprimand that guy! Reprimand him! He wasn't supposed to leave that block there!" [Loud voice] I says, "Miley [sp?], you can go to hell!" So I took him up to the—we both went up to the—he says, "I'm going to have to take you in to the boss!"

DC: So he wanted to reprimand you.

LC: Yeah. They wanted to reprimand me.

DC: Yeah, right. OK.

LC: Because he left a block.

DC: Yeah, yeah. The guy who stayed overtime.

LC: The guy had even spent overtime.

DC: So what happened then?

LC: What happened? I just waited another, little while, and just turned in my resignation, and went back to the tool room.

DC: That day?

LC: No, not that day.

DC: OK, a little while, a few days.

LC: I had to think about it awhile. I thought about it awhile.

DC: What was it like when you went to meetings?—you must have gone to some meetings with your boss, and the plant manager, and stuff like that . . .

LC: The only thing his boss said, he said, "You two guys have got to get along." That's all he would tell him. He didn't say right or wrong. He just said, "You two guys have got to get along."

DC: Do you know if this guy had a history of having trouble?

LC: Oh, everybody!

DC: OK, so it wasn't just you.

LC: Oh no, no.

DC: So at those meetings, would he try to place blame on you, for instance, for production totals in the department?

LC: Well, not in any meetings that I was in.

DC: OK, not when you were present.

LC: Not when I was present.

DC: It sounds like this guy was the real obstacle to being a good foreman.

LC: He was—he didn't help me any. But I still had a pretty good—I had a good record as far as getting my people, and the productivity of it, I had a good record. Of course it would go up and down, like this here [arm motions], but you come across the middle where the center line was supposed to be, and my people were just above that.

DC: What would be the reasons for the ups and downs?

LC: Well, because every day I couldn't make production because some of it is in the end product. And I don't get credit for it until the end product is done.

DC: Until it's out of the shop?

LC: Yeah.

DC: OK. How were your relations with your workers while you were the foreman?

LC: Most of them were very friendly, very good, but—in fact, we went to some meetings about how you're supposed to treat your employees, and they said, "Don't have anything to do with them outside of the plant." Don't do this. Don't do that.

DC: That was your foreman training?

LC: This was foreman training. I said, "You're crazy. That isn't the way you do it." I was a little—I had my own thoughts, you know.

DC: Were you friends with some of the people you were supervising?

LC: Oh yeah. But I never really associated outside the plant. But just the fact that they told me I couldn't made me mad. And I didn't feel that that was right either. You know, because I bowl, and I do all these different things, and I'd bowl with them, you know. I mean, what kind of crap is that!

DC: So they'd be on your team or other teams?

LC: Sure. Good friendly relationship. Right.

DC: So what else do you remember from your foreman training? What else did they tell you?

LC: Well you know, I went through—there again, I went through about a year of training and different courses that I took in foreman training.

DC: So you were a foreman for about three years, and one of those years you were being trained all the time. But do you remember anything in particular that they taught you?

LC: At this age, no I don't.

DC: OK.

LC: I never thought you'd want to know about foreman. I probably could think about it awhile. Like when you asked me this, I tried to find some of my things that happened. They had a picture of me in the—as the Red Feather Drive for the union, you know. And they had the management.

DC: What's the Red Feather Drive?

LC: Red Feather is United Way. Well this is before—and I was in on getting the people to sign up for taking so much out of their pay rather than donate one particular amount. I also was in on blood banks. I was working with the Red Cross. And when the Red Cross would come to get blood, I was on the Blood Bank.

DC: Was that even true back in the 1950s? Or was that more recent?

LC: That was whenever they started, and I don't recall when that first started.

DC: But you were very involved.

LC: I was always involved in something of that nature, besides working in the plant.

DC: What did your wife do? You said that you were married for nine years . . .

LC: First wife?

DC: First wife through '52. What did she do during those years?

LC: Well, she did a little bit of everything. She sold Avon Products. We sold—I also helped her—we sold different things that bordered on a dollar a week in the village, Willow village over there. All different kinds of merchandise. You could buy just about anything. And what else did she do? I think she worked for a day or two at Bell Telephone. And she worked . . .

DC: Why only a day or two?

LC: She didn't like it. Like I say, she sold Avon, and merchandise, and Sarah Coventry jewelry. She had parties, you know. They have parties and have people—give them a present, and have people sign up to buy certain jewelry.

DC: And how many children did you have?

LC: I had two by her, and then I had two by the second wife.

DC: And how did you work out the care for the children with your first wife?

LC: Most of the time.

DC: Most of the time you worked it out? What do you mean?

LC: I did it. [laughing]

DC: You did it. So you'd be in charge when you weren't at work?

LC: Pardon?

DC: Who cared for them? That's what I was wondering?

LC: I did most of the caring for them.

DC: You did.

LC: When we got divorced, I was given custody of them. The first two.

DC: How about when they were very young? The first was born in '45, right?

LC: Yeah, right. Well, I would leave them with her—her Mother. And then I'd pick them up when I got out of work.

DC: OK, so they'd stay with her Mother.

LC: And then she was gone someplace. I don't know where.

DC: But you divorced, and you were given custody.

LC: Yeah.

DC: And so how did you make things work? You had two young children.

LC: Well my Mother stayed with me then—after the divorce my Mother come and took care of the kids, babysat my kids. And kept me on the straight and narrow.

DC: So she was, you say, taking care of kids her whole life . . .

LC: And she had taken care of mine too.

DC: And how long did she do that?

LC: At two different intervals.

DC: Right. OK.

LC: Because I tried to take my wife back, after we divorced. She came back, and [iffy, whiny voice] you know, 'I'm going to do this. I'm going to do that.' Uh uh. I tried it. It didn't work. Should have stayed the way it was, but—and then, see the divorce wasn't completely through—see, you're getting a lot of information! The divorce wasn't completely through, and she wanted to come back. OK, she come back. So that extended that period of time that we were divorced to a longer time. So the second time she decides, "Oh, I'll divorce him, and I'll get married again, and I'll have these kids. I'll get the kids away from him." But it didn't work that way. It happened to work that she got married before the final papers were divorced—so she was a bigamist [laughing].

DC: This would have been in the 1950s, right?

LC: Yeah, that would be in the '50s, right. This is all during the time I was going through the apprenticeship too.

DC: Your apprenticeship was during WWII, wasn't it?

LC: Yeah. But it also . . .

DC: It started during then . . .

LC: I was married to her in '42. I was having some fun with her—a lot of problems—and I was having problems with the company—I mean trying to get my apprenticeship.

DC: But you weren't divorced until the early '50s, I think. Is that right?

LC: I was divorced in '51, I think it was.

DC: I was just trying to follow things. Well, one of the reasons I ask—I'm not trying to pry, but I know that it's really hard sometimes to juggle parenting with work. And that's a problem that a lot of people think was invented in the last couple years.

LC: No! I can vouch for that!

DC: That's why I'm asking.

LC: Here's another thing too, see. My Mother-in-law and Father-in-law would take care of the kids for me even after that if I wanted them too, because I was very good—I was like a son to them I guess, because they treated me really nice. And she was out wherever, you know. But this was the reason that I probably took her back, after we got the first divorce, you know.

DC: Because her parents had been so . . .

LC: So good. Yeah. I was still friendly with all her family. I mean I was—but this is another thing, see.

DC: It's interesting to me to hear how you managed to make things work.

LC: I worked it between my family and her family, and I was able to . . .

DC: Did your Mom come live in your house? Or did you take the kids to her place?

LC: Yes. Yes. She came to my house.

DC: And you said she kept you on the straight and narrow.

LC: Yeah. She kept me on the straight and narrow. I didn't do much besides go to work and take care of my kids, because my Mother went to church every night. So I would have my kids all evening long, and like that. And I would have to find things for them to do, and like that. But one thing about my kids, they were very good. They didn't get in a lot of trouble.

DC: That's good. So, getting back to the end of your career as a foreman, you went back then . . .

LC: Tool room.

DC: To the tool room, OK. And what was it like going back to that job after having been a foreman?

LC: Well, it wasn't hard. I knew what I had to do, and it wasn't hard to do that. But who do you suppose came over and wanted a job done because he had a business on the outside and he wanted a part made?

DC: Mmmm. Sounds like your former boss.

LC: Right. Put his hand on my back, and says—my nickname was "Lucky," and he says, "Lucky, I got to have this part."

DC: And how did you feel when he did that?

LC: I felt like hitting him right in the mouth. But I did it, and made him a part, and got him out of the way. I thought, well, if I've got to eat this a little bit, I will. I'll get by.

DC: That sounds stressful.

LC: [Laughs] I could have just as easy grabbed a hammer and hit him, or hit him with a hand, but I didn't. I just . . .

DC: Who was the next foreman? Who took your place?

LC: Oh, I don't think they really replaced me. They just moved him from another department.

DC: So you were back in your same job, and your former boss tormented you. Did the specific responsibilities that you had change at all? Or was it pretty similar to when you worked there before?

LC: I was transferred right back in to my leader's job.

DC: So can you remember anything interesting about that stage of your career?

LC: You mean how the people reacted to me coming back?

DC: Sure, that—that would be interesting.

LC: I was always friendly with almost all of them. I was [laughs] friendly with all of them, and see, I was there until '41, through the '30s, and like that, and again I was taking care of the blood bank, and doing the Community Chest, and all that sort of stuff.

DC: Let's see if I can figure this out now. Were you a foreman in the mid-1950s?

LC: Between 1951 and 1954 or'5, I'm not sure.

DC: OK, and then you went back to being in the . . .

LC: Tool room.

DC: Tool room. OK.

LC: Until 1956 or '7, or something like that. I can't . . .

DC: We're close here. You probably could narrow it down if you had to. But that's good enough for now. I just wanted to know in general where we are. Do you remember either of the big recessions in the '50? There was one in '54, and one in '58? I've talked to others who said that there were a lot of layoffs in those years? Did that ever affect you?

LC: Yes. Mm hmm.

DC: How did that affect you?

LC: Well it affected me—'58 I think it was, probably. In that area. I can't tell if that's the same date. But what happened to me is that I went to work at a jobbing shop on the outside.

DC: Were you laid off?

LC: Yeah.

DC: You were laid off.

LC: I was laid off for two weeks, I think. A couple of times I was laid off. But anytime I got laid off I got another job. I think—I don't remember if it was '58 or whenever—but one time I worked at, in Ann Arbor, at Argus. I worked I think about two weeks at Argus, and I went in there and started working twelve hours a day for the two weeks. And then I had to quit, to go back to Ford's.

DC: You got called back?

LC: Yeah.

DC: OK, all right. Did—let's see, I'm trying to figure this out—when there were layoffs, did the layoffs hit skilled workers the same as they would hit line workers?

LC: Uh, as I recall—see some of those I don't recall too much about because I wasn't laid off. Just the one that I recall, where I was—there might have been two, but I don't recall the times. I mean, it's gone. I can remember what I did, but I can't remember the particular time. But I always got another job whenever I was laid off. I had to work. I figured I had to keep going.

DC: When you were back in the tool room after having been a foreman, were you involved at all with the local union at that point?

LC: The whole time?

DC: What was your involvement? I guess the blood bank and things like that.

LC: I was the Sergeant-at-Arms for the Union for quite a long time. Early on, that was before I became a committeeman.

DC: What exactly did the Sergeant-at-Arms do?

LC: Nothing. [laughs]

DC: [laughs]

LC: All are you supposed to do is if there are any fights, to break up the fights.

DC: At the union meetings?

LC: It was just—actually , it seemed like just part of the union, that's all. Just something to be voted on. I was on that quite a few years. I don't remember how many. But I was Sergeant-at-Arms before I become—early on, see you're talking about early on in the union, and I put down [on paper] some of the people.

DC: Oh you did.

LC: Some of the people that was early on that I remember. I remember early on committeemen: [spellings are suspect] there was Ted Toler, Gabe French, Bill Bristol, Bill White, Jack Russell, Jim Burwell. That was early on.

DC: Are any of those people still around?

LC: Uh, no. Uh, I think all of them are passed away. And then I remember the presidents of the union. There was Larry Hussey [sp?]. He's still around.

DC: He is?

LC: Larry Hussey is still around. George [?] is passed away. Ralph [?] is passed away. They were presidents of the union. Well Ralph wasn't. Ralph was the Financial Secretary. George was the President.

DC: Did you—I'm thinking about the 1950s here—did you ever pay attention to what was going on with the national UAW?

LC: You mean early on after—in the '50s. Oh yeah. I went to quite a few meetings down at "the Glass House," they call it. I went to meetings down there, and we decided on who was going to be—what do they call it—my brain is kind of leaving me now.

DC: That's OK. Do you want to take a break, or are you OK?

LC: I'm OK. I just can't seem to think.

DC: That's OK.

LC: I have to think awhile nowadays for these things. National negotiator. You'd pick your negotiator. I was down there and we voted for who we wanted to negotiate for the national contract. I was in on that a few times. I hadn't thought of that for a long time.

DC: Was the local union ever involved in local politics?

LC: [pause]

DC: This tape's about to run out.

LC: That will give me something to think of then.

DC: Well, we have a couple minutes to go and you can think [laughs].

LC: [Laughs] OK. In local politics, yes. The local union was quite involved with the Democratic Party. In fact, we became a member of the Democratic Party. I was a member for awhile. I remember joining it. Something—a light started to turn on about something I wanted to tell you, but I've forgotten. It passed as fast as it came [laughs]. Hmm. Oh, during the wartime, when we were on the union, one thing they did was make us all sign a pledge that we were not Communists.

DC: Did you know any Communists?

LC: I didn't know a Communist. That was just a name as far as I was concerned. Who was a Communist?

DC: Was that a condition for working in the plant?

LC: No. This was a Union, this was directly a Union—that you didn't belong to the Communist Party. I guess that must have been the era when McCarthy was doing his . . .

DC: It sounds like post-Taft-Hartley.

LC: Yes, and I remember signing a contract saying I was not a Communist. So that was something I thought that you might—maybe you heard that before.

DC: Sure, well there was a law passed saying that no union officers could be Communists. But I haven't talked to anyone about signing such a form. That's interesting. So did you stay in the tool room then? How long did you stay in the tool room when you went back?

LC: Until 1940—I mean until 1982, when I retired.

DC: Really. So you stayed in that tool room and did that job for a good twenty-five years or so.

LC: About.

DC: I mean after you were a foreman.

LC: I had forty-one and a half—well they took off a quarter of a year, or a half a year of my time for my apprenticeship.

DC: Held it against you, huh?!?

LC: You know what I was looking up? I was looking up to see if I could find where I signed my apprenticeship, and I was under 21, so I had to have my Mother sign it. I was 18 years old, and I had to have my Mother sign that I could go into the apprenticeship. I had that paper someplace, and I was going to bring it and show it to you.

DC: Well, if you find it, you have my phone number.

LC: I don't have your phone number.

DC: Well I'll give it to you. My work number is on the sheet of paper I just gave you. But I can give you my other number too. [mumbling about finding the paper] I have a few more questions here, if you have enough energy . . .

LC: Oh I've got a lot of energy.

DC: You're fine. OK. All right.

LC: We've covered quite a bit of what I wanted to talk about. I'll go ahead and switch this tape. [explains that it's about to run out, which it does]

End of Tape I, Side B

Begin Tape II, Side A

LC: . . . I hope you don't need it in the right order.

DC: Oh no, no, no, no, no.

LC: I've had a very interesting life, and I think—I just enjoy, almost, talking about it.

DC: Yeah.

LC: Great. The different things that I've done.

DC: What are some of the other things that you've enjoyed that you haven't told me about?

LC: [laughs]

DC: I don't mean to incriminate you [laughs].

LC: No, no. You probably could. Let's see. When you say it that way, I forget them. Let's see. What interesting—well, when I first was an apprentice—can I go back to that?

DC: Oh yes.

LC: Well when I was first an apprentice, we used to have a wagon—that we'd go down and eat off a wagon, you know, on afternoons, not days, I guess. Oh yeah, they had them on days. But you'd go down to this wagon—they had all the food on there. You'd buy a sandwich or whatever you want. And we had one fellow—he was a welder for the tool room—well, specific things. Well anyway, he was a welder, and he was always playing tricks on people. So one of the early things that happened to me when I was still an apprentice, we went down there, and I was standing in line, and he took a Coke bottle full of water and stuck it in my pocket upside down. This was one of the things that we went through. You pull it out, and all the water still comes out of it [laughing]. You whole leg is all wet. The sort of things like that he pulled on people.

DC: So did you guys pull pranks on each other? Did you get him back?

LC: No, I didn't try to get him back, because if you tried to get him back, he'd be planning something even better, more deceitful, you know. Another time, this fellow all the time come took his tobacco and filled his pipe full of tobacco all the time. And so he went and put some firecracker—he took the power out of the firecracker and mixed it with his tobacco. This kid—this guy's pipe blew right out of his mouth [laughing]. Things like that. Interesting things that go on in the plant, you know.

DC: Some characters in there.

LC: Yeah, oh yeah. But this one guy, he just wouldn't leave his tobacco alone. He warned him about three or four times.

DC: Were you not allowed to smoke in the plant?

LC: No, you weren't allowed to smoke in the plant till later on, years later, and this was later on he did this. That guy was in the plant for a long time as a welder. He was there for many years. But certain things like that, you had to learn—when you needed somebody to do something for you, you had to know you'd be on the good side of him—to help him, like a welder or something like that. Because he could really mess you up, if you needed something welded and he wouldn't do it.

DC: So that was part of your job then—you had to maintain good relations with these people who could help you get your work done.

LC: Oh yeah. You have to make good relations with them. This is different times—that's about it. Some of them would get so angry all the time. It seemed like they were in anger mood all the time. Now maybe they hated their job, and just hated coming to work. If you worked with them—sometimes you had to work with machine repair people. In fact, one time I was—they came out with a chart, tool and die makers, and machine repairs and so forth. And then they had a little line through there with about six guys on it—and it was tool and die makers with machine repair experience. And they put me in that category too. So I was

working with machine repair a lot of the times. And when I was a die maker, I did my die work, and sometimes I'd have to do machine repair—help. It was just sort of a help thing. It was like on a Saturday, when you didn't have any die work, or something like that—machine repair was back on the machines or something—they had to repair them before the Monday came in. And so they'd work a Saturday. And so I'd be eligible to go in there and work with the machine repair on something like that.

DC: Did you want to do that?

LC: Oh yeah. I wanted the overtime.

DC: Yeah, OK.

LC: I needed the money, you know.

DC: What was the money like? Were your wages . . .

LC: Oh great. I started out at 55 cents per hour.

DC: OK, in '41?

LC: In 1941. And the die makers at that time were making 75 or 80 cents an hour. And they were soon moved up to a dollar. And I was moved up to 65 cents. They were making a dollar, and I was making almost half of that.

DC: But you were still in training.

LC: I was still in training, and I was working twelve hours a day, time and a half—time and a half I might have been making a dollar an hour [laughs].

DC: Yeah, yeah. And trying to raise a family.

LC: Oh yeah.

DC: How about later in your career? Were you able to live comfortably with the wages that you made?

LC: [hesitates] Live comfortably—I think it was quite a few years before I started living fairly comfortably.

DC: When do you think that was?

LC: Probably in, well, end of the '70s. In the '70s. Because even early on, I mean you had to have a place for your family, so you tried to buy a house. But of course, houses at that time, you could get one pretty fair—$3000.

DC: Different now.

LC: I wouldn't sell you my house for $3000 [laughs]. Things are—it was really kind of rough. It was kind of rough running a family like that.

DC: And you were a skilled tradesman, so presumably you would be making more than a lot of the others.

LC: Well, skilled tradesmen, they're making more, but what can I say? I don't recall ever having a lot of money. All my money went, you know, it was all gone before—I didn't buy any extras or anything. I always had to have my family taken care of—clothes for the kids, go to school, things like that.

DC: When did you start your second family?

LC: 1954.

DC: Is that when you got married?

LC: I got married, yeah, '53, '54, just before that. Our first child was actually a little ahead of time [laughs]. But I've been married now forty-six years.

DC: Oh, OK, Congratulations.

LC: Yeah, we've been married for forty-six years. And there's another story—do you want to hear all these stories? Huh? My wife and I met at FDR-CIO camp. She was a librarian out of Detroit. And she had been divorced from her husband—she was very sad about it—and so they sent her to the FDR-CIO camp. Her boss thought she needed a change of being in the Detroit library system. So she went to the camp up at the FDR-CIO camp. I didn't know her when I first got there, but this other committee man that was up there with me, he says, "You've got to come and meet her. You've got to come meet this girl at the library." And so he took me over there and introduced me to her, and so we started playing ping pong together. Later on, she needed a ride to her home, which was in Roseville, which was on the way, and the guys I was with give her a ride to Roseville. She had a home there. She had been divorced, and she had her home yet. So we went in, and we had some pecan pie, and some coffee. And this guy I was with, says, "Well, why don't you take him home," to her. And she said, "Sure! I will." And so they went on, and I stayed around awhile, and we talked. Found out a little more about each other. Found out, you know, what our likes and dislikes were. So she brought me all the way to Ypsi, and drove back to Roseville by herself. And then—she knew I had—she met my family then, my Mother and my kids, everything. I had two kids at that time, so she kept coming back about every weekend to see me, or every other weekend, or sometime. And once in a while, I'd have to go in there, but I usually had so much to take care of my kids that I couldn't . . .

DC: Did she have children?

LC: No, she had no children, until I married her. Then she had a couple. And one of them is pretty high up in General Motors right now. My daughter. She's pretty high up.

DC: What is she doing there? What is her job with General Motors?

LC: I don't specifically know exactly, but she has a lot to do with the international part of it. So she's really got a job. And my other children, my son works for the State of Florida, and my other daughter, she just, she teaches school in Ohio. Teaches the little kids—it isn't schooling . . .

DC: Pre-school?

LC: Pre-school-like, yeah. And my other daughter works for a doctor. She's had quite a experience in the medical field, and she's working for a doctor, stuff like that. That's my children. My grandchildren are the ones I'm really proud of. All of them are graduating—I've got one that graduated from Michigan State University, and she works at a TV station up there. And I've got another one that graduated from Eastern Michigan. She's got an international business [degree]. She really hasn't found herself yet. She graduated, and taken international business extra. So she'll be involved in that probably someday. And I've got one that's in the University of Toledo, and she's a senior, or a junior, this year, working towards a senior. Well, almost all—I've got ten grandchildren, and probably six or seven of them are in college right now. One of them's in law. She graduated from the University of Michigan, and she's in law for one year, and she may change her subject, but that's two years' past.

DC: They're all pursuing higher education.

LC: Oh yeah. I'm just so proud of them.

DC: That's wonderful. Another thing that occurred to me—let me ask another question, following up on that. With your second marriage, how did you work out the child-care arrangements when your children were young. How about when they were very young?

LC: Well, we allowed my ex-wife to—we didn't allow it, but we made the arrangement where she'd take them on the weekend—the two kids. And we kept them through the week. Had them go to school, educate them.

DC: How about when they were very young?

LC: Oh, very young. I was still married to my first wife for the first nine years.

DC: Well, I'm talking about your second family.

LC: With the little kids? How did we work that out? Well my wife stayed home for a couple, three years. Four or five maybe. But she was a librarian, and then she got a job part-time library. And finally she was working almost forty hours, something like thirty-five hours,

and I said, "Why don't you take a full-time job at the library?" And so she did. So she worked at Ypsi Library for over twenty years.

DC: Now did your Mother help out at all with . . .

LC: Oh, she lived with us until she died.

DC: She did. OK. So she was there as well.

LC: Yeah. She lived with us until she passed away. My second wife and my Mother were just, real close.

DC: That's a very interesting story. Going a different direction for a second—we'll see if it works or not—when I read about automobile work in the 1950s, one of the things that comes up all of the time is automation.

LC: Mm hmm.

DC: Did you ever encounter automation as an issue in your work life?

LC: Yes.

DC: Tell me what you . . .

LC: Well, when automation first came in, I always thought in my mind, well this is a thing of the future, and I saw it. I was interested in automation, but it came up to the fact that if we do automate like that, we're going to put a lot of our people out of work. I had the sympathy—I felt sympathetic towards those people that would be put out of work if we did the automation. But I just couldn't believe—it was a thing of the future, and I *knew* that this was coming.

DC: When did you see it coming? Do you remember?

LC: When we had to do things to make parts for automated parts, you know, automated things. We were building some of the things that would be automated. It was a minor thing for us, because we weren't doing that great an amount, but the automation—the automation I knew had to come. That was my feeling now. The people I know were—a lot of us were against it, because of the fact that it was putting all our people out of work. And if you're in the union, your heart is with these people! I mean, I think. I don't know if all of them do, but I was always—I mean, there isn't very many tool and die makers come to these union [retiree] meetings, because they're all hourly employees, but the hourly employee, actually, to some degree, has put themselves aside of the tool maker, because they was skilled trades, you know, and they sort of . . .

DC: There was a division?

LC: Yeah, there was a division, mentally, a division. There really—I mean, the toolmakers were all good people, you know what I mean, but I always worked with both. As you probably can see.

DC: Sure, because you're here. But it sounds like there would be these moments when you would have to produce machines that would ultimately end up with layoffs for the production workers.

LC: Right. That's right. But I don't think it came so fast that it hurt very many people. You know what I mean?

DC: At any one time?

LC: Yeah, at any one time. It didn't come so fast that it did that.

DC: OK. So it was a gradual process?

LC: It's a gradual process. In some places, you know, it probably was—if you talked to people at the Rouge, and like that—there are probably whole departments that was put out of whack because of the automated—but they were always bringing in new machines that automated, or like that, you know. Moving people out. Like now, right now, they've got automated machines, all of them.

DC: So that was a constant process.

LC: Right.

DC: Do you remember any particular jobs that got automated?

LC: [pause] Well I think the horn job is one that got automated. It would affect me because I was working on—not the horn, wait a minute—no, the starter job.

DC: Starter job?

LC: Yeah, starter.

DC: How did that affect you?

LC: Well, they tried to send—this line, one particular line, our product that I was really taking care of—they were trying to send the parts to Japan and have them do it. And it was really a lever combination. I don't know if you know what a lever job—the lever that ignites the electricity to start the starter—it's a lever job. And they tried to send that to Japan. And so they had them make some parts, and they brought it back—because they wanted the line, and they wanted a certain part. Later on, they made a smaller lever, and they made it automated. But they were trying to get them to make the parts, and they couldn't make the

parts as good as we could. So they kept the job here longer, until they automated it to a smaller lever, to a smaller lever. And then they automated it.

DC: And then they sent it out, huh?

LC: Yeah, and they set it up over here in this building over here. So then we were on two lines—even when I left they was still running—the job that I was in control of for a long time, and then the other line came in. And finally, they had to make the old one for repair parts and add a new line, automated. So that other line went out then. But I was gone by then, in '82.

DC: So how did your tool room job change from, say, when you went back to work after being a foreman in the late '50s, through '82 when you retired? What changes were there in your tool room job over that course of time?

LC: During that course of time was when I was really working more or less with this line. I didn't have that before. I just worked anyplace where a die broke down, or a point broke, or something, and I'd work on that, or build a fixture, worked with the fixtures, or something like that. We were always, during the whole time that I worked, we were always taking care of presses that were broke down, and things like that, put new dies in, or new parts in, or rebuilding the dies, or something.

DC: Moving all around to a variety of jobs.

LC: Yes. We didn't do an awful lot of new stuff. We did repair stuff, make new parts for the same, the dies that we had, and stuff like that. This plant was sort of that way. We didn't spend a lot of time on making all new stuff.

DC: It sounds like later, then, you were more focused on specific lines.

LC: Well, really, I probably—they expected me to focus on that line, after I decided that I needed to—if I wanted to do something and keep it right, I'd have to focus on one thing, you know, like that. Particularly. I could do the others at other times, but when I focused on this line to keep it running, so that they could produce their parts—and so I did a lot of, well, like the dies, the punches go through back this way and they have a stripper plate like this [hand motions]. Well, each time that they'd break down, I'd have to take it all apart, like that. So I'd drill holes through it so that I could take a punch and punch out the punch, and get it out and put a new one in, without taking all this out. So when the guy broke it down, it would take maybe fifteen to twenty minutes, I had him back and running again.

DC: As opposed to how long the other way?

LC: The other way it would take, probably, a good thirty minutes, probably, before it was all back and ready for him to run. I probably cut it, at least half the time. Or sometimes it would even be less than that. Maybe five minutes I could have that punch. It just depends on how much damage it did. Things like that. That's what I focused on. I focused on—and

then we had welding fixtures, which weld these two lever halves together, like that. And of course they had to tear them apart to see that they would hold in the starter. And so, I focused on making sure that those lever parts worked perfect, which would pull apart like that. In fact, they sent me to the company, and then also I had to weld a block onto these two levers to make it go, like this [hand motions], the block on the top. And the welding—there was another welding fixture for that. And on that, I focused on that, and I went to the company that built the fixtures, the machine that did that, and made sure that their parts were right before we brought it in, the new machines. So they sent me out, even though I was just hourly, they sent me to these companies.

DC: You had a lot of responsibility.

LC: Well [laughs], I was a leader, I guess.

DC: Do you remember any strikes at this plant?

LC: Oh yeah.

DC: Yeah?

LC: Yeah.

DC: What do you remember?

LC: Well, I remember a strike that this young man was, on a Sunday, was asked to go up in a crane, which was shorted out—the crane was shorted out, is what I understood—the crane was shorted out, and he was a machine repairman. He wasn't an electrician or anything. And they wanted him to go up here and do some kind of work up there where that crane was stopped, part way on the track. And they sent him up there, so he wouldn't do it because he says, "I've got five kids. I don't want to get electrocuted. I don't know anything about that electrical thing up there." So on a Sunday, they fired him. They sent him home. I didn't know anything about it until the Monday, the Monday that we came in, and one of the union guys came down and said to us, "That guy—I mean he was right to not, to refuse to work. And they fired him. And we've got to get him back to work. And the company won't budge on it. They said, 'He's fired. He's fired.'" And so, I said, "I'm going to talk to all these skilled tradesmen, see if we shouldn't go on a wildcat strike. And so he says, he talked to the rest of them, and he says, at twelve o'clock, he says, "Why don't you just shut your boxes up and walk out?" And so we presumed that everybody had been informed, so everybody shut their boxes up and come across the river, over on this side in the parking lot. We all—the whole skilled trades were there. I guess. I don't know whether anybody, an electrician or anybody stayed, or anything. But we all walked off.

DC: What happened?

LC: They fired us! But we didn't know that we were fired.

DC: OK.

LC: About three hours later, they told us to come back to work. So we all went back in to work, and there was just, probably, a year or two before I retired, in 1982.

DC: That's when this happened?

LC: No. This happened way early on. This happened right after I come back to the tool room.

DC: OK, in the late '50s.

LC: In the late '50s, or '60s. It might have been the '60s.

DC: It might be the '60s?

LC: I don't know, late '50s or '60s. But anyway, the chairman of the committee came over to me, he says, "Well Lucky, I just cleared your record." I said, "Cleared my record for what?" He said, "Well, you were fired for that wildcat strike," way back whenever it was [laughs]. He says he figured I led that group out. I didn't lead them out. We all shut our boxes at the same time. We all walked out at the same time. They fired a whole bunch of them.

DC: What happened to the guy who refused to go up?

LC: Well they brought him back to work.

DC: They brought him back too. So that's what you were after, it sounds like.

LC: Yeah, that's what we were after. That's what we went out for.

DC: Yeah. Yeah. Do you remember any other wildcat strikes?

LC: [thinking] Let's see. Yeah, I told you about the one where we timed . . .

DC: That's right. That's right. You stopped working on the line when you thought it was too fast.

LC: We stopped working on the line when I was on the committee. And the funny part of this was, one of the ladies on the line had been hired in by Ford's because her husband had died while he was working, or something. Anyway, she got a job here, and she'd been working for years and years, and the General Foreman on production was her son. And he had fired all these people [laughs]. That was an interesting situation there.

DC: I wonder what that family dinner was like.

LC: [laughs] Yeah, that was an interesting situation.

DC: How about other sorts of strikes, either national Ford strikes, or local ones? Do you remember any of those?

LC: I remember marching in one. There may have been more, but I only remember marching in one, around the plant and like that. As I recall [pause], that part of it, I don't really, it's just kind of foggy to me.

DC: OK.

LC: I can't remember much about it. I can remember the signs, and I remember a lot of times we made signs and we never used them, and things like that. And I remember coming over here and getting $50 for a time that we were out on strike. But I can't remember what time that is.

DC: Or what it was about?

LC: No—well, it was always about the contract. But I don't remember—that wasn't a wildcat. That was a regular strike.

DC: Right.

LC: Whenever they had a strike, then—but most of the time, I guess, from what I can think now back, I guess I must have kept busy all the time there was anything going on. But I was always involved with the union whenever anything like that happened. I would come and I'd do my duty, and maybe work in the office with them for a little while, or something. I've always been part of it.

DC: In addition to raising your kids, and doing the blood bank, and all that, you were a busy guy.

LC: Well I've been all my life. Having part-time jobs someplace else, maybe for a couple weeks or something like that. Even at night, maybe work five hours, or something like that, whenever I could. But that's been it. I think you've got my whole life on here!

DC: We've done pretty well. Can you think of any questions that I should have asked that I haven't?

LC: Let's see. Let me think of anything. See I got on here, I've got FDR-CIO camp at Port Huron, Red Feather, strike signs we made up in the wildcat strikes. You covered all that. Let's see if I've got anything else here. [pause while he looks through papers]

DC: You've done a lot of homework.

LC: Well I didn't do it. I tell everybody this. This here, oh [points to newspaper article], it is quite interesting. This boy's father, [?], his father was our foreman, when I was an apprentice. And whenever the war started, soon after the war started, or sometime during the early time of the war, he told all the apprentices—I can't remember how many of us

were around him when he said it—but he said, "I want to tell you one thing." He says, "I have two boys over there fighting. You guys are in here safe and sound." He says, "I don't want to see any of you raising your nose up. I want you to get your work done, and keep your nose to the grindstone, because I'm going to be watching you."

DC: Those are powerful words.

LC: And being an apprentice, you were very impressed.

DC: That sense of national emergency, and his personal interest in his sons, would be pretty compelling.

LC: Right. So I thought it was so interesting, when he came back, I met him and everything, and I told him about his father, and how he told us that we better keep busy. See, he autographed it. He autographed it.

DC: [wrapping up the conversation] Well can you think of anybody else who might be willing to talk to me, who wasn't at that meeting? Some people signed up that day, but can you think of anybody else that would be good to talk to?

LC: Well I have a friend, but I don't know. He lives over in Tecumseh.

DC: I'm always willing to travel.

LC: Well, I don't know how much he can tell you. He can tell you why he went to war—he joined Air Force because of this guy's father. He was a die maker too.

DC: [more wrapping up]Well, if you think of any.

LC: OK, I'll think about it. I don't know just anybody that, just off hand.

DC: I really appreciate your time. It's been a lot of fun for me.

LC: I hope so.

End of Interview