Phyllis and Robert Young Interview
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Transcribed by Marie O'Brien
Copyedited by Daniel Clark

DC: I'll probably just bounce questions back and forth and you guys can, you know, work this out any way that makes sense. But I really start out with basic questions, such as where were you born and stuff. So maybe you could go first Phyllis.

PY: I was born right here in Pontiac.

DC: You were, OK.

PY: My father was an autoworker.

DC: OK. Was he from Pontiac originally?

PY: No, he came from Ontario.

DC: OK, he was from Canada. Where in Ontario?

PY: Uh, the St. Thomas area.

DC: OK.

PY: And he hired in at the old Oakland plant when he was fourteen years old.

DC: Really? When was that?

PY: That would have been about 1923 or so. He was young enough to think that there was still cowboys out west. So he worked one winter and then he went out west and worked. Found out all there was is a bunch of farm work out there and he had to work his butt off to get back. And then he hired back in about 1925. '24-'25. And he was working at Oakland when it become Pontiac Motor—or, when it become General Motors.

DC: Did his whole family move over?

PY: Him and his brother. But his brother—when it come Depression, he decided he'd go back to Canada. And my Dad stuck it out.

DC: OK. How about your Mother?

PY: My Mother was Canadian, too. He came first and then she.

DC: Did they know each other in Canada?

PY: Yeah.

DC: Yeah, they did. OK. All right.

PY: Then she came a couple years later.

DC: I'll try to keep all the stories straight and go back and forth, but how about you, Bob? [adjusts microphone] There we go. Where were you born?

BY: Lapeer, Michigan.

DC: Oh yeah, OK.

BY: I'm not for sure where my Father was born. [laughs]

DC: You're not sure.

BY: My Mother was in Millington, I'm pretty sure.

DC: Was what? I'm sorry.

BY: Millington. It's a little town up north.

DC: Oh, OK. I'm not familiar with that town. OK. If you don't mind me asking, when were you born?

BY: Me?

DC: Yeah.

BY: '36.

DC: '36, OK. And [to Phyllis] . . .

PY: '41.

DC: OK, all right. [to Bob] So what did your parents do in Lapeer?

BY: He was a farmer. He worked for the Ford dealer there and the Ford dealer had a farm. And he plowed the fields and took care of the cows and horses and stuff like that. And that's where I was born at.

DC: Do you know how long they had been in Lapeer?

BY: Not really. That's a long time ago. [laughs]

DC: Yeah. Sure. OK, when did everybody move to this area then?

BY: I think just before the war broke out, or during the war they moved to here to—and he went to work for the auto factories, you know, building stuff for the war, at Truck and Bus down there.

DC: And you would have been quite young at that point.

BY: Yeah, I was just a baby then.

DC: Yeah, OK. So you wouldn't have direct memories of that. Did your parents ever tell you what it was like trying to run that farm during the Depression?

BY: It was hard. They ate a lot of eggs, my Mother said. They didn't have much refrigeration or nothing. They had to eat, you know, fresh stuff mostly, you know? I know my Father was telling me one time about working the fields and it was so hot out there, the Ford dealer come home and told him to put the team away—it was too hot for them to work.

DC: Did you ever hear, Phyllis, any stories about how your parents fared during the Depression? You would have been born just afterwards.

PY: Well, the day the bank closed my Mother had my sister, which would have been their second child. And the landlord came to collect the rent that morning and my aunt was there. And my aunt said that she had just had a new baby and that my Dad had went to see if he could work. And so the landlord never came back after that. Figured he might as well leave them there. And my Dad was able to get enough work at the shop. You went up and you stood outside the gate. And he got enough work that he could buy groceries and stuff.

DC: Was he a part at all of the organizing campaign here?

PY: Yeah. But he later went on salary.

DC: He did, OK.

PY: Yeah.

DC: Was your Mother an autoworker, too?

PY: My Mother went down and hired in at Baldwin Rubber when I was a baby. And then, of course, she came home and she told my Dad that she was going to go to work the next day. And he said, "No, you're not." And that was it. She never went to work. She never went.

DC: Oh really? OK.

PY: But her friend did and worked at Baldwin Rubber until it went out of business.

DC: Did your Mother ever tell you how she felt about that?

PY: She told my Dad that she'd never go to work again. Never had to ask her. [laughs]

DC: Did you get the sense that she wanted to work at Baldwin Rubber?

PY: [pause] I think she wanted to when she went down and hired in and stuff, but . . .

DC: I know you would have been too young to know personally.

PY: Yeah. Yeah, I was just a little—I was just, like under a year old. The war had broke out and they were hiring women.

DC: Sure. I guess I was just trying to figure out if she had ever talked with you about why she went down there. Did she want to work? Was she trying to help out the war effort, you know.

PY: Yeah. Probably, probably. She never did say.

DC: Never did say, OK.

PY: But I know my Dad put a kibosh to it, and that was it.

DC: That was it. Did she ever work outside the home again?

PY: No.

DC: No, OK. That was a big kibosh.

PY: [laughs]

DC: All right. So let's see, I've got to try to keep my stories straight. I'm not used to always trying to keep two stories straight at the same time. But Bob, your parents came down here just before the war you said? Is that right?

BY: Yeah, I think they—it was during the Depression they worked on the farm. I remember my Father talking about making twenty-five dollars a month on the farm and he was able to buy a car and save money on that, you know.

DC: Yeah. Twenty-five dollars a month. Did they ever tell you why they came down to Pontiac?

BY: They never—I really don't know.

DC: All right. OK. Well let's talk a bit about what you remember growing up. [to Bob] You would have moved from Lapeer to this area when you were just a little kid. And [to Phyllis] you were born here, so what was it like growing up in Pontiac? What do you remember about growing up around here?

PY: Well I was raised just a little over here, just off of Baldwin. I can remember at night hearing the foundry and stuff—you know, especially in the summertime you could hear the noise and stuff. So yeah, everything depended on the autoworkers.

DC: Did you get used to the noise?

PY: Oh yeah. Yeah. In fact, between the noise from the foundry and the noise from the railroad tracks, it was hard for me to learn to sleep without it! [laughs]

DC: Yeah. What was your neighborhood like?

PY: It was just an average neighborhood, you know, average houses. Nothing fancy, three bedroom—living room, dining room.

DC: What kinds of people? Were they mostly autoworkers living in your neighborhood?

PY: Mostly autoworkers, yeah.

DC: And where were they from? Can you remember where they had come from? Were they all from Pontiac?

PY: Well, I know the one neighbor to the one side, he worked for plant protection. And they lived up in the thumb at one time. They came down from up in the thumb. And then we had a couple across the street and he was English. He come over here from England. When and how he ended up here, I have no idea. But he worked for the shop, too. And most of the neighbors worked at the shop at one place or another. We did have one neighbor down the road that worked at a dairy. And another neighbor that worked for the school.

DC: How about you, Bob? Do you remember anything about your neighborhood growing up here?

BY: Well I lived in Huron Gardens. I remember that.

DC: Where's that?

BY: A little subdivision just out of Pontiac just a little bit. I remember one of my uncles moving in with us and he lived with us for awhile because people didn't—he lived on a farm, too. And then my Mother came from a farm in Lapeer. Millington, actually, up in that area.

And he was running the farm and he come down here to [?] for the autoworkers, too, you know. Guess he got married and moved out, of course, but . . .

DC: Were they all in your subdivision?

BY: Yeah, he bought a house right next door to us. Lived in our subdivision.

DC: Were those houses relatively new then? Was that a new subdivision or was it established?

BY: It was pretty well-established. My Father built the house.

DC: Oh, OK.

BY: Yeah. But the one my uncle bought wasn't. You know, he bought it.

DC: OK. And . . .

BY: Just a small one. I remember having an outhouse—no inside plumbing there.

DC: So that would have been in the 1940s then?

BY: Yeah.

DC: OK. [to Phyllis] How about you? Did you have inside, indoor plumbing?

PY: Oh yeah, we always had inside plumbing.

DC: OK, you were living high.

PY: Yeah.

DC: [to Bob] What about your neighbors? Were they mostly workers in the plant, too?

BY: Mostly workers, yeah.

DC: And do you remember at all where some of them came from?

BY: I don't remember.

DC: What about kids? Were there a lot of kids in your neighborhoods growing up?

PY: Oh yeah, a lot of kids. Most of them became autoworkers, too.

DC: How about in your subdivision, Bob?

BY: I remember about this one couple that lived there. My Father bought their—they had a

trailer, a big trailer, you know—and they lived in that next to the school and they had about three lots. And they were from down in Tennessee someplace. And she got pretty sick or something or other, so they moved to California. My Father bought the three lots, you know. My Father was a really good mechanic. He become a mechanic at the shop.

DC: Did he learn that at the shop, or had he done that on the farm?

BY: Well, you're always working on equipment on the farm, you know. So he fit right in for repairing things, you know. You didn't have to have much of an education back in those days. Just started working on the jitneys and stuff like that, the Hi-Los.

DC: So that was his job then in the plant? With the mechanics, and all that?

BY: Yeah.

DC: How about your Father? What was his job?

PY: Well, I don't know what he did before he became salary, but he was a foreman for—since about—that big strike in the '40s. He had just got on supervision just before that.

DC: So pretty much the end of the war, then, it sounds like.

PY: Yeah.

DC: Yeah, OK. So he just had a short stint as a non-salary worker.

PY: Well, he hired in about 19—1925.

DC: Oh, that's right. That's right, yeah.

PY: So he did his share on the lines, too, you know.

DC: Yeah, I'm sorry. I'm getting the stories confused again. I need to get my stories straight here. But you don't know what he did really on the line or in production?

PY: No, I remember I was complaining one time about—I always worked in press metal. I got sent to Plant 8 and, you know, having to build up my stock. And he said, well it was nothing. He used to get to work an hour early to build up stock and at that time you had an hour for lunch. And he'd quickly eat his lunch and build up stock for the afternoon.

DC: When he went in an hour early, was that off the clock?

PY: Oh yes, that was off the clock. You did that so that you could make your job easier.

DC: OK. So he'd come in and get it all set up to run.

PY: Yeah.

DC: OK. Yeah, I've got to get the story straight. I had confused his starting date with your birth date. Didn't add up. [laughs]

PY: [laughs]

DC: But you know, it's early in the morning. What schools did you go to when you were younger?

BY: I went to the Hudson Copland [sp?] school, or something like that. Hudson-Culver[?]—Hudson [?] was the name of it. And then I went to—my parents sold that place and my Dad had farming in his blood, I guess, so he bought twenty acres out by White Lake and I went to Holly schools.

DC: What was it like out there?

BY: Well, the first year we were there they had, like, the first grade through the sixth grade in a country school. In a—one teacher taught the whole school. And it was like three or four kids in each class, you know. And about a mile to school—you had to walk or ride your bike or something. Or your parents had to take you.

DC: What was it like moving from a Pontiac subdivision out to Holly?

BY: It was quite a bit different. I only had about a half a block to go to school there, because I lived right across the road from school.

DC: How was it making friends and all that?

BY: Oh, it's hard to start with, to make friends. But farm kids are easier to make friends with, I think, you know.

DC: And how old were you when your family made that move?

BY: Oh, I must have been, like, twelve or something like that. Ten, twelve years old.

DC: OK. But it sounds like your Dad wanted some space. Is that . . .

BY: Yeah, he had farming in his blood, I think.

DC: So was he working in the plant and farming?

BY: Yeah. Yeah, he did a lot of work in the garage behind the house, too, down in Pontiac here. You know, nobody could buy a car back in those days because you had to repair them, because it was all going into war projects. So he did a lot of mechanic work in the garage, plus work at the shop.

DC: But when you moved to that property then, it sounds like he was actually running the farm as well?

BY: Yeah, he moved out there. So we grew potatoes and corn. We sold a lot of potatoes.

DC: Did you get involved with working on the farm then?

BY: Oh yeah. I had a horse.

DC: Oh yeah? Tell me about that. What were your responsibilities?

BY: Oh, I had to take care of it and feed it. My Dad, he cultivated with it. But I didn't do too good cultivating with the horse. He'd be in one row and I'd be in another, you know, and I'd cultivate out stuff. My Dad used to holler at me, you know.

DC: Yeah, I guess you make mistakes there it diminishes the crop.

BY: Yeah, the horse was pretty, pretty stubborn, you know. Horses are made to—when they turn around on a corner, when you're cultivating, they're not supposed to step on stuff. Well he couldn't see nothing, I guess. He stepped on everything. [laughter]

DC: Did you like that?

BY: Yeah, it was a lot of fun. It was fun living on the farm, yeah.

DC: I've talked to some of your fellow retirees who remember working hard on their family farm and hated it. So I didn't know . . .

BY: Well this was more of a fun farm, you know. It wasn't like you had to get up in the morning to milk cows or nothing like that, you know. I just had the horse and we had a few chickens.

PY: Well he was an only child, too, so that made a big difference.

BY: Yeah, I was the only child.

DC: OK. And so was your Mother involved with the farm work?

BY: No, she was more like a housekeeper, you know.

DC: OK. So your Father, then, was working on the farm and working in the plant.

BY: Mm-hmm.

DC: That sounds busy. What about you, Phyllis? What schools did you go to?

PY: I went right over here to Wisner School on Oakland Avenue. My parents never moved around much. They stayed in the same house for forty-five years before they died. They had been there forty-five years. They made one move there when I was about four years old, and that was it. But it was just up the block. We moved down there. [laughs]

DC: Why did they make that move?

PY: Well, because there was three kids and it was a bigger house.

DC: OK, need more space.

PY: Yeah.

DC: Yeah, OK. Well what do you remember about school in Pontiac? What was it like?

PY: Just like schools are today, I guess. Not much different.

DC: OK. Let's see. Then what high schools did you go to?

PY: I went to Wisner and then Lincoln and then Pontiac Central.

DC: Pontiac Central, OK. Was it called Pontiac Central then or was it . . .

PY: Yes, the second year in high school they built Northern.

DC: OK, yeah. I knew that happened somewhere in there but couldn't remember exactly when. [to Bob] So did you go to high school then out in Holly?

BY: In Holly, yeah. Holly High School.

DC: So I know that you worked on the farm as a kid, but did you have any jobs then, you know, through high school or any other outside activities or things?

PY: Well, I did a lot of babysitting in the neighborhood and stuff like that. But as far as for having jobs around the house, I was the youngest so, you know.

DC: OK. How many siblings did you have?

PY: I had a brother and a sister.

DC: OK. So a lot of babysitting—stuff like that. What did you do then . . .

PY: I think my first job outside of doing something like that was working at Federal Department Store for seventy-five cents an hour, when I was about—I must have been sixteen. Yeah.

DC: OK. Were there other school kids working there, too?

PY: Yeah. I worked there. I worked at Waite's.

DC: What's that store?

PY: That's another department store that used to be in town.

DC: I've got to learn all my department stores.

BY: A lot of them's closed up today.

PY: Yeah.

DC: I think there are some pictures of some of them in this old book I've got. It's a new book with old pictures of Pontiac. So I'll have to study up on that. How did you like those department store jobs?

PY: I thought I was making lots of money at seventy-five cents an hour. [laughs]

DC: Yeah. What did you do with your money?

PY: I spent it on me! [laughs]

DC: All right. Did you have any other jobs besides farming, Bob?

BY: No, I quit school. Like, I turned seventeen on the 14th of February and I went to work on the 27th at Pontiac Motors.

DC: You did, OK.

BY: They told me to go back to school, but I told them I wasn't going back. I went up there, and I tried to hire in about three or four times. Finally they took me. They got tired of looking at me, I think.

DC: So had you had your sights set on working at Pontiac Motor for awhile? It sounds like you were pretty persistent.

BY: Well, you know, everybody worked at the shop and I said, well school wasn't for me. I needed to get out here and make some money on my own.

DC: Well what job did you get when you hired in?

BY: I worked in unitizing.

DC: What's that?

BY: That's packaging small parts up and shipping them out to dealers and stuff like that. I couldn't lift nothing heavy and I couldn't work second shift. They had restrictions back in those days.

DC: Because you were seventeen?

BY: Because I was seventeen, yeah.

PY: Soon as he was eighteen, he went on the line. [laughs]

BY: I went on the line. [laughs]

DC: Well, a couple more questions about unitizing, then we can get to some of the other jobs that you had. But what do you remember about that unitizing job?

BY: My aunt had talked to the superintendent about me. And she worked there. Her husband had passed away and she worked there for a few years. And she put a good word in for me. And so he put a call in it for me, and that's how I really got the job, I think. With having a call in for me. Back in those days if you had a little bit of a pull it made quite a bit of difference.

DC: Did you get a sense that there were a lot of people trying to get these jobs—more than there were jobs available?

BY: No, there was plenty of jobs. There was lots of jobs. They were hiring everybody that walked in the front door. They needed help real bad.

DC: OK. Did you like the unitizing job?

BY: It was all right. I—you get the small parts and put them in boxes and label them and ship them out to certain dealers, you know. I don't know what they call it today. I don't know. It's like warehouses today they have, you know. Parts warehouses. We were our own parts warehouse, you might say.

DC: Was that job in the Pontiac Motor complex?

BY: Pontiac Motor complex.

DC: It was in there, OK. And Phyllis, when did you first get a job in the plant?

PY: Well, 1966 when affirmative action started. I was one of the first—I had had my application in for over a year, and when they called, they called my mother. And she thought maybe it was a hoax. So she called Western Union back. Western Union did the calling, and they said no, it wasn't a hoax.

DC: Well you must've done something between working in the department stores and 1966. What did you do during those years?

PY: Well, I worked at K-Mart and I worked for Farmer Jack's. I was a meat wrapper just before I went in then. I had one child by that time.

DC: OK. What did you do at K-Mart?

PY: I was sales help. I ran a register, I put up stock, I did anything.

DC: The usual stuff. I worked at K-Mart. It sounds like the same job.

PY: Yeah.

DC: And then you said you were a meat wrapper?

PY: Yeah, for Farmer Jack's. Well really, when I went to the shop I was making as much at Farmer Jack's as what I made in the shop. But you belonged to the Teamsters union and it cost eighty-five dollars to belong. Seventy-five or eight-five, something like that. It was quite a bit of money. And the union dues were six dollars a month for the union and I didn't—you had to pay half on your insurance. So when I went to the shop I—union dues were less and the insurance was less and it didn't cost that much to join—which I had already paid my union dues to join the Teamsters anyway.

DC: Now did the Teamsters offer any benefits to you?

PY: No.

DC: Not really.

PY: No.

DC: OK, yeah. How long were you in that meat wrapping job?

PY: About a year, a year and a half, before I went to the shop.

DC: Did you like it?

PY: [flat affect] Yeah, I liked it. You know, it's a job. A job is a job. But the only thing I didn't like was that Farmer Jack's has a whole lot of stores and somehow or another they—because I had bought a car, they put me as a relief person for all the stores. So like, let's say somebody down Southfield was taking a vacation, a week's vacation, I'd have to go to Southfield that week. Or maybe it was Farmington the next week. I like—that was one of my biggest reasons why I went in the shop. I didn't like all that running all the time.

DC: Right. So you didn't really have a permanent store.

PY: No!

DC: And that was because you had a car.

PY: Yeah, because I had a car! There was people with less seniority than me, but they didn't have reliable cars.

DC: So Farmer Jack wasn't going to give you a company car.

PY: No.

DC: You said you had a child, too.

PY: Yeah. I got married and had a boy, but then we ended up divorcing. So I was divorced by the time I went into the shop.

DC: By the mid-sixties. When did you get married?

PY: [pauses] Let's see. About '63.

DC: OK, all right. So you would've been just in your early twenties at that point.

PY: Yeah. Yeah.

DC: What did your child do while you were working?

PY: My Mother took care of him.

DC: OK, so she was in the area.

PY: Mm-hmm. Because then I married shortly after I was in the shop, a few months after I was in the shop.

DC: Was that your marriage to Bob?

PY: No.

DC: No, that's another marriage. OK, I'm sorry. [friendly laughter all around] I'm just trying to sort things out here. Shouldn't be assuming anything here. You said you were hired because of affirmative action.

PY: Yeah.

DC: Had you tried to get a job in the plants before that?

PY: I had my application in—they started taking applications the year before I got hired. That's why my Mother thought maybe it was a joke of some sort, because, you know, an application in a year ago!

DC: OK. Did you know of any other women working in the plant?

PY: Oh, yes. Back in the war, yeah. The woman right across the street still worked at the plant. But she was hired during the war.

DC: OK. But you would have had an application in for a full year at least before they responded.

PY: Yeah.

DC: OK. And your sense was that they responded because there was some . . .

PY: Was affirmative action, yeah. That's the only reason they hired women at that particular time. That and men were hard to come by. It was '66—things were really booming.

DC: OK, yeah. The economy was taking off then.

PY: Yeah.

DC: [to Bob] So, kind of jumping back into a different decade—you worked for a year at unitizing and then went on production. Is that what . . .

BY: Yeah, I washed courtesy cars for awhile.

DC: Courtesy cars? And what does that involve?

BY: The big shots drove courtesy cars from—Pontiac Motor supplied them with cars. They would bring them in and we washed them, cleaned them up for them—clean out the inside.

DC: So your job was to clean up the cars?

BY: Yeah. Keep the big shots' cars clean for awhile.

DC: And were the big shots Pontiac Motors officials?

BY: Right.

DC: OK, I see. All right. What did you think about that job?

BY: It was not a bad job. It got kind of cold in the wintertime, but it wasn't really that bad of a job.

DC: How many people did that job?

BY: There was four of us.

DC: OK, so you guys could keep the bigwigs . . .

BY: Two on each car, yeah.

DC: OK. And how long did you do that?

BY: Ah, probably a year.

DC: Really? OK.

BY: And then I went to Plant 8 on the line.

DC: Now refresh my memory about when this was now. I've got notes all over the place.

BY: I hired in in '53. So that was probably '54 or something like that.

DC: OK. I know around '54 times were tough, you know, around here. Do you remember being affected at all by . . .

BY: No, not too much. I think they were cutting back—that's how I ended up on the line in Plant 8 on second shift, you know.

DC: OK. Well tell me about that job.

BY: I put the rear ends in the cars—on the assembly line.

DC: And what was that like? Was it hard?

BY: It was a hard job.

DC: How heavy is a rear end?

BY: Well, they lift it with a hoist. You put it in and then you had to put two U-bolts in. They don't have the rear ends like that today like they used to have. It had a spring in it—a leaf spring instead of coil springs. And I put two U-bolts in and hope you get them in and tightened up when it goes on down the line, you know.

DC: You say you hope to get it in. [laughter all around] That's not reassuring! What would be—what would prevent you from getting them in?

BY: Oh, the nut would go on crooked or something and, you know, you had a big power wrench and you tightened up four of them at the same time. You had to pull it down and tighten it

up. It was on a spring thing. And follow it down the line as you're doing that.

DC: It's moving.

BY: It's moving all the time, yeah.

DC: OK. All right. And how fast was it moving?

BY: Ah, we was running about seventy cars an hour probably, somewhere around in there.

DC: And so was your job just to get those U-bolts on and get it bolted down?

BY: Right. Yeah. There was a guy that had a schedule and he had racks of rear ends and he'd pick it up and put it on the line. The rear end would come down like this and the line was going, you know—the guy put the frame on. And then we had to lift it off with a hoist and swing it in position and bolt it in.

DC: How long did it take to learn that job?

BY: You have to learn it really quick. All of those jobs are *fast*, you know. They usually put somebody with you for a little while—maybe a half hour or so. But some of those jobs are really tricky. I have worked other jobs on the line. One time they put us on a job putting dashboard—the lights on the dashboard. And it was supposed to be a woman's job. It took three of us to do it, you know. Because it was so—each bulb had to go in a certain place and my hand was so sore by the end of the day, I could hardly move it.

DC: You say it was supposed to be a woman's job—would one woman . . .

BY: Woman's job. One woman doing the job. It took three of us to do it. Three guys to do it. You know, some of those jobs are just . . .

PY: Tricky.

BY: Tricky. You know, and if you got the feel of the job, if it was an easy job, maybe you could do it and smoke a cigarette and get a drink of water. But until you really learned the job, it was really tough.

DC: What about your bosses on these various jobs? Either unitizing or courtesy cars or this job with the rear ends—do you remember your supervisors at all?

BY: Uh, on the rear end I remember. You know, the supervisor wasn't around that much, really. He had an office. You had like a utility man and you had a repair man. So if you got in trouble or anything—and you had a relief man, you know, you had to have relief man—and they would go run and get a coffee for you or something like that when the—they used to have wagons. They didn't have no coffee machines. And they had to run out, take your order and run over to the wagon and bring back a donut or something.

DC: Would the wagon kind of go through your department?

BY: Go through your department, yeah. They didn't have no machines at all like that back in those days.

DC: Did you ever have any use or any need for the union in any of those jobs? In those first few jobs you had?

BY: Uh, not too much. You know, as long as you did your job and—people didn't bother you too much back in those days, you know?

DC: Were you a member?

BY: Oh yeah. Yeah.

DC: So had your father been a union member too, then?

BY: Oh yeah, he was a union member.

DC: Did he ever recall any instances where he needed the union's assistance?

BY: [short pause] Well, later on in life I needed the union.

DC: Well tell me about that—then we'll jump back and forth. It might be a story you've heard, Phyllis.

BY: I had tore the cartilage in my knee.

DC: When was this now?

BY: That was in the '60s, I guess. And—probably late '60s, you know. Yeah, closer to '70s maybe. Anyway, I was riding a motorcycle and I tore the cartilage in my knee. And I had to have it operated on. So I had called in and I had got a call-in number. And then they decided that they were going to operate. So I called in again and told them I wasn't coming in, you know. So I went and had my knee operated on and I went up there—waiting to get my knee operated on, I went up and applied for sick leave even. And they—I got a notice in the mail that I was terminated because I didn't do anything. So I have my call-in number, so I went up to the office there on crutches then, of course—I had my leg operated on. And they said, "Oh, you're fired. That's it," you know? So I come to the union hall—you know, I started to come to the union hall and there was a union representative up there at the time, and he stopped me and was talking to him, and he said, "I'll get this straightened out." Well, my papers that I had turned in was laying right in front of the woman, you know. And they got it—finally got it straightened out.

DC: But you had actually gotten a termination notice.

BY: I got my termination notice, yeah.

DC: How long did it take to recover from the torn cartilage?

BY: About four months.

DC: OK, yeah. I was going to say you . . .

BY: But what they did—I was off for like two months and then they made an appointment to send me to *their* doctor. And I was off another—I had a little bit of money saved up, luckily, you know. And I was off like another two, three weeks before I got any more money again because I had to go to their doctor. By the time I got any money, I was back to work, you know. It was pretty tough time at that time. You spend a lot of your savings when you get into a situation like that, being off for four months, you know.

DC: How was your medical coverage?

BY: It was pretty good back in those days.

DC: OK, yeah. It would be a big change from the ‘30s.

BY: Yeah. Oh, yeah.

DC: I’m going to switch gears a little bit, Phyllis. I wanted to know if you could tell me what it was like being in an autoworker’s family in the 1950s. You would’ve been a teenager all through the ‘50s. What was it like?

PY: Well, during the ‘50s, ‘57, ‘58, ‘59, things weren’t going very well in the auto shop. But my Dad had a lot of seniority, you know, because—you know, he came over with old Oakland, you know? And Oakland took over in the—so it didn’t affect us. But I can remember neighbors being laid off and kids saying they didn’t have much to eat at home. In fact, I had a neighbor, a friend of mine when I was a kid—beans was about it—you know, navy beans. And she’d make bean and peanut butter sandwiches, bring them to school, you know.

DC: Yeah. But it sounds like your family . . .

PY: My family did all right because my Father was on salary and, you know, he had probably twenty-five, thirty years seniority. Twenty-five years—he had thirty-two years in ‘67 when he retired. Forty-two years.

DC: Were you living in a neighborhood where it was mostly union workers then?

PY: Yeah. At least I think so.

DC: What was that like, you know, to have a Father who was a foremen living with a bunch of people—how did that work out?

PY: I don't ever remember any problems, you know.

DC: OK, yeah. I wouldn't know if there would be or not, but I just—you know, you can see where . . .

PY: Yeah, I could see where there could be.

DC: A lot of production workers living next to a supervisor . . .

PY: I've had people tell me—a couple of people that come to the union dinners that worked for my Dad way back when, and they always said that they loved—this one woman always says, "I just loved working for your Dad. He was always so fair."

DC: OK. Was that your sense of his work?

PY: Yeah. He wasn't the type that would lord it over. Yeah.

DC: What made him fair? I mean, besides not lording it over? Can you give me any examples?

PY: Well, I don't know. He just treated people like people would like to be treated, you know. A lot of supervisors don't do that.

DC: I wouldn't mind talking to these people who worked for him. That would be interesting to get their perspective, because it sounds like he did a really good job.

PY: There's one woman, Blanche—what's their last name? Blanche and her husband.

BY: I'll think of it in a minute.

DC: Maybe at the next meeting I can come to, you could introduce me and I could see if she'd be willing to talk—or she and her husband.

BY: He was on the board.

PY: Yeah. Al, Al. Blanche and Al [short pause]. I can't think.

DC: It'll come to you at some point, yeah. OK, so that's interesting, though, that you noticed that a lot of the families around you in your neighborhood were having difficult times.

PY: Yeah.

DC: There certainly was a big recession in the late '50s. But let's see, tell me about the first job that you had in the plant when you finally got hired in.

PY: I went to the press room. And I was very lucky because I hired in in a department that was very light. A lot of women worked in that department.

DC: The press room doesn't sound light. What made it light?

PY: Well, the parts weren't heavy. They were small. Small parts. Of course it was fast work—525 an hour, you know, you worked an hour.

DC: What kind of parts were these?

PY: Uh—I don't know. I'm not a car person, you know. They give me this bunch of parts: "Run them."

DC: Run them, OK. But you said it was mostly women in that department?

PY: Mostly women. There was a few men, but women are a lot faster with their hands, as a rule. And we still had the foot pedals, too, and I was afraid to death of those.

DC: Why?

PY: Well, first thing I can remember when I went in was people showing me their fingers they had lost! You know? But they got rid of them shortly after I was there. They did away with all foot pedals.

DC: OK, so that would've been in the '60s they got rid of the foot pedals. So if you're controlling with your feet, both your hands are vulnerable. Is that it?

PY: Well most of those foot pedal machines were tilted back, and you were throwing them in, you know, with a pair of tongs. Well if—and you were stepping on it with a foot. Well the minute you lost your balance, where were you going to go?

DC: OK. Yeah, yeah, leaning right into it.

PY: And you'd have your foot on the thing and *bango*!

DC: So you saw a lot of women missing—who had lost fingers.

PY: Some women had lost fingers, and some guys, too, you know.

DC: Had they worked there for some time?

PY: They had been working there since the '40s.

DC: OK, so there were some women, you know, in there who had stayed on.

PY: Oh yeah, there was quite a few. I hired in to mostly a woman department. And as far as the women accepting younger women, most of them accepted us with open arms, you know, and treated us very well. Well I know some women didn't have that experience, but the women I worked with . . .

DC: Your department was accepting.

PY: Very good. Yeah. Very accepting.

DC: Did the women help you learn the job?

PY: Yeah.

DC: OK. How hard was it to learn the job?

PY: It really isn't that hard, you know. How hard is it to learn? You know, you just put that part in like that! It was using tongs.

RY: Fast!

PY: I'm left-handed, and learning to use tongs in my right hand was hard for me.

DC: OK. You had to use them right-handed?

PY: Yeah. Because the machines are all set up right-handed. I had a boss—I hired in on days, but I went—got bumped right to the second shift right away. And I had a boss that was very understanding that I was left-handed and this was awkward. He says, "I'm not going to worry about your production, but I want to see those tongs in your right hand."

DC: OK. How interesting.

PY: In the matter of a few weeks, I got the hang of it.

DC: You developed that knack with your opposite hand.

PY: Yeah.

DC: It sounds difficult to me, actually.

PY: It was. It was difficult. It took awhile. And then if he had any job that was, maybe, you know, it didn't matter—you know, it wasn't running a press, maybe stacking or stuff—he would put me on that, too.

DC: OK. Give your off hand a little relief.

PY: Yeah.

DC: You said you got shifted to second shift pretty quickly?

PY: Mm-hmm.

DC: How did that work out? You still had a child and all.

PY: It worked out all right. You got to make arrangements, you know.

DC: OK. Was it easy to make arrangements? Was your Mother still on hand?

PY: Yeah, my Mother was still taking care of him and then I got married shortly after I went in the shop. I always seemed to be able to find babysitters.

DC: OK. I know that's a problem for some people I've talked to.

PY: Yeah. Yeah.

DC: When they had sudden shift changes that came up and caused a problem.

PY: I married a guy that his Mother lived with us, and she took care of the kids for a long time.

DC: OK. Did he bring kids to the marriage, too?

PY: No. But we had a daughter.

DC: OK. And when was that?

PY: '67.

DC: All right. I'm going to keep shifting gears here. I was wondering, Bob, what you did outside the plant. We talked a bit about what you were doing inside the plant in the '50s after you hired in, in '53, '54 and stuff.

PY: He got drafted, too.

BY: Well, I—in Plant 8 there, I got cut back. They had a cutback and I went to axle department making rear axles.

DC: When was the cutback?

BY: It was in the '50s there.

DC: OK. And you went from—was it going from the rear end job to axles?

BY: No, yeah—from putting on in Plant 8, putting the rear ends in, I went to where they made

the axles.

DC: Where they made the axles, OK. So that was—it was in the ‘50s at some point. But it was in a time of cutbacks you said?

BY: Right, right. Then I got married.

DC: All right. We’ll start with the axle job and get to your marriage here. But what was the axle job like?

BY: It was running machinery. Axle comes from the foundry in the raw state and they lay that down, and I was running a grinder, the finish grinder where the bearings go on the axles. It’s a pretty good job. I worked second shift.

DC: OK. Did you choose that or did you just get assigned that?

BY: I just got stuck there.

DC: OK, all right. And then—what did you think about such a sudden shift?

BY: Better than Plant 8. It was a lot better than Plant 8.

DC: It was better than Plant 8.

BY: Oh, a lot better.

DC: What made it better?

BY: Well, you wasn’t on an assembly line like you were in Plant 8 where you couldn’t get away. You could let the line go around and take a bunch of axles off and around that—and you could run them real fast.

DC: So you could pick one, or take one down and work on it . . .

BY: Yeah. Well you had all these axles coming around on the line. Just set them off on the floor and you just run them through the grinder. Empty out the line, and then people had a place to put them back on the line as the line went around, see.

DC: I see. All right. And how many would work on a single axle?

BY: There was two of us on the grinders, finish grinders.

DC: OK. And you’re just, what, smoothing them off and stuff like that, is that what . . .

BY: Yeah, and one of my son—brother-in-laws at that time was running the other grinder. So we worked together really well.

DC: How long did it take to learn that job?

BY: It didn't take very long. He showed me how to—you'd call it dressing the grinder. He had a diamond thing and he had to turn it in so he could make the grinder real smooth. It had to be real smooth because that was the finish grind on it.

DC: OK. What did you like best about that job?

BY: Probably the break time off of it. [laughs]

PY: [laughing]

DC: Was that because you could get ahead of the job?

BY: Yeah, you could get ahead of the job by stripping the line, you know, and taking all the parts off.

DC: Could you ever get ahead of the rear-end job?

BY: No, there's no way you get ahead of that.

PY: No way you can get ahead of any job on the line.

BY: No way you can get ahead of Plant 8. Plant 8 was there, and the next one's coming at you.

DC: All right. So in the time of cutbacks, how did you get such a good job in Plant 8? It seems like you would've had less seniority.

BY: With low seniority.

DC: Low seniority and you got a better job?

BY: Yeah, they transferred me out of there.

PY: You'd be surprised the number of people who will not leave their home plant.

BY: They're afraid to leave—afraid to try something else.

PY: They're afraid they can't do it.

BY: It's scary. You know, you're walking into something you don't know nothing about, you know.

DC: But you had enough seniority to at least get a job somewhere.

BY: Get a job somewhere, yeah. I bumped somebody else out.

DC: So other people were choosing not to move into the vacancies at Plant 8.

BY: Right.

DC: OK, I see. So it was your sense that a lot of people just wouldn't move.

PY: Well I was that way for a long time. I didn't want to move, you know.

DC: Are you that way in general? New things you kind of . . .

PY: Yeah, I think so.

DC: Yeah, I mean some people are not . . .

PY: Very conservative.

DC: I have a son who doesn't like new things. He needs to see it for a long time and other people jump at the chance.

BY: It didn't bother me.

DC: Didn't bother you, OK. Huh. All right. That's an interesting angle. I haven't come up with that one. See you guys told me you wouldn't have anything to tell me—it's not true. But your sense was that there were a lot of people who just simply wouldn't consider it. You were one of them who wouldn't consider moving.

PY: Yeah. When I finally ended up having to leave my—things really got bad. About '85 again. No, about '90 I guess it would have been, things got bad and I got pushed around from job to job, and then—I got my twenty-five year clock on Thurs—on a Wednesday, and got laid off that Friday indefinitely. And then I got called back to the . . .

End of Side A

Begin Side B

PY: Either you went into this job bank and wherever they needed people—you maybe went down and filled in for this or that. And then from there I went to Plant 9 for awhile.

DC: Right at the tail end of your career?

PY: Yeah.

DC: OK.

PY: Yeah, during the tail end of my career. Finally, the last three years I ended up over in power train, cleaning offices on second shift. So that was good, that was a good job.

DC: When did you retire?

PY: '97.

DC: OK, so it was fairly recently that you were down at power train.

PY: Yeah.

DC: OK. We'll try to sneak up on that—the job bank and stuff again—I'm trying to keep us moving chronologically here a little bit. One thing, Bob, that I didn't ask about was you said you got married. And when was that?

BY: Um, let's see . . .

PY: '58. '59.

BY: '58, I guess it was.

DC: OK. And was your wife working in the plant?

BY: No. No. She worked for Kresge's.

DC: OK.

BY: She just graduated and she was working at Kresge's. And I got laid off and I was trying to build a house in White Lake out there. My father gave me an acre of land.

DC: Part of his land?

BY: Part of his land, yeah. He give me an acre. And we wasn't using the barn anymore for the horse, so we tore it down and I used the lumber out of that to build a house.

DC: So you got laid off—was that in the '58 recession where you got laid off?

BY: Yeah.

DC: OK. So what was that like?

BY: It was pretty scary. Thirty dollars a week unemployment.

DC: Was that from the union or was that from the state?

BY: From the state.

DC: OK, yeah. Thirty dollars a week.

BY: Yeah.

DC: And you had been making how much?

BY: I wasn't making too much more than that, probably. [laughs] Probably about sixty, probably.

DC: So did you get married and make your plans for the house before you knew you were going to get laid off?

BY: Ah, right about that time.

DC: Same time. It all came together.

BY: Well I got the house put up, you know, roofed it in and everything and had that roof on it and everything. And in '59 I got my notice to go in the Army. Got drafted.

DC: OK. In '59! How old were you then?

BY: I was about twenty-two, I guess, twenty-three.

DC: OK. Hm. Drafted, all right. So what happened then?

BY: I spent two years in the service.

DC: You did, OK. I've talked to a number of people who got drafted during World War II or during the Korean War, but . . .

BY: I was right in between the wars.

DC: Yeah. Yeah, between Korea and Vietnam.

PY: It was Berlin crisis era.

BY: Yeah, I—we had our bags packed to go to Berlin several times.

DC: That makes sense.

BY: But we got—I got the Vietnam bonus because the war was going on—some way or other, I don't know. It wasn't right for me to get any money from them.

DC: Well, I mean, you were before the big troop buildup but certainly we were involved.

BY: Right. But they were fighting over there then. I was in at this time of [?].

DC: Well where did you go to boot camp and stuff?

BY: Uh, Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri. And then I went to Fort Sill ,Oklahoma. Took artillery training. Then I went to Fort Bragg, North Carolina and I was in the artillery there.

DC: Artillery, OK. So a lot just happened at that stage: you got married, you're trying to build a house, then *whoosh*, you're in the Army.

BY: I'm in the Army. We boarded up the house and put up a fence so nobody could get at it. I just had the well drilled. I spent five hundred some dollars for a well. I really could have used that money to go in the Army with.

DC: Yeah. So did your wife go with you, then, to these . . .

BY: After boot camp, yeah.

DC: After boot camp, yeah. OK. Wow. So you said your bags were packed for Berlin several times. Did you ever go overseas?

BY: No.

DC: No, OK.

BY: We went to the train station.

DC: And what happened? You didn't get on the train?

BY: Didn't get on the train, they canceled it.

DC: OK, so that close to being on a ship.

BY: Yeah.

DC: Did you ever think about staying in the service?

BY: No way. [laughs] I knew I had a job back here, so I said, "I'm getting out of here as soon as I can." After I got out, I was out two years and then they called me up for the reserves, you know. So then I spent two years in reserves after that.

DC: So you would have gotten out in around, what, '61 or so?

BY: ‘61, yeah.

DC: OK. And then in ‘63, roughly, you got called in the reserves.

BY: Got called back in the reserves. I thought I was all *done* with it, you know?

DC: Yeah. Yeah, OK. What did you have to do for reserves?

BY: Well, we had to go to meetings once a month and we went to Wisconsin two weeks out of the year. I made sergeant then.

DC: OK. So you’d have to convoy up there or something?

BY: Yeah, we took a train.

DC: A train, all right. Yeah. Did you like the artillery?

BY: The artillery was fun.

DC: Yeah. What made it fun?

BY: Oh, I don’t know. Just loading up that big gun and shooting it off, I guess.

DC: Well again it was all training, so you didn’t have anyone shooting back at you at that point.

BY: Yeah, nobody shooting back at us.

DC: Yeah. What about—kind of switching gears again—did your family in the ‘50s ever go on vacations or did you have any kind of recreation activities or anything like that?

PY: Yeah, we always took a vacation every year.

DC: Where would you go?

PY: We always went to Ontario. [laughs]

DC: Oh, back to Ontario, OK. Did you have relatives there?

PY: Yeah, we had relatives, family, you know. My parents ended up buying a cottage, but I don’t think that was until the ‘60s—on the Canadian side of Lake Erie over there where they were raised. So you know—my brother and sister was a lot older than I were, was, and they were both married by the time. The ‘60s, you know, they were both—in fact, they were both married [pause]—I’m going to say my sister was married in ‘62, or ‘52.

DC: ‘52?

PY: Yeah.

DC: How much older than you are they?

PY: My brother was ten years and my sister was nine years older than me. And my brother went in the Korean—was in Korea. And I think he got drafted in '51.

DC: And you would have been just a sixth grader or something like that.

PY: Yeah. Yeah, I was just young. So really I was raised more like an only child.

DC: Yeah, I can see that. It's a big age difference. Did you remember talking to your brother at all about his experiences in Korea?

PY: My brother was wounded in Korea twenty-four hours before the cease-fire. And he had a piece of scrapnel [shrapnel] on his heel. And he was taken back and him and the guy that took him back were the only two that got out alive. The next bomb killed the rest. So I guess he was lucky. But he had awful nightmares when he come home.

DC: He did. OK, you remember that.

PY: Yeah. Yeah, oh yeah. He'd wake us up and he'd be screaming and hollering and under his bed.

DC: Did he live at home then for awhile?

PY: Yeah. Yeah, he was only eighteen when he got drafted—nineteen when he got drafted. He had hired into the shop and he had enough time that he could freeze—it took six months of that time.

DC: So he had already hired in.

PY: Yeah.

DC: Did he go back to work in the plant when he came back?

PY: Yes. Yes.

DC: But continued to live at home.

PY: Yeah, until he got married. I think he got married about '53, '54.

DC: Yeah. Did he get over the wounds?

PY: Yeah, he—they said he would always walk with a limp and stuff, but he did real well. He had a good doctor over there that took good care of him. The scrapnel [shrapnel] was in his

heel.

DC: Yeah, that would make it hard to—hard to move around.

PY: Yeah. He did well, you know. He never walked with any limp or anything.

DC: How about with the trauma? You said he was screaming . . .

PY: Well, he kind of got over that. But I guess—his wife always said that there would be nights that he'd still have dreams about that for a long time. You know, wake her up screaming and hollering and fighting, you know.

DC: But did he stay on at Pontiac Motor?

PY: Yes, he retired out of Pontiac Motor.

DC: OK. What was his job? What did he do?

PY: He worked in shipping and receiving. He worked at the warehouse. He ended up having liver cancer and he died when he was fifty-five.

DC: Oh, I'm sorry.

PY: And my sister died with cancer, too, of the liver. And she died at fifty-two, so.

DC: I'm sorry. That's—that's not fair.

PY: No, it isn't, but you know.

DC: Was the church a part of your family's life?

PY: My parents were—my Father was more of a churchgoer than my Mother. Yeah.

DC: What church was that?

PY: First Baptist of Pontiac.

DC: How about when you were a child? Did you go along with your Father?

PY: Oh yeah. Yeah. We went.

DC: And did you have friends at church and all? Was that a part of your social life as well as your religious life?

PY: Yeah. Yeah, I guess you'd say. Yeah.

DC: Some, OK. Let's see. Well, Bob, you got married what, in the late '50s, right? You just took the job in '53. What was your life like in between there and—you're a young guy, you're seventeen, eighteen years old, you're working at the plant. Were you still living at home or were you on your own?

BY: I was still living at home, yeah.

DC: OK. All right.

BY: I didn't have no car, even, back then.

DC: You'd come in with your Dad then?

BY: Yeah, I come in with my Dad and he would drop me off at my aunt's house. And she'd take me to work and my Mother, I mean my—he'd pick me up at my aunt's house here in Pontiac.

DC: OK.

PY: First thing he did was buy himself a car. [laughs]

DC: Soon as he could, huh? Get some independence.

BY: It took me awhile, you know. Had to get some money up, you know.

DC: Yeah. Was your paycheck your own then? Were you able to do with it as you pleased?

BY: Pretty much, yeah.

DC: OK, your parents weren't charging you rent and everything.

BY: No.

DC: OK. Because you [to Phyllis] said that as soon as you got your job in the department store, you were spending it on yourself.

BY: I just pretty much did that, too. When I hired in, I made $1.85 an hour. I remember that. My aunt that got me the job, that kind of got me the job there, she said I was making ten cents more an hour than she was! Because I was doing a different job like, you know.

DC: What was her job again?

BY: She was working the same unitizing thing, but she was doing a different type of work than I was.

DC: How long had she been there?

BY: Ah, probably—she'd been there ten years probably, or so.

DC: But you hired in and made more money than she did.

BY: Made more money than she did.

DC: Did she want the job that you had?

BY: No, not really. She worked with a lot of other women.

DC: So they had it divided up by . . .

BY: It was an easier job, you know.

DC: OK. So even in unitizing they had jobs for women and jobs for men?

BY: Yeah. Well, like fenders and bumpers and stuff like that—men did most of that.

DC: OK, you're packaging . . .

BY: Yeah, and the women did the little, light stuff.

DC: OK. And so they gave the wage rate based on the heaviness . . .

BY: Yeah, on the [?].

PY: There was weight restrictions on women when we first hired in, but I think they left about in the '70s. And then after that, they could put a woman on a real heavy job.

DC: Whether she could do it or not. Or the question is, if you could do it you could do it regardless of what gender.

PY: Yeah.

DC: OK. Yeah. Did either of you—were there African Americans in these jobs at all when you first got your jobs?

PY: Yeah, I worked with a lot of . . .

DC: A lot of black women in your department?

PY: Yeah. Yeah. Black women, black men.

DC: OK. So by the mid-'60s, black women and black men. How about in unitizing . . .

BY: I think it was pretty much white.

DC: Pretty much white, OK.

BY: Pretty much white in unitizing. I don't remember any black women or any black men in there, as far as that goes. I don't remember anybody like that.

DC: How about on the rear end job?

BY: On the assembly line . . .

DC: Assembly line, yeah.

BY: I don't remember any blacks. Well, there was a few—I take that—p take that back. I remember a couple of black ladies. They didn't work right in the line where I worked. They worked in a different department. But they were in Plant 8 working on the line.

DC: So you saw some black women on the line.

BY: Yeah. But they didn't do the heavy jobs, you know—like they had restrictions.

DC: Right, right. Well what about, then, in the axle job?

BY: There was no women in that department at all.

DC: No women in that department.

PY: Yeah, when the feminine movement come is when they took off all the weight restrictions.

DC: OK. Yeah.

PY: That was in the '70s.

BY: There was no blacks in that department, either.

PY: I said they didn't do women in the shop any favor. The feminine movement made it harder, if anything.

DC: OK, because of opening up these heavier jobs?

PY: Yeah, opening up the heavier jobs. Before, women were kind of sheltered a little from those heavier jobs. But, you know, if cutbacks came and you're line seniority, well you got put on it. So the feminine movement really didn't do much for women that worked in the shop.

DC: OK. Because you would get heavier jobs than what you were hired to do?

PY: Yeah, we were getting equal pay anyway.

DC: OK. Oh, so the disparity that you talked about was gone, you're saying, by the time you came in in the '60s. If women had a job that was lighter . . .

PY: About '70. I would say the early '70's is whenever the feminine movement got going. When I first hired in, you had weight restrictions. You couldn't be put on anything too heavy.

DC: And that was better.

PY: Yeah, it was better! [laughs] You know?

DC: Yeah, OK. All right. So when you say the feminist movement, was that the feminist movement within the union, or are you talking about . . .

PY: Outside the union, when they started talking equal—equal pay for equal work.

BY: That's when they burned their bras.

PY: Yeah. [laughs]

DC: OK, so you're talking about the outside, larger feminist movement. I wasn't sure if there were women within the plant who were arguing for this.

PY: Then they—they took off the weight restrictions and stuff. They couldn't have that.

DC: OK. All right. Did you recall the union being involved at all in those discussions about weight restrictions and job availability?

PY: I would imagine they were, but I didn't know about it all.

DC: OK. Did you ever have any need for a committee woman or man to come to your assistance on that job?

PY: Yeah, but it wasn't until later in my working life—health reasons, you know. My feet kind of got bad when I was working the job that I was standing on that all—I had tendonitis. I finally got put over on Plant 9 putting a few little things in on the line. I hated it, but it was . . .

BY: Lifters.

DC: What was it?

BY: Lifters.

DC: Lifters?

PY: Lifters, yeah.

BY: Hydraulic lifters.

DC: Oh, OK.

BY: Makes your valves go up and down.

DC: Yeah.

PY: But I only had maybe half the length of this room to walk back and forth. You know, if I could have done it, just went on down the line, I could have. But I was just stuck right there. I hated it. But it was an easier job.

DC: On your feet, but not on your hands?

PY: On my hands. On my hands. But then we got back to inspection and I went on inspection on [pause, then hesitantly] Plant 23. Axle line, I think. I was inspecting, but I was walking on steel all day.

DC: OK. And that was hard on your feet.

PY: Oh yeah. About killed my feet.

DC: When was that, when you were doing the inspecting?

PY: Oh, I'd say that was about '93.

DC: OK. So again, you're at the tail end of . . .

PY: Yeah. That was hard. That's when I got put over in power train. I got taken off of that and cleaning the offices.

DC: You said the union assisted you at some point. Was that in getting the transfers you needed?

PY: Getting the transfers I needed.

DC: OK. All right.

BY: She couldn't get along with that supervisor. [laughs]

PY: I couldn't get along with that lady.

DC: Well tell me about that.

PY: Oh!

BY: I liked her.

PY: She was a woman I hired—a black woman I hired in with, and she always *was* something else, but when she made supervisor she really was something else, especially with women. Men could get their way with her, but women—oh, Lord.

DC: And which department are we talking about now?

PY: Uh—axle department.

DC: Axle, OK. [to Bob] So did you work under her as well, or were you . . .

BY: I don't think I ever really worked with her, but she worked like around my area, whatever, you know, I didn't work right with her.

PY: I worked with her in plastics, too. She was my supervisor. I didn't have any trouble in plastics because I could do the job. But you know, she just was a nasty person. That's basically . . .

DC: OK. Now did you think that her nastiness was changed by becoming a supervisor?

PY: No, she was nasty before she ever was a supervisor. She just—that was her personality.

DC: Was it your sense that most supervisors had worked, you know, production or on the line or something earlier, and then moved up to being supervisors?

PY: Well, when we first hired in, they were from the old school. Supervisors came up through the rank. But—later in the '80s and '90s, we got people just hired in as supervisors and they didn't know what they were doing.

BY: School teachers. People with a college education. [laughs]

PY: Yeah. Different things. And they're trying—they're trying to tell you, you know—and I seen a lot of times those kind of supervisors, people take a lot of advantages of them, because they didn't know what they were doing. Of course, you know, you've been around the block a few times. People knew how to take advantage of them.

DC: Sure. Yeah. Now would anyone ever try to take advantage of the old-school ones who had come up through the ranks?

PY: You wouldn't get away with taking advantage of them! [laughs] It went from—maybe

because I was young. My supervisors when I first hired in were like people of authority. And then later on, supervisors became—they wanted to become your friend.

DC: So the ones who actually came from college wanted to be your friend?

PY: Yeah. I think so. They wanted to be your friend or something. They didn't have—maybe because *I* was getting older, too. When I first hired in, if my supervisor said, "Go stand in the corner," I would have went and stand in the corner. [laughs] You know?

DC: But by the '80s and '90'?

PY: Maybe because I was older and I had more seniority or something—maybe I didn't [pause]—I wasn't so afraid of them, or didn't take their word as law, you know?

DC: So it sounds like it's kind of hard to tell if it was the age—your age and maturity, or if it was . . .

PY: Their inexperience.

DC: Yeah. Right.

PY: A lot of it was their inexperience, too, you know? Heck, I know a little bit more than that guy!

DC: Well, I think of myself—if I were to walk into a plant, I wouldn't have a clue. You know, that's why I'm talking to you and that's why I ask you questions that might seem like this basic stuff to you, but for people who are outside the plant it's all new. It's all different.

PY: Well I think it was kind of a combination of the two—that they were easier to take advantage of.

DC: How did they react when they—or did they ever find out they were being taken advantage of? They must have.

PY: I don't know.

DC: Not necessarily.

PY: Bob has a neat story about a supervisor. [laughs]

BY: This guy was a Marine. He was like a lieutenant in the Marines. He had a good education, he come in, you know . . .

DC: When was this, roughly?

BY: It was in the '90s, I guess. Anyway, they made the part and it split in half. Because if it

started out, you start out with one part, you know? And as it goes down the line it makes two parts.

DC: OK, it's split in half.

BY: Yeah, it's split. So at the end of the line, you got two different parts, you know, right and the left hand to fit the car.

DC: What part is this?

BY: I don't even remember what it was. It's like an inner panel of it somewhere. But anyway, it split in half and about lunch hour he come down and told him to stop running, about 10:00 or so. Half the day, you know? And the woman that was running the line said, "Well why?" And she said, "Well you got production already." And she says, "No, I don't." You know? She had a counter showing one part, you know? And he said, "Well at the other end of the line we got two baskets down there, you know, so we got to double the count." You understand how he was figuring? [laughs]

DC: He's counting each one as two.

BY: Yeah. You know? He said, "You have a left and a right, so you got your production." But actually you got to run a thousand of each one of these, you know, whatever the count was.

DC: But for him, five hundred split in two was good enough.

BY: Yeah, that's good enough. He already had a thousand parts, you know? Shut the line off, you're running too many! How—why would you shut the line off when you're running too many, you know? That's crazy for a supervisor to do that. Let them run them, you know?

DC: Yeah. Oh man.

BY: He didn't want to overdo it.

PY: So this went on for about two weeks. Everybody on that line just stopped running them, you know?

DC: So what did you do then?

BY: Well the office finally caught up with it. You know, "Why aren't you running . . ." " . . . only half production?!", you know?

DC: And this guy didn't even know.

BY: He didn't know it—no. But he was the one that told them, you know. And one time the woman was running the job and she said, "Well, that's not making the limit down here—it's not running right," you know? And he said, "Well you're just a dumb press operator.

You don't know what you're talking about," you know? And so the line quit, you know, and he come down there and he ask her what was wrong. And she said, "I'm just a dumb press operator." [laughs] You got to work with the people, you know?

PY: You got to know how to talk to them.

DC: Yeah. Do you—do you remember—it sounds like in the '50s, things were different, when you first started out.

BY: A lot different. A lot different.

DC: They were, OK. So what you're describing really wasn't the case, it sounds like in your experience at least, in the '50s? Did you think your supervisors were . . .

PY: Were more, more—they came up through the ranks . . .

BY: They had knowledge.

PY: They were more knowledgeable, really.

DC: Yeah, because that's what your experience was in the '60s . . .

PY: Yeah.

DC: And then in the '50s that was your sense as well of these folks? You couldn't pull the wool over their eyes that way.

BY: Right.

DC: They would actually know what the parts were.

PY: [laughs]

BY: Then they told this guy, "Well, you know, if we run production you're supposed to bring us in lunch," and do this and that. He was buying the whole line lunch. [laughs]

DC: Now did you ever do anything like that earlier, like in the '50s or the '60s?

BY: Oh no, you wouldn't even think about that.

PY: You wouldn't, you wouldn't even—oh, you'd be afraid you might get fired! [laughs]

DC: Was this part of the guy wanting to be liked?

BY: Yeah. Oh, yeah. Likeable person, you know.

PY: I can remember the . . .

BY: 'If they like me, they'll run production for me,' you know? Right, right, right—OK.

DC: Yeah. OK.

PY: I can remember in the '60s we would stop maybe a little—five minutes early for lunch. And I always snuck up the stairs the back way. You know, my boss caught me one time. And I didn't do that again! I *waited* the five minutes. There was no leaving—leaving the floor early, you know?

DC: When did you two meet then?

PY: We worked together in the '80s. By that time I was divorced and he was divorced, and we got married in '86.

DC: All right. Was that in axles? Or where did you meet? Where were you working together?

BY: Plant 15. I was a welder.

DC: OK. Well let's follow your careers a little bit here. Somehow you got to Plant 15. I guess we missed a decade, you know, the '70s.

BY: Well I was—I come back out of the Army and I was working in the axle department, and this job opened up to build frames. And so it was a welding job. So I said, "Well, I'm going to try that." Paid a little bit more money, so I put in for that. And they sent me to school to learn how to weld to make—build these frames, you know.

DC: Had you ever welded anything before?

BY: No.

DC: OK. What made you decide you wanted to try that?

BY: Something different.

DC: So you like new things.

BY: I like to move around, yeah.

DC: My grandfather was a welder. I never learned. So anyways you were a welder then.

BY: Yeah, I worked on the frame job until it closed down.

DC: Which was when?

BY: Oh, [to Phyllis] you remember when that frame job closed? I don't even remember.

PY: It was in the '70s.

BY: '70s or the '80s?

PY: Late '70s, early '80s.

DC: So you worked a long time there. Yeah, like fifteen years or so on the frame job?

BY: No. The frame job only run about five or six years?

PY: I don't know that.

BY: Didn't run that long.

DC: Well what was it like when you were there?

BY: It was a whole brand-new line. I was right there when they first started it up.

DC: Did you like welding?

BY: I liked the welding part of it, yeah. And then I become a repairman and I worked in the back repairing the frames that needed to be repaired.

DC: OK, so if there were problems with production you'd go and repair them before they went out?

BY: Right.

DC: Is that what it was? OK. And was it the same situation, that you just wanted something new? Or why did you switch from welding to repair?

BY: Well, that was acetylene welding. Because you had to cut the parts off and weld it on. And I wanted to try acetylene welding, so I went back there and worked on that—tried that out.

DC: The repair was acetylene welding? I'm confused.

BY: One was MIG arc welding. MIG wire welding. And that's what I did on the line. But when you went to repair, you had to be able to acetylene. You had to cut the parts—cut the frames apart and put them back together.

DC: OK. So it was a different kind of welding, a different challenge.

BY: Yeah, well we still used a MIG welder to put it back together. But we had to use—had to

be able to use acetylene to cut with.

DC: OK. And what did you like best about that?

BY: Ah, the twelve hours a day I was working, I guess, and making a lot of money. [laughs]

DC: You liked the overtime?

BY: Yeah.

DC: Any drawbacks to the job?

BY: Yeah, the smoke and—one time I was working on a railroad car, because they missed a weld. And they stacked them [frames inside the car] like twenty high. And I was up on the very top frame and I was going to make the weld, I had acetylene thing up there. Just going to acetylene weld it in. And the crane came down and hit me, and it squeezed me up to about six inches. And I was very lucky to come out of that one alive.

DC: Yeah. You were way up on top of that?

BY: I'm up on top of the frame, you know?

DC: What, where did it—did it like wedge you in?

BY: Yeah, well they had a stacker crane. What it did, it went down inside and opened up, pick up twenty. You know, actually it picked up forty frames at a time, because it got double rows on the flat car. And they put a big piece of metal on top of it to tie it down, the frame. And I was setting up on top of the piece of metal—going to weld on the top frame.

DC: And that thing came down.

BY: Well, he was driving it. They had two of them. He was pushing one and driving the other one. And it came down, you know. And I was setting up there, and it pinned me between the two things. It was like a big piece of metal that just went down inside it.

DC: Did he not see you? I mean how . . .

BY: He didn't see me because he's way down here on the floor. See, he's riding on a railroad track down here and this thing is way up here. I was on the outside frame, you know. He couldn't see me.

DC: So he couldn't see up and over. Yeah.

BY: I was way up over, up overhead, you know? And he was pushing the one and not driving.

DC: How did you survive?

BY: Well, it bent me over real bad and tore up my back, you know, scratched it all up. And I was with another guy so that he went and got help and they got me down out of there, and I spent a couple days in the hospital. Bleeding out of one kidney for awhile.

DC: Yeah. Well that must have done a lot of damage.

BY: Well it—it didn't do that much really. I was just lucky, that's all. Bruised me all up, because when it hit me, I went like that and hit the frames. I was all black and blue.

DC: From hitting metal.

BY: Yeah, metal. It's all steel up there.

DC: Yeah. That sounds nasty. How long was it before you went back to work?

BY: Ah, I was off about—actually, I didn't sign up for workman's comp. They sent me my paycheck. They didn't want me to draw workman's comp. And I was on restrictions. I went back probably in a couple weeks. And they give me a lot of restrictions because they sent me up to main medical and I was still bleeding. My kidney was still bleeding—damaged my kidney. But it healed back up.

DC: It did heal, OK. But if you're on payroll then, you know . . .

BY: I was on payroll all the way through the whole thing, you know? They don't want you draw that workman's comp.

DC: [to Phyllis] Did you have any dramas like that in your jobs?

PY: No, I was very lucky. I never had more than scratches and stuff like that. But I know quite a few people who had had real bad accidents. You know, but I was lucky. I didn't have any problems.

DC: Maybe we can trace the route that you took to where you guys ended up in the same department. Because I think that was what we were talking about—you were welding and all, but which jobs did you take before you left for the same department?

PY: Well I kind of just—I just stayed right there in [Plant] 91 until probably the late '80s. And he happened to transfer in, and . . .

DC: OK. He was the . . .

PY: He was divorced at the time and living in Holly, and I was divorced and I lived in Holly, and I needed a ride. That's how we really got to know each other.

DC: OK. So you were in Holly, as well.

PY: Yeah. We rode together.

DC: Oh, OK.

BY: After the frame job I went to the—to the pipe department, where they build tailpipes and all that. And I was working there, welding on those. And I think that's probably where . . .

PY: Yeah. I don't know. I really don't know where you worked but I needed a ride and, you know, I asked people if they knew anybody that lived in Holly that—you know, we were introduced that way, more or less for a ride.

DC: OK. Let's see now. [to Phyllis] You had the two kids then? Is that right?

PY: Yeah. Two children. Yeah.

DC: OK. Yeah. And let's see.

PY: And he had three children.

DC: He had three, OK. And how old were your kids—or when were they born? [short pause] Put you on the spot here. That's not fair.

PY: You were—your oldest daughter would've been born in '64. Or '63. '63, and then he has a daughter that's the same age as my son.

DC: OK, so born in the late '60s.

PY: Yeah. '64—my son was born in '65. They were three months apart.

BY: OK. My boy was '74

PY: Yeah.

DC: OK, '74. OK. I'm trying to—there's so many things to ask about. Did either of you ever get involved in local union issues at all?

PY: I never—I just minded my own business. I never got involved with the union. You know, I supported the union and I would vote for the—go out on strike and this and that and the other, because I realized that was the only leverage we had. And I was always happy that we had a union. A lot of people thought that was a waste of money, you know, but I never felt that way. I wouldn't have wanted to work in one of those plants without having some sort of protection.

DC: OK. But you said that some people didn't understand or didn't appreciate . . .

PY: No. No, oh the union just, you know. Well I didn't agree with everything the union did. Because it always did seem like the guy that got in trouble was the guy that got all the union help, you know. Some of those people got in trouble one time after another after another, they needed to be let go.

DC: OK. So you thought there were times when the union defended people who really didn't deserve it—the defense.

PY: Yeah. But other than that, I wouldn't have wanted to work in there without a union.

DC: OK, yeah. How about you, Bob? Did you get involved in any of the local activities?

BY: Not much, no. I remember one guy got fired eighteen times for being drunk, you know. I think they defended him a little bit too much, you know, but they have to represent everybody, you know.

PY: It's people like that that I didn't ever think they needed to represent.

BY: Make it a bad name, you know?

DC: Yeah, that's a tough one, isn't it?

PY: Yeah. I'm sure that the union didn't really want to represent him, but that was their job too.

DC: Did you have any friends or coworkers who were defended by the union?

BY: I remember the one time I was laid off and we had to come to the union hall to get our unemployment and I waited in line and they said, well, they couldn't find my records. Come back, you know. So I came back and they couldn't find my records. You know, I was married and had two kids. Had the car payment, house payment and everything. Well I went into the office and I happened to get a hold of Charlie Melton, Bonnie's . . .

DC: Right, husband.

BY: And he was president at that time. And I told him I was, you know—I need this money, you know? And he came up, and he found my records for me. So that was a big help, you know? Otherwise I would have been sent home again, you know, without any money.

DC: It seems like a pattern—people lose your records. Sitting on the desk in front of them, they don't look.

BY: Yeah, you know? And he went and got my records and put them right in front of them, and I went to the front of the line, you know.

DC: Did you know him before then?

BY: I knew *of* him.

DC: OK, yeah. It was a big local, wasn't it?

PY: Yeah.

BY: Yeah, it's a big local. But I never really got involved much, either, you know.

DC: Did you pay attention at all to what the national-level UAW leaders were doing? The Walter Reuthers of the world and the [shaking heads]—no, OK. Yeah.

PY: Now I can remember thinking when they were building Black Lake, that was a big waste of money. You know. I can—you know, we had to have a surtax put on us. Didn't they raise our union dues to . . .

BY: Yeah, raised our union dues to build Black Lake.

PY: And I didn't think that was right, because I didn't understand the whole situation.

DC: Have you ever been up there?

PY: As a retiree I have.

DC: What's it like?

BY: Beautiful.

PY: Yeah, it's a beautiful place, but . . .

DC: But still at the time you were getting more money deducted from your paycheck.

PY: I didn't want it. I didn't see any use for it.

BY: We've been up there camping before.

PY: Yeah, we've been camping. We've stayed at the lodge.

DC: Is camping something that you have done over many years, or is that a recent thing?

PY: Well I never camped before we were married.

BY: I did.

DC: OK, yeah. Did you camp as a kid?

BY: No, not that much. I remember going fishing with my Father and stuff like that.

DC: OK. Any hunting or anything?

BY: Oh, we used to go deer hunting.

DC: Did you? OK. Did you look forward to it?

BY: To what now?

DC: Did you look forward to deer hunting?

BY: Oh yeah! Oh yeah!

DC: Where would you go?

BY: Up by Mio and Lewiston and up in that area.

DC: Up in northern lower peninsula.

BY: Yeah.

DC: Yeah, I've talked to a lot of people who look forward to that every year. So your Father liked to hunt and fish and stuff.

BY: Oh yeah.

DC: OK. Did you do that with your kids?

BY: No, I took my son a lot of fishing, but I never went hunting with him much. I just kind of stopped—dropped out of hunting.

DC: Any other activities that you liked to do outside the plant, you know, bowling or dancing or music or anything like that? Were there any things that . . .

PY: Me—by the time I worked and took care of the house and—I always have gardened. Other than that I don't think I ever had too many outside activities.

DC: Yeah. What kinds of things did you grow in your garden?

PY: Oh, vegetables.

BY: We still have a big garden.

DC: Yeah?

PY: Yeah, we still grow a big garden, but now I grow flowers, too.

DC: OK, yeah. So would you can vegetables and stuff?

PY: Oh yeah, back in those days I canned them. I canned—three years ago was my last time. I decided I don't need to do this any more! Too much work!

DC: It is a lot of work. Did you enjoy gardening?

PY: Yeah, I have always enjoyed seeing things grow.

DC: I run a community garden down in Ann Arbor, so I can appreciate that.

BY: We grow pumpkins every year for the grandkids. We have a pumpkin party, you know, and they come over and pick out their pumpkins.

DC: So you grew up on the farm but don't mind working in the garden now. I've talked to so many people who had to work in a farm or garden . . .

BY: That don't bother me. Really we weren't that big of farmers so to say, you know. We were more like gentlemen farmers or—you know.

DC: Recreational farmers.

BY: Recreational farmers, yeah.

DC: So do you grow giant pumpkins or just regular . . .

PY: We like the jack-o-lantern pumpkins.

BY: Like twenty pounds, twenty-five.

PY: We have nine grandchildren between us.

BY: I have growed hundred-pound pumpkins before, but they don't really turn out nice.

DC: So are you still living out in Holly?

BY: Yeah.

PY: Yeah.

DC: Is it the same property?

PY: No.

DC: No, OK. Well can you think of questions that I have not been asking you that you thought I was going to or that I ought to ask you?

PY: No. I think you covered it pretty good.

DC: It's been great. You guys are wonderful at answering and, you know, we talked about the problem of possibly talking over the top of each other. That didn't happen. You guys were excellent. This is like you practiced. Let's see. I don't really have any other major lines of questions. So I guess I'll just say thank you very much for spending some time with me. If I think of others, though, I might come up and talk to you at the luncheon or something like that.

BY: That'd be fine.

DC: And if you can think of anybody else who might be willing to talk with me, I'm always happy for those connections.

BY: Maybe this Blanche would like to talk to you.

PY: Well, she could really give you—she probably hired in during the war, and I think he was probably there during the war, too.

DC: That would be fantastic.

PY: And they would be good people.

BY: Her and her husband both.

PY: Did you interview Margaret Webber?

DC: Well, I've been trying to reach her but she's so busy, she's never available.

PY: She's another one that's . . .

DC: Yeah, Margaret Beaudry introduced me to Margaret Webber, and I've called Margaret Webber several times. But each time she's either out of town or . . .

PY: Margaret Beaudry got hired in during the Korean stuff. Margaret Webber was in World War II.

BY: Beaudry got hired in the same time I did, about.

DC: She had actually . . .

BY: I had a little bit more seniority than she did. I remember way back when we were working in this one department, it was—and they put me on a machine, it was a axle thing-like.

And it was a tube like this—it went into the Trans Am, or whatever. I don't know. But anyway, I tried to bump her off of days, and I couldn't bump her.

DC: She had more seniority?

BY: I had more seniority than she did. But I called the committeeman about that and they didn't bump her. Her husband was a painter, and he had a lot of pull in there, I guess, or something. I don't know. But they ended up moving her so I could come onto days.

DC: So you actually did eventually bump her.

BY: I didn't really bump her. [laughs]

DC: OK.

BY: They shuffled us around.

DC: OK. All right. But it sounds like the actual procedure was . . .

PY: You kind of had to watch her. I remember one time I got put on afternoons and I had kids at home. And at that time they were in school. This other girl that had a little less seniority than me, they left her on days because she didn't have a ride. And I said, "Well what's more important, a ride or a babysitter?" I mean, if I can find a babysitter, she can find a ride.

DC: So they're trying to be generous to this one girl but it affects you and they don't see how that has a ripple effect—is that how it works?

PY: Yeah. Yeah.

DC: OK, it's like Margaret's life is important, but seniority wasn't observed, it sounds like.

BY: Yeah.

PY: Yeah.

BY: My seniority wouldn't bump her out.

PY: Sometimes it was who you knew, you know?

BY: I retired the same time she did.

PY: The union got everything—tried to keep everything on the even keel.

DC: Yeah. But those are problems kind of within the union, not necessarily between the union and the management.

PY: Well, sometimes it was management.

BY: I think it was management that was holding her. It wasn't the union. I don't think the union really cared, you know.

DC: Oh, OK. But you said that her husband had some pull? Was that pull with the company or pull with the union?

BY: I think maybe that's . . .

PY: I imagine it was pull with the superintendent.

BY: Superintendent in the company. Because he was a painter. He did a lot of fancy painting stuff.

PY: He did. He probably did some extra work for him on the side or something.

BY: For the superintendent or something, you know.

DC: OK, so there could be these connections that are hard to see if you're not on the inside.

PY: Yeah.

DC: OK. Yeah, that's tricky. You have certain levels of favoritism, but some of it might be motivated by noble intentions and some might not be.

PY: Yeah. Yeah some could be motivated by union affiliation. Some of it could be, you know, by management. You know, but you have enough people in there that's always watching everything. They can put you on the straight and narrow.

DC: Sure, yeah. Well people have to look out for themselves.

BY: I know this one superintendent, he was messing around with a woman that worked in there, you know. And he would put somebody else on her job and they'd have a big fight out here in the aisle sometimes. [laughs]

DC: Wow. Was it . . .

BY: Her husband was a painter, too.

DC: Was there a lot of that going on, though?

PY: Not a terrible lot.

DC: Did you think women were treated OK in the workplace?

PY: Yeah. I always felt like I was being treated all right. I never had any problems. But I always tried to fit right in and I didn't make no big deal—you know, somebody—there was people that would, "Oh, so and so cussed in front of me." Well, as long as they weren't cussing *at* me, I didn't care, you know. It just went over my head. I didn't try to make any—I remember this one girl. Years—back in the '70s when they were burning their bras, she came to work with this real tight top on, and no bra on. Of course the guys all made obscene remarks. Let's face it. You're working with men—mostly men! And she went to the boss and the boss went down and told those guys to knock it off.

BY: They should have sent her home. [laughs]

PY: They didn't. And then a day or so later she came in with the same thing, and of course somebody said something. So finally he just told her like it was: "Well, if you're going to dress that way, you got to expect that kind of comment!" Well then she went to the union, and she got transferred out [laughs]. But that was good, because she was a troublemaker. I always just tried to get along with the guys, fit in with the guys, and, you know, if they had a bare-naked woman on their toolboxes, on the inside, I chose not to look at it. A lot of women . . .

End of Interview