International Union,
United Automobile, Aerospace, and Agricultural Implement Workers of America,
UAW

International Executive Board
Oral Histories

Duane (Pat) Greathouse

Interviewed by Glenn Ruggles
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Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs
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RUGGLES: Let's start, Mr. Greathouse, with where you were born and your parents and early life on the farm.

GREATHOUSE: I was born at West Salem, Illinois, which is about 250 miles south of Chicago, across from St. Louis, over near the Indiana border. I lived there until December of 1934, when I was nineteen years of age, and I left and went to Chicago. My parents and their parents were early settlers down there. My father's people came, initially I guess, from Pennsylvania and then went down to Virginia and over into Ohio and settled in southern Illinois in 1803, 1 guess it was, and lived there ever since. My father was born on the farm where we lived — they had been there with other relatives and farmed all their lives.

RUGGLES: You graduated from high school?

GREATHOUSE: Yes, I graduated from high school in 1932.

RUGGLES: You hinted in an earlier interview that you had some experience with mine workers. Can you tell us about that?

GREATHOUSE: Well, there were some mine workers in the area, but I never belonged to them. The only unions in the area around there that we were familiar with were the Mine Workers and, obviously, some of my people's relatives worked in the mines down around Marion and Herrin and those areas in southern Illinois where there were substantial struggles during the early days of the Mine Workers union.

RUGGLES: Did you have any direct experiece with them?

GREATHOUSE: No I didn't. I was not a member and there weren't mines there directly where we lived.

RUGGLES: Why did you leave the farm?

GREATHOUSE: I left the farm to get a job and enough money to go back and build a filling station down there. I'm still trying to get it!

RUGGLES: Your experience seems to be directed almost entirely toward organizing. You became involved in organizing very early in your union history.

GREATHOUSE: I think it was what happened to a lot of people, seeing things that were completely foreign to us in the treatment of people. When I went to work in the plant I was young. I was used to a lot of work and the assembly line didn't really bother me. I could keep up with the jobs without any trouble. But I saw what they did to people and how they treated people. Each year when we would have a model change, you would see the people, not old people as we know them today, but the people maybe 40 or 45 years of age, who were having trouble keeping up with the lines. When the new models started up, you looked around, and those people weren't there — they just weren't recalled. The only people that were recalled were the young, active people that the company wanted back.

We also had the situation where supervision ruled from fear. We had a foreman that used to say every day, "Get them or get out. There's plenty more outside wanting in." And every day or so they would fire somebody just to teach everybody else a lesson. We decided that that's not the way you treat people. We'll do something about it.

RUGGLES: So you became an organizer.

GREATHOUSE: Yes.

RUGGLES: Did you have any special training as an organizer? Was the UAW helping to prepare people?

GREATHOUSE: No, as a matter of fact, there wasn't, and very frankly, that's why in the early days of the union we had as many of the various political ideologies having as much influence as they did in the union, because these people were really the only ones that had any knowledge and schooling as to the operations of unions. Most of us who came from the small towns and the farms really knew nothing about unions or procedure and we had to learn. So that, I think, is why it took some period of time to develop the leadership of the unions with a non-political base and why you saw what you did in the early days of the union.

RUGGLES: In those early days, especially with the Communist Party, there were some very clever and sophisticated people at work in the union meetings. How did you overcome that with your inexperience?

GREATHOUSE: Well, as I said, it took time. And in the very early days, there wasn't so much battling going on. Really, the split came, I guess, during the war and following the war, when you got into the second front arguments, and then the movement to take over control of the locals. I think that when they moved to take over control, you had to fight back.

RUGGLES: At one point you were working at Ford Motor Company (I believe it was Ford) and you took a voluntary layoff and went to another plant. Do you recall why you did that?

GREATHOUSE: Oh, sure. That was at the beginning of the war, after Pearl Harbor. We quit building passenger cars. I was committeeman and was in the plant on preferential seniority when they had a layoff. The plant went down until we had only about 100 people or so in the plant. I was our delegate to the 1942 convention in

Chicago. I went back after the convention and a number of our people who were laid off from the Ford plant went right next door to a plant called the Pressed Steel Car Company. It was one of the old car shops in south Chicago that were then building M3 tanks for the British purchasing agency. District 50 union was in that plant, and our union hall was there right close to that plant. So they would come by the plant every day complaining about conditions in the plant and the fact that we ought to do something about it.

As I said, I lived right in the area too and I was young and felt a little guilt about still being in the plant with all these people laying off. So I said that I would take a voluntary layoff in the plant and not use my preferential seniority, which I did, and went over and hired in to the Pressed Steel plant. As soon as I was in there, everybody started coming around and saying, "What will you do about getting the union in the plant?"

So I worked the second shift, got all the dirty jobs anybody could get. They put me on an old boring mill and an older drill press, dirty and everything. But I kept working at them because I knew what was going on. They had a 90-day probation period. On the 89th day, they came around and fired me from the plant. The excuse was that I required too much supervision. Well, I didn't require any supervision, but they were complaining because everybody was stopping by and visiting with me all the time.

I went to the National Labor Relations Board and I was reinstated with back pay. But in the meantime — this was the end of November — I went outside and set up an office and got an NLRB election on January 20th of 1943, and we won the election by about 70 % and took over the bargaining rights in the plant. Then in February of 1943, I went to work for the international union.

RUGGLES: Weren't you meeting some resistance from the companies inside the factory? Weren't they giving you some trouble?

GREATHOUSE: Of course. I said they fired me. [laughter]

RUGGLES: Other than that, I mean these were the days when, oh, for instance, Ford had his goon squads.

GREATHOUSE: Oh, yes, well we did that. As a matter of fact at our plant there was one person killed out on the distribution lines in the early days, a staff member by the name of White. The goons there, they called them the Ford Service Department people, but they were just goons and foremen. I can remember when we were organizing, we were talking about goals and such things as getting holidays and vacations. Foreman used to come around to me and say, "You don't want that. You don't want to get paid for not working. That's socialism, to get paid for not working. You don't want to do that."

Of course, they had their own company union, their own organization that they tried to get people to join. They had people following people over to meetings. I think this was one of the reasons why the organization was formed by just the young people. These older people I talked about, the ones 40 and 45, probably thought it couldn't be done, that you couldn't take over a big corporation like that, and they also worried about the fact that they would lose their jobs. We were young, we didn't care. I've said so many times, if anybody would have asked anybody if we could have done it, they would have said, "You're crazy." But we did it because we didn't know any better.

RUGGLES: Let's jump ahead to the period when Walter Reuther was elected president in 1946. You were an international representative at this time.

GREATHOUSE: Yes, I went on staff in January of 1943. I was young, but within the staff I think I represented the end local as a point of view. I was from the Chicago area. The director at that point was Joe Mattson from Minneapolis. Joe was a nice, inoffensive guy. The assistant director was Paul Russo, who came out of the old Nash plant, which is now American Motors Local 72 in Kenosha. Well, Russo was close to the Thomas forces of the Thomas-Addes group. I supported, ideologically and so on, the programs of Reuther.

So prior to that convention, we discussed at length what role the regional director should play at the convention. I kept insisting that people in our region really were of both points of view, that the director should go to the convention and remain neutral, let the people go where they pleased. Then he would be re-elected, it wouldn't be a problem, because (this was most important) he'd been the first termer, starting in 1943.

They said that's what they would do, and a week before the convention they left early and went to Atlantic City for a board meeting that takes place. I was to come in by train with the delegates and bring the cases of booze and things like that (you had to take your own supplies in with you).

So when we landed in Atlantic City, first thing as we got off the train, Russo got me on the side and told me that the reservations were all fouled up and I wasn't staying down at the same hotel where they were with all the delegates. I was staying in another little hotel down the street. I figured things didn't look too good. So then I found out that the night before they had gone to a Thomas-Addes caucus and had pledged the region to the Thomas-Addes forces. I didn't like that and got together with some other people,

delegates that were coming in that didn't like it. So we set up, down at the hotel where I was staying, our own pro-Reuther caucus. I chaired the caucus.

We recognized it was going to be a tough fight. I remember one of the staff members then, an English fellow by the name of George Rose from Wisconsin, said to me, "Pat, what will you do after the convention?" I said, "Well, I can always go back to the farm." He says, "'Tis a healthy life." I said, "Yes, I know."

Anyway, we split the region again, right down the middle. I went back home. They didn't call me in and discharge me. I went back and I was working out of the office every day. I went out and had a meeting one afternoon, got home that night, I had a special delivery letter telling me I was removed from staff. So I was fired in May, 1946. I went back to the local union and became the financial secretary of the local. I was there until 1947.

RUGGLES: Was it Mattson that sent you the letter firing you?

GREATHOUSE: Yes.

RUGGLES: Did he explain in the letter why?

GREATHOUSE: Just, I think, a reduction in staff or something. It was about two lines. I still have the letter. So anyway, in 1947 I went back to the convention. Then though, when I was elected the first time, I guess, we decided to put it together. I didn't fire the whole staff; I kept half of them. This guy Rose came in when I got elected and said, "Well, I'm a man of few words. Am I in or out?" I said, "You're out." [laughter] So that was it.

RUGGLES: That's when you were regional director.

GREATHOUSE: That was when I got elected, yes, in 1947.

RUGGLES: Let's go back just before that period. There was a Progressive caucus organized in Region 4.

GREATHOUSE: Yes.

RUGGLES: Did you have anything to do with that?

GREATHOUSE: I organized it. [laughter]

RUGGLES: I've seen the documents . . .

GREATHOUSE: Have you?

RUGGLES: But I haven't seen your name on them. Could you tell us . . .

GREATHOUSE: Oh yes. I put that together and typed up the literature and ran the leaflets in one of the local unions out there.

RUGGLES: This was in between the time Walter first got elected in 1946 . . .

GREATHOUSE: That was the caucus that we developed for 1947. One of the projects, of course, that we took on was the defeat of the FE-proposed merger that they had. That was really set up to directly affect us, because the biggest block of those FE local unions were in Region 4. This was one of the things that was designed to save that region for the Thomas-Addes forces.

RUGGLES: You've been described as being militantly anti-Communist in that the FE workers, along with a lot of other factors in Region 4 were seemingly controlled by Communists. Did that have a lot to do with your approach to organizing your people?

GREATHOUSE: Well, I don't know that I'm militantly anti-Communist. Again, as I said, I wasn't raised in the concept of any of the ideologies. I just didn't believe in them. I didn't believe that anybody ought to have an obligation within the trade union movement to anything but his union, and that ought to be it. In the early days when we

were first being organized, there were people of various branches of the Communist Party that I at least thought were carrying out that point of view, that I was familiar with their activities. We had the Stalinists, we had the Trotskyites, the Cannonites and the Shachtmanites, a little of everything out there that you had. They tried to destroy me in the local union, as well as other people. They put out the leaflets, they carried on all the campaigns to try to do that. I suppose that, if anything, further cemented my feelings that we should have just a trade union and not . . .

As far as the FE thing was concerned, I suppose it was two things, one of which was the Communist leadership, but not really so much, because whether it had been Communist leadership or not, I felt strongly, being from the farm area of the Midwest, that the workers in the implement industry and all those should be part of our union and should be in one union. Over the years I have always maintained a relationship with the farmers union, the national farm organization, the rural electric people and the implement industry and auto, so it was really more of a desire to unite them in one union than it was to worry about the Communist end of it.

RUGGLES: But you weren't in favor of that merger in early 1947.

GREATHOUSE: No, because that merger was designed as a political merger, to bring the people in, as you know, with all of their full membership, their staff, their full voting rights at the next convention. Really what it was designed to do, in this area, was to save the regional director.

RUGGLES: By the early 1950's, thousands of farm implement workers had been convinced to come over to the UAW. How did you convince something like 16,000 workers to switch from farm implement to the UAW?

GREATHOUSE: Basically, in talking about goals and programs and in bargaining. They had no good unions in farm implement, but they really didn't bargain. What they would do is they would get people all revved up, of course blame the company for everything, shut the plants down, then sit there until one or the other of them wore out, and one of them would fold up. After they folded up the strike and went back to work, then they claimed that it was a great victory that they'd kept the company from destroying the union. That was a great victory.

At the point we finally won it in Caterpillar in Peoria in 1948, we'd been down there since 1945. As a matter of fact, I lost my front teeth down there in 1945.

RUGGLES: I was going to ask you — I have that in my notes — about your front teeth.

GREATHOUSE: Yes, I lost them in a distribution down there in 1945.

RUGGLES: Can you tell us about that, how you lost your front teeth?

GREATHOUSE: That was kind of an interesting thing. I learned something that day. I only had about half a dozen people down there to handbill the plant. One morning we were out handbilling the plant and I was in front of the main entrance going into the plant there in East Peoria. A group of the FE supporters, workers, kind of gathered in little groups beside us as we were getting people going in. So they waited until about everybody had got in and then they kind of come up around us and one fellow in front of me come up and said, "Are you going to be here this afternoon passing out papers?" I said, "Yes, we are." About that time from behind the guy slugged me right here over this eye, so I got a lump there. Another guy hit me from the front, so I just backed up and dropped my papers. I was young and thought we'd have a little fun, and I

said to our guys, "Come on fellows, let's go!" I meant to fight. I turned around and looked, and they were going down the street as fast as they could run! I decided I was never going to do that again. Three of us were left there, me and two of the local guys that were there, and we got bounced around pretty good.

Anyway, we kept after that, the same time we had a campaign going up in the McCormick works in Chicago in 1945. The first election we had up there we lost it, but in 1948, of course, we finally got the Peoria plant. That was the time when you had the question of signing under the Taft-Hartley Act. FE would not sign, so on the ballot when the election was held, they were not on the ballot. They were advocating a "no" vote. So the IAM was there; they had a long strike, then we won the election.

We then went at the same time down to Springfield, Illinois at the Allis-Chalmers plant which they had, and we won that election. We had a campaign going on at that time at the Harvester plant over in East Moline, and that's where we also had a battle out at the plant gates and had quite a few people roughed up. What happened there is that there's a road goes by, and an entrance for almost a block right across the railroad tracks down to where you go in the plant gate, in that area. We were handbilling, so they waited until the plant let out and then the whole mob came out and the guys jumped on us at that time.

We had some real battles. Of course, we were the outsiders then. East Moline police worked for the local boys, made some arrests. They arrested Jack Livingston and I and took us down to the station, booked us, photographed us, fingerprinted us. Jack was livid. He was really jumping up and down — they couldn't do that. Eventually he went to court and made them give him back his photos and fingerprints and everything else. It

didn't really bother me; I'd been in jail several times. But Jack was very concerned. So we went from there immediately over to meetings in Peoria.

RUGGLES: Organizing must have been sort of discouraging. In fact, isn't organizing one of the dirtiest jobs in the union?

GREATHOUSE: It may be. I liked organizing, because I think it's the lifeblood of the union. Obviously you have to keep getting new people into the union for two reasons, three really: to give them the benefits, to protect the jobs of other people and also to infuse new ideas and new enthusiasm into the union.

One of the first things that I did when I got in in 1943 was to get into organizing. One of the first plants to organize was the Dodge Chicago plant in south Chicago, the big complex down at 79th and Cicero where we had 25,000 people working during the war. We organized that plant. At the same time another group of people on the staff were organizing the Douglas plant up at where O'Hare Airport is now. They made the bodies of the planes. We had the Bendix plant down in Chicago and the Studebaker plant out north of Midway Airport. Many of these plants set up so that most of our work there was done in organizing and getting these people into the union.

We had troubles during the bargaining with some people. We had some tough strikes at the end of the war, one in Jones foundry out there in south Chicago. We had it so that where they were running scabs in, we had mass picket lines every day. As a matter of fact, I got arrested three days out of four.

RUGGLES: How did you handle the scab problem in those days?

GREATHOUSE: Well, mainly you had mass picketing and tried to keep the people out of the plants.

RUGGLES: Were they physically stopped from going into the plants?

GREATHOUSE: In many instances, yes. The Chicago police department had a labor detail, so you didn't have everybody. I had a pretty good relationship with the labor detail, because in the FE fights and so on, they certainly weren't giving us too much trouble — we'd bounce around with them. We never did pay any fines or anything. Sometimes the companies were out taking pictures and they would have to arrest you, but we'd run down and get them out of jail real fast.

As a matter of fact, a few times this police captain and I would negotiate, sometimes right out in the middle of the street, on how much time he was going to give us before he arrested anybody, how many they were going to arrest, and we'd pick out even who it was going to be. I remember one case where we did that, and the police got in and grabbed one fellow and it was the wrong fellow and the police captain went up and grabbed him and said, "No, no, no, not him, this one! Not that one, this one!" They took him down to the station and I went down with the station wagon and got him out, come back, and he grabbed me and he says, "Don't let them get back on the line. I don't want to have to arrest the guy twice the same day!"

RUGGLES: One of the things that you encountered when you took over Region 4 was an awful lot of difficulty in places like Milwaukee. You had to become an administrator of Local 248. Just what does an administrator do? How does that work in the UAW structure, and what did you do in 248?

GREATHOUSE: Mainly, of course, the administrator is placed over the local by the International Executive Board, either directly or replacing all the officers or with the authority to replace the officers. In this case, 248, which was the Allis-Chalmers local in

West Allis, had been on strike for a long time, had a leadership which was supposedly Communist-oriented, at least Christoffel and Buse and so on. They had lost the strike, people had gone back to work. Out of 10,000 people in the plant, if I remember correctly, I think there were 184 dues-paying members at that time, but the local union was still being run by those people.

We had the convention in November and we had the elections. First board meeting we had was the weekend after Thanksgiving, at the Fort Shelby Hotel in Detroit. We didn't have much staff, because some of the old staff we had given notice to terminate and we didn't have money enough to hire new ones, so we didn't have a lot of staff. One of the first jobs that I got — I think it was December lst — the board acted to make me administrator over Local 248.

So I went back to Milwaukee and gathered up the four or five staff members in the area and some of the local people that we had that had supported us in Racine and Milwaukee to talk about what we would do to move and rebuild the local, because first of all, they refused to turn the local over to us. They locked the building up and we couldn't get in. We had to go to court to get an order and be able to get into the building.

Then they called a meeting of the local union down in the basement of a Serbian hall down in south Milwaukee. So we went to that meeting — it was the back of a bar — and also a number of these local people from the local unions come up to give us support in case we needed it. We went in there and Christoffel made a speech, ranting and raving about what they were going to do to the international. I went to the meeting and when he got done, I just got up and told them that we had an administrator, that I was the administrator and there wasn't going to be any motions, there wasn't going to be any

officers, we were going to run it, I was going to run it, and that's the way it was going to be.

In the meantime, our guys were out in the barroom having a few drinks and laughing it up because Christoffel and them had cut a big swath over the years and by the time we got done inside, they were saying, "Look, you got all these ruffians out here, what are they going to do to us? You got to give us safe conduct out of here." So we opened the back door and let them go home and we took over the local. But then we had to start from nothing on the rebuilding process.

Then we met with the company to get a contract and the company would sit there — nice people, give you a lot of nice words, remind me of the Japanese today — oh, but they wouldn't give you anything. I remember the labor relations representative, a guy by the name of Ohrman, would sit there and say to us, "Now you fellows are a bunch of nice fellows and you're doing a good job. We like you, but this is what's going to be in the contract."

There wasn't much you could do about it. We got a contract — it wasn't too good — in 1948. Then we moved along and got the people back into the local union, so that in 1950 we were able to get a decent contract and move it on from there.

RUGGLES: What ever happened to Christoffel?

GREATHOUSE: He was still around, last account I heard. He went out from there — he never was back around there anymore — but he was back around in the area and in Wisconsin.

RUGGLES: He'd been a virtual dictator of that union since the early 1930's.

GREATHOUSE: Yes, he was the shop chairman, and you had a guy by the name of Buse who was the president at that point. Buse wasn't a bad guy. Again, it's like they pick out guys that they could control. Bob Buse.

RUGGLES: He used a maneuver known as the flying squadron. Tell me how that operates. What actually is a flying squadron?

GREATHOUSE: Well, it was really a group of people that you either organized or put into the plants who were kind of used, I suppose you'd say, as a guerrilla group or a Green Beret group or something, who were called upon at a moment's notice to get out and to carry on all kinds of activities, whether it was break up a meeting, or get in and drum up support for a meeting in a meeting. But it was a group of activists who were actively coached and trained to work together to meet any kind of a situation. Sometimes it was to break heads, sometimes it was to give support in a meeting, sometimes to go in and break up a meeting.

RUGGLES: I've heard them described as sort of semi-military.

GREATHOUSE: In a number of situations, they could be. It depends again on the training and the use to which they were put. Actually it wasn't just there that there were flying squadrons; Emil Mazey had one in 212, Dick Gosser had one in Toledo.

RUGGLES: You made an awful lot of gains in the farm equipment industry that was so immovable — they were so anti-union. That's quite a credit to your organizing abilities.

GREATHOUSE: You see, actually most of that happened after 1955. In the early days there, like other places, we had the individual negotiations. Then in Deere, the first time we pulled together in an overall group was in 1950. We had a long strike in

1950 and coming out of that, we had moved into a centralized bargaining, centralized negotiations. International Harvester, the first time that we tried to get a central bargaining of the UAW plants was 1948 at the Congress Hotel in Chicago. That fell apart because everybody had different things in their contract and nobody was willing to give up anything to get something else, so they went back home and got their own agreements. 1950 then, they come back together for the first central agreement.

But this is another reason why I felt we had to take on FE, because you had that division in the Harvester plant especially, with the UAW having primarily the truck plants and FE having the farm implement plants. The company played you off one against the other. Then in 1952 FE had the disastrous strike in which the company broke the strike, about which they've said many times they destroyed the union. Well they really didn't destroy the union — we kept the company from destroying the union — but they broke the strike completely and just dictated the terms of the contract in which they took away grievance time, time investigating grievances. They took away everything and bragged about it. So at that point we knew we had to get them all into one union. In 1955, that's when we finally brought them all in and that's why from 1955 on, we had the industry united.

Now, Caterpillar's the other one (just for a minute on that) that's the same thing. We first organized there in 1948. East Peoria was Caterpillar, but then they moved to get the additional plants, but there were individual negotiations because the company insisted on plant-by-plant bargaining. So we did that for awhile and then we insisted that we would bargain in Peoria; whatever we negotiated there, then we would just take a day and go over and negotiate in the other plants. Finally after 1954, they agreed to central

bargaining. They moved up and put a vice president over the whole operation, so we had central.

We also got agreement from the International Executive Board at that point that we could do our own bargaining, not just a matter of following auto. Because our union was an auto union, and the feeling was auto, and the publicity was auto, so as long as we did our own thing and didn't affect anybody else, we could do our own bargaining. So from 1955 on, we were able to negotiate and to move up and go beyond auto.

RUGGLES: The bargaining in the farm implement industry was slightly different than the auto bargaining.

GREATHOUSE: In what way? You mean the terms of the bargaining, or what?

RUGGLES: The terms. The corporate structure of the industry was slightly different — or was it — to the point that it affected your bargaining?

GREATHOUSE: I don't know that the corporate structure was that much different in the bargaining. Harvester all this time had tight central control of the corporation. Caterpillar got it about this time; they didn't have it before. Deere initially had plant-by-plant operations, and even when we got central bargaining for a number of years, it was on the basis that you had a central spokesman, but you had the labor relations directors from each of the plants, and he would refer to them as his clients. In fact, they would make their decisions finally and we would bargain centrally, but then we would break up and sign separate agreements for a number of years, and we finally pulled it together. I tell you there wasn't too much difference.

I think one of the differences as far as we were concerned is that we didn't stick strictly to pattern, one after the other. We would set a pattern somewhere and then we

would work out some variations which we'd then pick up even internally there on the next go-round. So we'd look around and see what we could do differently and what we could pick up in these places. For example, we got the first vacation bonuses, we got that in Caterpillar. Nobody had thought about getting more than pay for vacation, but we insisted people ought to have a little extra money to spend. Then in 1967, we got the first Christmas/New Year shutdown.

RUGGLES: Was that vacation pay before auto got it?

GREATHOUSE: You mean the bonus?

RUGGLES: The vacation pay.

GREATHOUSE: I didn't say vacation pay; I said vacation bonus over and above the vacation pay.

RUGGLES: I see. Was that a first in the entire union?

GREATHOUSE: Yes. First we got $100, then you got $75 when you took your vacation during the summer and $25 when you were down over Christmas as a vacation bonus. Well, finally auto got the bonus holiday, they would get the extra day's pay on there. But we got them to raise that to $125. Then in 1967, we got the first Christmas/New Year's shut down. Auto got it in 1970. Then in 1970, we got the inverse layoff in Deere. Then we went to Harvester in 1970 and got the first dental plan.

Then we got in trouble on the inverse layoff with people getting unemployment comp in some of the plants because of cases in the Quad Cities. So if you were laid off from Deere and Harvester happened to be hiring, why you go to get your unemployment comp and they say, "Hey, we got a job for you over here." So we went back in the next negotiations and we changed that inverse seniority to the optional leave program that we

put in, so that when there was going to be a layoff, employees with more than ten years service could opt to take optional leave up to thirteen weeks.

We were negotiating what rate they should get and what we settled on was that they should get the same rate that people get when they're off for sick and accident, the S & A rate. We said that if this is a proper amount of money for people to get when they're sick and unable to come to work, then we ought to settle for that for an amount they get when they could be working but they take time off, because none of this was state benefits. This was directly from the company as a separate payment. So they didn't have to go report for unemployment comp, they didn't have to report for anything else. They could take the optional leave for up to thirteen weeks and go wherever they pleased and just tell the company, "Here's where you send my check for the next thirteen weeks." So they got that in Deere, which was later put into the other places.

At Caterpillar, then, we first established three other things. We established the so-called "income maintenance program," where even in cases of layoff, if you're working the first Monday of the month, then they couldn't lay you off during the month, they had to keep you all month. If they did lay you off, for the first three, five and seven weeks, based on your seniority, you had to get your full pay before you drop back down to the SUB and the UC pay. We later put that in Deere also.

Then we put in the other provision on cutbacks, reductions in place of layoff. You weren't laid off, but you were reduced in classification, so that an employee who was reduced during the layoff would continue to draw their higher rate for 4,000 hours up to two years. While you were downgraded as a result of layoff, you continued getting your higher rate. We put that in also in both Deere and Caterpillar.

So as I said, over the years there were a number of these things. Then of course, we came up with the pre-retirement leave. What we tried to do was approach it a little different then they did in auto. In auto, like in absenteeism and so on, they moved to discipline people for being absent or coming in late. We decided that we ought to try to do that with the carrot rather than the stick. So that's why we set up the bonus hour program, so that workers who worked their regular hours during the week, not for overtime, would get additional time. We started with a half hour a week and then an hour a week and then an hour and a half and so on, so that people would earn additional time off, which they could schedule and take time off when they wanted to, and get people to come to work.

This didn't help for the habitual absentee that didn't care if he worked three or four days anyway, but people that would take time off would take a look at not doing that because they wanted to get the additional time, and that helped.

RUGGLES: Did it work?

GREATHOUSE: It worked, it helped. No question it cut down on the absenteeism. The other thing we did was when we had the thirty-and-out early retirement program. In the first instances we had it that employees more than 56 and thirty-and-out could take it, but not in between. So when we got around to the point of knocking out the age requirement, there was a question what we were going to do with it. The company gave us the argument that, "Why are you worrying about these people who are 52, 53, 54, 55? These are our best guys, our key workers, our good technicians who are leaving us. We want to keep them." So we said, "Well, why don't we offer them an incentive to stay?"

So we worked out the program that anybody up to age 52 with 30 or more years could get an additional two weeks off, 52-54, you could get three weeks off, 55 and 56 or more, you could get four weeks off in addition to your vacation every year as a pre-retirement leave. So we said if they're going to leave, they can be getting used to retirement and if they're not, maybe they'll take this much time off and then they'll stay another year to work for you.

RUGGLES: Did you negotiate all these contracts yourself?

GREATHOUSE: Yes. That's another thing with negotiations, you know. In the auto, usually the director of a department would have more employees per company, but he would have one master agreement to negotiate. I had eight of them — most of them, as a matter of fact — while being director of the organization.

The three basic ones that we used on pattern-setting, like in auto, were International Harvester, John Deere and Caterpillar. All of those contracts expired on October 1 each year, which was two weeks behind auto. So we had to make the same decision there as to what we would do about establishing a pattern. We had to make judgment on it and again, as in auto, we had to decide. As far as I was concerned, the basic thing is looking at the issues that were involved and the committees and the makeup of the local unions where you could get the best agreement on the national issues in the shortest possible time or the least effort on the part of the employees.

You'd have to take a look, when you're pattern-setting, at what your central items are and does the company have a lot of demands? Does the union want to do a lot of things on a local basis that isn't going to affect pattern-setting, because in the initial negotiations, if possible, you have to try to concentrate on those items which are central

items that can be used and carried over into the other agreements. So we would have to do that, and then in addition to that, we would follow through. We had Allis-Chalmers. We also had the truck industry. We had Mack trucks, which always followed International Harvester. Now Harvester's been following them; it's finally turned around. We had White Motors. We had Massey-Ferguson. We had J. I. Case. We had Oliver, which was White farm implement and then, of course, I also had American Motors in between.

RUGGLES: You must have had a pretty good staff working with you.

GREATHOUSE: Yes, I had a good staff. I had a good staff in each of those places.

RUGGLES: Who are some of the people that worked closely with you on the negotiating and the bargaining?

GREATHOUSE: Well, Art Shy, who's now the director of education. Art was my administrative assistant. Initially Art came from the Harvester truck plant in Springfield, Ohio. He was chairman of our Harvester council and then went into the department in the late 1960's. He was assistant director of the department first and my administrative assistant and stayed there until he was made the director of education shortly before I retired.

We had Marshall Hughes, who came out of the Allis-Chalmers plant in Springfield, Illinois. Marshall was also my administrative assistant, worked there.

Staff, then, was pulled together from various plants and corporations within the farm implement industry. I was fortunate in being able to move from one of those negotiations to the other and keep in contact with the issues and with the committees and

the negotiations, and I think helped to get coordination, because I think if you're moving back and setting really in with each of the companies and each of the committees, you can kind of play it by ear as you go along.

RUGGLES: Of all the gains that you've just mentioned in the 1960's and 1970's, what do you think is the most controversial, trendsetting gain that you were able to get for the workers in your mind?

GREATHOUSE: I really wouldn't know about the controversial. The thing we tried to do in negotiations was to take a look at issues as we saw them and see how you could put it together on a positive basis and not a negative basis, looking at the long-term trend. In many instances we had to look at what can we do to meet the needs that we have today, but also set things up so they will work for the future and maintaining sufficient coverage for retirees, maintaining employment down the road and working to maintain productivity.

In the later years we didn't have the animosity that was going on in the early years, when we had real bitter struggles. After the 1950 strike in Deere, we set down and put it together on a reasonable basis, where it was more of a family operation. We had disagreements and we had all those things, but it was still a family operation, and it is yet today and we've all worked to try to keep it that way. Even if we were having a strike, we would negotiate and we'd still go out across to a restaurant and sit down and probably have lunch together and go back and negotiate the strike again.

RUGGLES: With the company bosses.

GREATHOUSE: Yes, with the company people and local union people. Today they have joint meetings and they'll have a hog roast together and they'll have a fish fry

together. The company will do it one time and the union will do it one time and they'll go about their business. Over the years, when they were hollering about productivity — we haven't got a productivity problem, we don't consider that the problem.

RUGGLES: This is somewhat revolutionary in that you started out in your early years at a time when the company would totally reject the union and today you're telling me that they're family.

GREATHOUSE: Yes. At Harvester we had these fights, like those strikes in 1952 and destroying the FE. Then in 1958-59, we had a nine-week strike in Harvester, right up over the holidays, the snow's ass-deep. A fellow by the name of Bill Riley was manager of industrial relations then and in many instances probably the only meetings that would take place in a day is that he and I would get together and would sit down and see whether or not there was any sense of doing anything. But coming out of those negotiations, we decided that there had to be a better way. We had learned over the years that we could shut the plants down anytime we got ready and they could take a strike. We'd had 15,000 grievances piled up for arbitration during the 1955-58 contract, and there had to be a better way.

That's the point when we brought in Dave Cole and Art Shy and Bill Riley, who made the rounds of the local unions and we sold them what we called the "New Look," which was put into effect. We said to all the people in the local unions and the management, "From now on, if there's any brownie points that are going to be made, it's going to be made for those people that solve their own problems, not for the people that send a lot of grievances up through the machinery. If you send a lot of grievances up through the machinery, we're going to look to see what's wrong with you."

And that thing turned around completely and we had for a number of years practically no arbitration at all. We had to renew it from time to time, but it went really down the line until the people out of there left and we finally got in the McCardells and so on and destroyed the whole operation.

Cat — we had a partial on that. We always had problems in the Peoria operation. It was a big operation and a lot of internal politics in the local union down there. We were never really able to put it together. We did in some of the other plants: York, Pennsylvania, we had very good relations over a long time; the Aurora plant in Illinois, we had what we called the "Aurora Approach" to the "New Look" there. We went up with the vice presidents of the company and we met with the management people, top executive board and shop committee of the local, and the committeemen and the stewards, again, getting everybody moving in that same direction. That continued working very well for most of the time I was there.

I think one of the main things, though, that was to our advantage was that we had a continuing relationship of individuals on both sides. I think we did disagree with each other, but we respected each other. We respected them, they respected us. We knew we both had a job to do, we had joint responsibilities and we had individual responsibilities. We were dealing with the same people there for twenty years. We said a long time ago, you know, that we had a unique relationship. We used to tell the story that if you're a salesman and you go door-to-door long enough and knock on enough doors, you may get a slap on your face, but you'll sell your quota of items. Even in a family you can argue, barring religious things, and if things get bad enough, you can get a divorce from each other, but we can't do that in a union and a company. This is the thing we sold, that we've

got to live together. As long as there's International Harvester, there's going to be a UAW, or Deere or Caterpillar or Massey-Ferguson or somebody else; therefore, we have to decide how we're going to live together. We can either live together fighting each other all our lives where everybody'd be miserable or we can sit down and work out reasonable rules to live together.

So in my opinion, we had quality of work life twenty years ago. As a matter of fact, Bill Riley and I made a number of meetings in Detroit and so on, trying to sell the program. They couldn't see it, because everybody liked that old aggressive approach. You had to demonstrate that you weren't stooges one way or the other, so that the auto people kept loving-hating each other. Now they've made a 180-degree turn.

RUGGLES: Did you ever think back to the days when you got your teeth knocked out and then compare it with all the gains you've made and say it was really worth it now?

GREATHOUSE: I never thought anything but that it was worth it. I think what we were doing at that point was worth it. I enjoyed doing it, that's the thing. I always enjoyed doing it. It was my life.

RUGGLES: Let's take a look at a couple of items that involve your history as regional director. The split in Region 4. Today Region 4 is three states: Illinois . . .

GREATHOUSE: . . . Iowa and Nebraska.

RUGGLES: The accusation was made that it was a political move at the time. Could you explain why that was thought of as a political move, and was it?

GREATHOUSE: No, I think it was a necessary move. I think it solved a political problem, if you want to put it that way. The region was set up in 1936 when the

original regions were set up. There was no organization in Chicago; the only organization of the people in the 1935-36 conventions was on the western side of the lake, up in Wisconsin primarily — the Nash plants and the parts plants, Young Radiator, Modine Manufacturing, and in 1936 when they decided to include farm implements, the J. I. Case people, and so on.

Anyway, in 1947 (this was why they talk about the political things) when I became the the candidate for the director, Harvey Kitzman, who came out of the J. I. Case plant in Racine, was a candidate for director. As a matter of fact, he was the chairman of the Reuther caucus and as such, he was supported by Walter as the candidate for regional director.

Leonard Woodcock and Jack Conway (who was Walter's administrative assistant) came out to the region and I think we had three different meetings to pick a candidate. I got picked each time and they decided something was wrong, we really shouldn't have picked yet, we ought to have one more shot at who's going to be the candidate. Finally, the last meeting was in Atlantic City, just before the convention started, at a caucus. Walter stood before the caucus, took a secret ballot vote, and I won again, so I finally became a candidate.

So then, immediately after I was elected, we set up the Agricultural Implement Department, because most of the agricultural implement locals had really supported the Reuther program and supported my candidacy in the region. Then to give Harvey a job, we set up the department and made him the director. Between 1947 and 1949 he was the director of the Agricultural Implement Department and would have liked to have been the

candidate for regional director in 1949. But as the convention approached, I think it became obvious that he couldn't be elected director in 1949 if he couldn't in 1947.

And we had in the meantime — as I said, there was a need — picked up Caterpillar in Peoria, we picked up Springfield, we had further organization in other places, we had the Dubuque plant that had been FE of John Deere, we had Waterloo, we had all the Quad Cities. Deere at that point had been in two regions — the Quad Cities/Moline area was in Region 3 and Indianapolis, and the Waterloo/Ottumwa area and so on was in Region 4. They needed to be put together. So it made a lot of sense to put the region the way it was. Rather than say it had political overtones, I would say that it was a necessary move and a desirable move, that if there was a problem, it solved a political problem.

RUGGLES: I see. Organizing in the South. Let's take a look at that. That's a little different type of organizing. You've got a lot of racial problems there. Let me begin by asking you about your administratorship of 998 back in the early 1960's, when you had to go down to Memphis.

GREATHOUSE: Memphis was one of the local unions. There were other local unions where there was very strong feeling and we had situations where even in moving people into departments, you would have sit-downs and refusals to work and so on in the department. Our union took the strong position that either people would work with people being moved into departments or they should be discharged.

In Memphis, the local union built a new union hall right across from the plant and the real crisis there was they built two sets of washrooms in that union hall. You go in the front door and on either side of the door was the washrooms labeled "men and

women" and one said "white" and one said "colored." We told them that they couldn't have the signs, they had to take them down. The local union refused to do it, so the executive board then put an adminstratorship over the local union. We went down there as the administrators and took some of our staff from the department down there and we had some hassles with them. Again, we did move in and we stood firm on it and eventually they folded up and came around. We've had a very good local union down there ever since.

RUGGLES: Wasn't that a little frightening in those early days of the 60's? This was just as the civil rights movement was getting started.

GREATHOUSE: It was kind of rough. I admit that. In this particular hall, you had this back door and up in front you had your stage with the little podium. I remember going in there, walking up for the meeting when these guys got out of work and come over there all ready for them. I carried a little Coke bottle with me and set it under the thing. That Coke bottle would work pretty good. If you had to use it, you know you could get in. So I set a Coke bottle under there, and again, like in Milwaukee, they were rough, and it was their local union, but we just stood firm and took the position that we were the administrator. We were the international union and fortunately, it came out all right.

In organizing we had the same problem. Even in later years, we had one drive over in Georgia, Hartwell, Georgia, the Monroe shock absorber plant. We went over there passing out literature and the company put on a real strong program. The whole community would do this, you know. We went down there one day for distribution and we had been distributing out at the end of a road that went into the plant, a block or so

away. So he got down there to distribute and the sheriff came out and told him, "You've got to get off the road because you are blocking traffic." You get back up on the side of the road and a guy says, "You gotta get off of my lawn or I'll have you put in jail for being on my lawn." The people come out of the plant, and so while we're over here mobbed around with these, some guys go back over to our car over here and slit all the tires on the car. Brand new car with new tires. So all four tires are down, can't move.

In the meantime — we knew we might have trouble — we were able to keep in contact, because we had two fellows just driving around in a car and go by every so often, but act like they didn't know us. When they saw the tires down, they went back into town to get a man to come out and put a new set of tires on. The guy comes out in his truck and pulled up there and the guys that had gathered down around us went up and told him, "If you put tires on that car, you'll never do any more work in this town again." Nothing he could do.

They then come out en masse. The company let a number of them off early, before the other workers, so about 50 of them come out there, surrounded us, grabbed our leaflets, burned them up. I had a UAW T-shirt on and they got around me and started telling me how good that T-shirt would look hanging up on that tree. They didn't think anything about taking me out of it before they hung it up there! I told them I didn't think that'd be a very good idea. Then they gathered about and we had to fight our way out.

And the sheriff was there, a couple policemen. I said to them, "Hey sheriff, arrest this guy!" He said, "What for?" I said, "He's attacking us!" He said, "I don't see anything." So finally what we did is that we got ahold of a guy with a tow truck over across the line in South Carolina and had him come over and hook up our car on the tow

truck and pull it back over across the state line. In the meantime, when we got the car out of the way, then the guys that were driving around in the car stopped long enough for us to pile in with them, and we all went back across the border.

Eventually we went back years later and we did organize the plant. We did win the election. That wasn't just in the early days; that was in the 1960's.

RUGGLES: In these cases in the South you're fighting more than just . . .

GREATHOUSE: Oh, you're fighting everybody. They had a parade there up the courthouse lawn. They buried a coffin in the courthouse lawn there — burying the UAW.

RUGGLES: Did you come in any direct contact with the Klan in these cases in the South?

GREATHOUSE: I suppose members, but not as such.

RUGGLES: And you had the nerve to go back to Hartwell after all.

GREATHOUSE: As a matter of fact, I remember one guy there that day telling me, "If you ever step foot on my lawn, I'll shoot you."

RUGGLES: Was that the toughest situation, or have you had some scarier ones?

GREATHOUSE: I don't know about them being scarier ones. We had to fight our way out in the early days, especially the FE things and so on, several times. But there you weren't fighting against the whole community generally, and you didn't really worry about whether or not you were going to get out of there; you worried about whether you were going to get out in one piece.

RUGGLES: The thing in the South was a little different.

GREATHOUSE: Yes. Very frankly, if we hadn't been lucky enough to have a couple of people roaming around there that day, we could have been in trouble. We would have been marooned there. That's why we fooled around there until the sun started getting pretty low and then said, "We'd better get out of here before it gets dark."

RUGGLES: So you were a good organization, planning ahead.

GREATHOUSE: In that case it worked, it helped.

RUGGLES: Well, that's exciting. We'll get back to some more mundane topics, like organizing within the UAW. Was there a shift in the 1960's from central organization to decentralizing within the different regions? Had organizing occurred orginally in the Competitive Shop Department, and then in the 1960's it was shifted to the different regions?

GREATHOUSE: Well, I don't know that it was shifted to the regions. What we did is that we started stationing a number of staff members in the region, rather than shifting them around all over, but the overall resposibility and direction still rested in the director of the department. We split the Competitive Shop Department and the Organizing Department. Under the constitution Competitive Shop was the department that operates the wage and hour councils and those kinds of things which are supposedly competing with each other. I was director of the Competitive Shop Department at the same time I was director of the Organizing Department. But the Competitive Shop Department at that point only had a couple of people that worked with the wage and hour councils, and the Organizing Department then was concentrated on organizing. The way we then set it up was by having the very small central staff that was the so-called "floating staff," and then having people assigned in the regions with day-to-day

coordinators or foremen over the groups in the region working with them, so that the guys would stay in that general area.

RUGGLES: Richard Gosser had been in charge of that at one time and someone had suggested that that was a demotion for him, when the regions began to take more control of the organizing. Does that ring a bell with you?

GREATHOUSE: Well, I don't know whether you want to call it a demotion. The fact is that a decision was made that this wouldn't be an overall staff subject to going all over the country where and if we needed them. We tried to station them in general areas and supplement this with direction and coordination and assistance centrally. I don't know, somebody may have decided it was because they didn't give somebody complete control. Dick was that kind of a guy that if you were in Timbuktu and he wanted you in Boston tomorrow morning, he'd call you up and say, "Be there at 9 o'clock tomorrow morning and pick up something up there." We just didn't think that was the most efficient way to operate.

RUGGLES: When you went into negotiating, did you always go in with a very definite plan or were you pragmatic and flexible? Were you sometimes playing guessing games as to what you could get in a contract?

GREATHOUSE: Well, you didn't know what you could get, but we generally had the basic idea of concepts as to where you were going. We would also have, generally, some pre-negotiation discussions on problems that needed to be fixed and also possible solutions. So we might not agree on what they would be, but we had some pretty firm ideas as to what we were going to be tackling, where we were going to go. Like I said, these things about the various approaches that we worked out for

pre-retirement and those other things, well, we talked about them before we ever got to negotiations.

RUGGLES: Did you have a lot of leeway at your level or did you have to take directions from the international office as a regional director or as a vice president?

GREATHOUSE: When I was a regional director, we were primarily negotiating company-by-company and plant-by-plant. As an officer, I would be part of the officer team that would work on the overall program and strategy and negotiations and so on. But quite frankly, when it came down to selecting targets and the procedure for negotiations, routine would be generally that as we get into auto, somebody would make a motion that I be authorized to select a target based upon clearing it with the international president. So I was given pretty much authority to operate and to make judgments, but obviously you had to talk about them, you had to justify them, you had to be responsible for them. But you have to be on the scene, really, to decide where's your best place to set patterns.

RUGGLES: When did you become director of the AMC division?

GREATHOUSE: 1964.

RUGGLES: 1964. That was the year that profit sharing was renewed?

Greathouse: It was renewed first in 1961.

RUGGLES: Were you in the 1961 negotiations?

GREATHOUSE: No.

RUGGLES: It was almost dropped, wasn't it? Profit sharing?

GREATHOUSE: Oh, it was almost dropped several times along the way. Companies kept wanting to drop it and I said, "Well, if there's nothing else left, let's keep it in the agreement. Let's keep it there." So we would never let them take it out.

RUGGLES: In 1967 the UAW did not go to the AFL-CIO convention. And then, was it in 1968 that the UAW separated? Was that move in 1967, not attending the convention, was that an attempt to boycott it? Or was it because you were tied up with negotiations?

GREATHOUSE: No, I think it was, again, a pressure move really. You're maybe tied up, but you can get away. It was a pressure move. There was certainly internal debate in 1968 over whether we would withdraw. Of course, Emil wanted to go to the convention and get on the floor and make the fight on the floor. Walter and Victor and a number of other people had already made up their mind about whether they were going to go. There wasn't any use; they were just going to get out. I think that a decision had been made and it was a matter of taking the time to decide when you were going to implement it, myself.

RUGGLES: In 1980, the year you retired, you conducted the longest multi-plant strike in the UAW's history at International Harvester.

GREATHOUSE: 1979-80.

RUGGLES: I think you mentioned it briefly already. You were the man in charge of that.

GREATHOUSE: Oh sure.

RUGGLES: That was quite a feather in your cap. Can you tell me exactly the details?

GREATHOUSE: Well I don't know about a feather in the cap or not. It was one of those kinds of situations that really bothered me. It always bothered me. We had to make decisions. You had here a company that was in trouble, that had been over the years, and we've talked about it. The company got in trouble, a strike was one of the things in the final analysis, but it had been in trouble for many years.

International Harvester was a company in different areas. Where Caterpillar and Deere were primarily in a single area — Caterpillar in earth-moving, Deere in implements and tractors — Harvester was in trucks, industrial equipment, tractors, implements and, of course, they had the solar division out here. So they were about second or third in about three or four divisions, which should take a lot of research and development and investment, which they didn't do.

They'd operated practically all their lives, I guess, on borrowed capital and they paid high dividends. Harvester always paid a higher dividend than either Deere or Caterpillar. Deere and Caterpillar put their money back into new plants, equipment, research and development. Harvester didn't. I talked to Brooks McCormick, the chairman of the board, about why they paid out higher dividends and didn't put this money back in there, because their plants obviously were getting older. The answer was, "Our stockholders like it that way." Well, this was all right as long as you were getting 3% money, but when some of those come due and you got to pay 20% for money and you're in trouble, then that's the end.

Now, they kept always arguing about the fact that they weren't as profitable as their competitors and they didn't make as much on the sales dollar as their competitors. Well, the reason they didn't make as much on the sales dollar is they were paying more of

their money back in interest on borrowed money. But on equity, they were more profitable on just the little bit of money they had in there, than either John Deere or Caterpillar. Just before we had the 1979, their latest report showed they were more profitable on their equity than General Motors! They were making over 20% on their equity because their equity was very small. But they weren't making it on the sales dollar, because they didn't have a lot invested in that. So that's where they were in serious trouble.

Brooks McCormick knew that they were in serious trouble as far as a lot of things were concerned. He went outside to get McCardell, told me the reason he did it was he didn't think anybody in the company was strong enough to make the decisions, swing the ax and do the things that had to be done.

RUGGLES: Who was McCardell?

GREATHOUSE: McCardell was the guy that they brought in as the head of the company from Xerox. They gave him a million and a half bonus to come over from Xerox and a salary of $465,000 a year. Then they loaned him another $108 million to buy Harvester stock, on the basis that if he reached a certain plateau of sales and profits, they would forgive so much of that each year and he wouldn't have to pay it back.

He came in and he knew nothing about International Harvester. Knew nothing about bargaining in mass production industry. He brought in a fellow retired from Continental Can as president of the company. He didn't know anything either about it. He went out and got Chandler from Hughes Aircraft and a couple of other places out there. Chandler was a nice guy, would make a good neighbor. I liked the man. He sat in on our negotiations in 1976-77 before the other people retired, just as an observer. He

never really made any attempt to learn the company, learn the operations or really learn anything about the union.

Getting back to the 1979 negotiations, McCardell and company made decisions in the boardroom. You got to go in and they told you to do this and this and this. They put out memos saying that they were going to set up these satellite plants around, move work out of big operations into the satellite plants. They were going to get away from the UAW, they had to get away from the UAW. Harvester workers had fought too many years for all these things that they were not about to have somebody come in from the outside and tell them, "This is what you're going to do."

So we had a strike and, really, the fact is that there was no bargaining. We tried to bargain, we tried to change, even over the holidays of Christmas and New Year's. I was concerned. We had settled the Caterpillar strike on the 19th of December. I immediately went to Chicago and met with the committee and met with the company and said, "Can't we wrap this up before the holidays?" The company's position said, "We're not interested."

During the holidays when we were shut down, I called Chandler, flew into Chicago to Midway Airport, met him out there to see if there wasn't some way we could get the people back together, and sit down and negotiate a solution. His answer was that the company people were not prepared to change their position. They thought that it would just get everybody mad to have a meeting, no sense in having a meeting at all. We didn't meet until February.

On some of the things they'd tried to do, I met with them just before the strike started and gave them possible solutions on some of these things. And they looked at it

and said, "Maybe down the road we might be interested, but our people wouldn't be interested at this time."

Well, some of the things that we did eventually, they said they got out of the settlement. What they got out of the settlement, they could have had before the strike started, but they weren't prepared to do it. What were those things? One was the matter of the scheduling. They were trying to get this different scheduling to work. This guy from Continental Can came up with a big proposal. Chandler came down to Peoria when I was in Caterpillar negotiations one Sunday to tell me that he decided what we ought to do is what they do in the can company, we ought to go on twelve hour days, we ought to work four days one week and three days the other week. We ought to do away with the time-and-a-half and double-time for Saturday and Sunday, just have the overtime and that's how we ought to set up the assembly line. I thought this guy must be nuts! I told him, "This is what they may do in can companies when they're operating automatic can lines somewhere, but to talk about it in the middle of a strike, or any other time, implementing that kind of a situation in an industrial operation is something that's sheer madness. It can't be done."

He wanted to know how they could operate their plants. So I told him that one of the things that we had just put into effect in the Deere contract was the thing like they have in continuous operations in powerhouses and so on, of having four employees for three jobs, so that everybody works five days a week, but you can operate on a twenty shift basis out of twenty-one. But we kept our time and a half and double time and all those kind of things, and eventually we did put that in and they probably operated in a couple of plants, but they weren't near as important as they thought it was.

The real basic thing there is that the company under any conditions was in serious trouble and would continue to be. I think the other thing then was that we were suddenly dealing with people who knew nothing about the industry, nothing about the company, nothing about the employees, the contract or how you bargain. They really come in with their ideas from somewhere else and said, "This is what we're going to put into effect at International Harvester."

RUGGLES: You could have broken that company with a long strike, couldn't you?

GREATHOUSE: We practically did. What broke it was, they couldn't pay their interest rates. That was the problem. They couldn't have done it anyway.

RUGGLES: What was the item that finally settled the strike, the one in 1980?

GREATHOUSE: Well, there wasn't any item. Finally, as McCardell has said, and a number of things have been written about it . . . He was very bold in the first place and he said, "Look, we piled up an inventory, we got inventory for 90 days or run over the holidays. By that time the union will be tired of the strike and they'll fold up and we'd settle and go about our business." When none of these things happened by the end of February, he called Chandler in and said, "Look, go get a settlement. Do whatever you have to do to get a settlement." So they folded up.

RUGGLES: Before you guys did.

GREATHOUSE: They folded up. Well, our guys were not about to fold up. I recognized face-saving is so important, so I tried to get our guys to move to wrap things up. A month before we settled, on the 19th of March, we had a meeting. I called a meeting of the Harvester council negotiating committee and reported to them on where

we were at that time and some of these issues that the company had and they wanted to get rid of.

I suggesed one little item we ought to give the company. One thing they'd had in the Harvester agreements from way back was a provision that when pieceworkers run out of piecework and couldn't be put on other piecework jobs, they could go home. Well, the reason the guys wanted that was because in certain operations we paid average earnings for down time and things like this, and all your piecework earnings went into making what the average earnings were. So if the company took you off of your piecework job and put you on a bad job or something you couldn't make any money on at all, that would cut your average down and really cut your earnings down then. Few people went home, because we'd worked out that if the company paid you a regular rate, an hourly rate or higher rate, you couldn't go home, only if you worked on the piecework job.

This was one of the demands the company had looked at, they had to have. So I said to our guys, "This don't really amount to a darn anymore. Why don't we give them that little thing?" "No way, no way." At this meeting on the 19th of March after we'd been on strike for five and a half months, no way were they going to give them anything. They voted it down. But then coming out of that, we did go back and clean up some other local things and then, a month later, we did have a settlement. But the company had made the decision at that point that they had to go wrap it up.

RUGGLES: You've been involved in a lot of activities outside of the union, related somewhat to the union. In 1968 you prepared a paper and spoke to the Republican platform committee. Tell me, how does a UAW vice president [indiscernible]

GREATHOUSE: I went down and appeared before the platform committee and had a document. I went over the program, basically the issues we had submitted to the Democratic platform committee. The thing that I remember most about it is when I got done, one of the chairmen, I guess of the committee, says, "Now if we adopt your program, you want us to change the name of this country to Union of Soviet Socialist America?" That was his question to me and I tried to remain very calm, and said, "No, what labor is proposing is that we adopt this kind of a program for the benefit and support and development of America." I didn't get much of a positive response.

RUGGLES: How did you happen to get the invitation, or were you invited? How did you get on the agenda?

GREATHOUSE: I don't remember whether they submitted an invitation or whether we said we wanted to go.

RUGGLES: Is that the first and last time a UAW vice president went to a Republican convention?

GREATHOUSE: To my knowledge, it is.

RUGGLES: In 1961 you had a hand in the Bay of Pigs negotiations.

GREATHOUSE: An interesting thing on that. Castro made this speech about the prisoners, that they would remain in prison all these years unless the United States would send down 800 D8 bulldozers, tractors to repair the country. I was on some appeals out in western Michigan and I got back to my motel that night, had notes on the door to immediately call Walter's secretary. They'd been trying to find me all evening.

Kennedy had called Walter and wanted to know what a D8 was. Walter was calling me, "What's a D8 tractor?" He didn't know what a D8 tractor was. So I told him.

The D8 at that time was the largest bulldozer that Caterpillar made. So what he was talking about was those big bulldozers to, as he said, clear the roads and so on. Immediately people started to say he wants to make runways and do all the other things. Kennedy obviously felt a great responsibility for those people that were down there. So he asked Walter to set up a committee, because he didn't recognize Castro, so he couldn't have direct contact. So they set up this committee with Milton Eisenhower and Mrs. Roosevelt and Walter and Dodge.

Then the question was, "How are we going to find out what the guy is talking about and can it be done?" They didn't know, so they said, "We ought to set up a committee, have somebody go down and meet with them. If we're really going to do this about developing the country, we ought to get some agriculture people on it." So we got two or three people from the agricultural section of universities to go down and they wanted me to go down to talk about implements, to talk about tractors.

So we went down. Of course, we stopped in Miami and had one of these nuts going to arrest me for violating the Logan Act for negotiating with a foreign government. Bobby had told me before we left Washington, "If anybody bothers you down there, we'll arrest them. Don't worry about it." Anyway, we flew over. You talk about feelings about things, I think this is one of the times that I had about as strange a feeling as I ever had in my life. This was so soon after the Bay of Pigs. That plane circled around to land at that Havana airport, pulled up and landed and I looked out the window. Lined up over in front of the airport was about 30 guys with submachine guns, lined up across there looking at us. That door opened up and I had to go out that door and start across that open field toward that airport!

We were met by Castro and treated very well. We went into a meeting with him the first day. One of these agriculture guys started talking about the soil down there and the fact that you really couldn't use this size tractor for developing land. He made it very clear to them that this was not an agricultural decision; this was a political decision. From then on, for three days, he and I talked politics and whether or not it could be done, to exchange tractors for the prisoners. It didn't have a damn thing to do with agriculture, it didn't have a damn thing to do with the other things; it was really whether or not the country would pay the ransom.

Meantime, you know, all this anti-Castro feeling — we can't pay tribute, we can't ransom people and so forth — was building up so that by the time we come back and reported on things, the feeling had built up that you couldn't do anything about it. But the interesting thing about this was that Kennedy felt very strongly about this and he called in the newspaper editors and talked about how he felt responsible for these guys. So it was just a matter of timing. Eighteen months after we were there, we then turned around and gave them exactly twice as much as he had asked for in the first place, but we did it in so-called medical supplies and all of these kind of things, plus three million dollars in cash. But it was exactly twice as much as he had asked for, value-wise, when he asked for the tractors in the first place. We called it a great victory. We got the guys home — a great victory. We paid — maybe one was 16, the other 32 million, whatever it was — but we paid twice as much to get them as we could have done and they spent another 18 months in jail.

RUGGLES: Wasn't there some politics in this country, switching from the tractors to the medical supplies?

GREATHOUSE: Of course! Also, not only the items, but the fact that Kennedy worked with the newspaper editors and got public interest turned around. It then became a great humanitarian thing. The bottom line is that they got the companies to donate the medicines, charged it off at retail rates, and they made money on the deal. So their tax rate at that point was higher than their actual cost of it, so that the government paid the total bill.

RUGGLES: You said you spent three days with Castro?

GREATHOUSE: Yes.

RUGGLES: Describe him for me as a man, what did you think?

GREATHOUSE: You know the news media was all saying "They're going to rise up right away and overthrow him." I came back and said, "You're dreaming." This guy at that point was a young guy, he was 35 years old, 235 pounds or something like that. Real nice personality. He had a little Cessna plane, and every piece of land they were giving out, he was running out and giving it out to people.

We'd met with him one day, the day before we were going to come back. They had negotiations, had certain items, would somebody do this or would they do that, so he was going to let us know. We were back at the hotel that night having dinner and we were sitting in the dining room. The news media were all around there. Suddenly (we were at a little round table) somebody comes running in, "Castro's out in the lobby! Castro's in the lobby!" Fine. So he came in and sat down and said, "Go ahead, have your meal, I've already eaten." So he and the guys with him sat down. We finished our meal, we all go up to my room and had a meeting and go back down.

These news media guys were baiting him about the Bay of Pigs. A young guy writing for the New York Times sits there and debates with him until 4:30 in the morning on the merits of the revolution. 4:30 in the morning Castro says, "I'll go show you." He gets some pickup trucks and takes them all down to the beach where the planes landed to show them what happened. They called me and wanted to know if I wanted to go along. I said, "No way. I didn't come down for that. I came down for something else. I'm not going to get involved in that discussion."

But he was that kind of a guy. He went all around. He had the support of the people. He, like Kennedy, had the appeal. No question about whether or not he had it.

RUGGLES: Did you think he was a Cuban first or a Communist f irst?

GREATHOUSE: A Cuban. Oh, there's no question. In the first place when he came to this country, I know he was in Chicago. Kupcinet had him on the Kups program and everything else. He was all right with us until he took over the oil company. He took over the oil company, then we cut him off.

RUGGLES: That was quite an experience for you.

GREATHOUSE: We cut him off.

RUGGLES: If you're going to hire a negotiator today — let me get back to the United States now — what qualities would you look for in a negotiator? What is a good negotiator, since that's your strong point?

GREATHOUSE: I think mainly, the first thing, you got to know your subject. You got to know what you're talking about, both in the matter of demand things and also the work force and your membership. You've got to know them.

I think you have to look at not only solving the immediate problems now, but the long-range goals of the union, and the benefits for the membership. I guess the typical example would be in 1950 (without taking a lot of time on it) when we had the $100 pension (including Social Security). We had a 102-day strike in Chrysler just to get funding. Now, we weren't just getting the pensions, we were looking then down the road for how are you going to secure these pensions for your membership in the future.

So it was working out medical programs and so on, and also looking at making decisions and judgements in negotiations. You can't go too far, until you put the company out of business. The most important thing is maintaining those jobs so you can keep employment, keep monies into the funds and keep paying the retirement benefits. You have to have the broader look at your membership, and I think also you have to look at how this fits into national patterns and what you see in the future as far as the national economy is concerned.

RUGGLES: I'd like to ask you about some of the people in the UAW that you've encountered over the years, how you feel and what your reaction is to them. First of all, of course, Walter Reuther. When did you first meet Walter Reuther and what was your relationship with him?

GREATHOUSE: I guess initially meeting him was in that period about the time of the GM strike in 1945 and then the period leading up to the 1946 convention. So that I never really had any relationship with Walter until about 1945.

RUGGLES: How did you happen to meet him? At a union gathering?

GREATHOUSE: I think the first time was when he came to Chicago during the GM strike. We had the Electromotive plant there. That was a pretty big local union at that point, one of the early strikes.

RUGGLES: That was a big strike, wasn't it, in 1945? You were an international rep at that time?

GREATHOUSE: Yes.

RUGGLES: And you became a supporter of Reuther?

GREATHOUSE: Yes. That's the time we were having the battle again, both internally with the Commies within the union, so not only in support of his program, but with the same philosophy that he had.

RUGGLES: When he was killed in 1970, what did you feel was going to happen to the UAW after his death? I'm sure there was a period of turmoil or confusion.

GREATHOUSE: Well the first thing is, I got the call that night from up here. I suppose maybe I got it because I was probably the only who was in the phone book. The manager here went out to pick them up at the airport. About 10:30 that night my phone rang and I picked it up, and it was about the time we had Shorty Powers just putting up these moon shots very shortly, and this guy got on the phone. He said, "Mr. Reuther's plane has just gone down in flame over the Pellston Airport. There are no survivors." He said the fire people were out there then, and that's it.

I then got on the phone and got ahold of Emil and Bannon, and we couldn't find Leonard. We didn't know. They said there were six people on the plane. We didn't know who the six were. Couldn't get an answer from Leonard, so we didn't know if Leonard was with him or what was. Later found out Leonard's phone wasn't working, so

somebody went over and he was home. But when you say this. I said to my wife that night, "My life will never be the same again." Up until now we were working, we were busy, we had Walter who was doing these things and we were the guys that were seconding all these things, because in everything that went on, Walter was in on it, but one of the rest of us was in with him. That's why there really wasn't the big void. He was there, but somebody else was a piece of everything that was happening in the union.

I didn't really think the union was going to fall apart. I thought that all of us would have to pick up and work that much harder. We then immediately had an agreement that nobody was supposed to carry on politics until after the funeral. I think some of the people did. I didn't. Leonard didn't. We didn't even talk to each other. Leonard and I were very good friends. We'd been the two vice presidents together for twenty-some years and regional directors together before that.

They didn't talk to him about it until on Sunday after — the funeral was on Friday — the memorial service. He came out to my house on Sunday morning. Before he came out to my house, I was talking to my young daughter. I think she was about thirteen or fourteen at that time, knew the union and had been to all the conventions, so I said to her, "Who do you think should be president of the international union?" Smart girl. She said, "I think you could do the best job, but I don't want you to do it. I think it should be Mr. Woodcock." I said, "You're right."

So Leonard rang the doorbell that morning and came in. Her name's Karen. I said, "Hey Karen, here's your candidate." That's the first time Leonard knew that I was going to support him for president. But there was never any question in my mind that he was the logical person to pick it up.

RUGGLES: Did he receive a lot of support in the vote? I don't know the final vote.

GREATHOUSE: Well, in the board, he didn't. It was a split vote, I think twelve to thirteen or something like that. But in the membership he did. He was ahead in GM and aerospace and so on. In my own opinion, if I was guessing, if he'd been a membership vote, it would have been a 70-30 vote. There's no question.

RUGGLES: For Woodcock.

GREATHOUSE: Yes. He would have gotten it.

RUGGLES: I've made up a list of names here of people I thought you might like to comment on. You don't have to, but people that you've worked with over the years. Harvey Kitzman.

GREATHOUSE: Harvey was a good guy. He was a typical farmer, worked in an implement plant, a nice guy. Wasn't a great brainy guy, but he was a good fella, and I think he was a good director.

RUGGLES: Joe Mattson. What went wrong with Joe Mattson?

GREATHOUSE: There wasn't anything. Joe, again, was really a good old, loyal, hard workhorse. He was a hard workhorse. Basically, if he would have taken my advice in 1946 and stayed neutral in that election, he could have been director for a good long time. He came back, and Joe then was made the assistant director of the Competitive Shop Department. He worked for me. Russo was assistant director also, really the one that ran it and fired me. Russo also worked for me after he worked for Livingston in the Aerospace Department. When I took over in Livingston's place, I made

him the assistant director of the Foundry Department and later, one of the organizing coordinators.

RUGGLES: You've got a big heart — you hired back the guys who fired you!

GREATHOUSE: At that point, as I said, before we wiped them out, it had happened to me. I guess maybe that's one of the reasons. But half of the guys we let go that I think were not really making a contribution to the union. Joe and Russo had talents, and we felt at that point that the political thing was over and we ought to put the union back together.

I recall in 1949, before the 1949 convention, we'd always had the politics up to that point. We had a board meeting in Minneapolis, a caucus meeting, to talk about what was going to happen in the convention. They went around with the directors about what kind of political shape you're in. So they asked me, "What about Region 4?" I don't think they believed what I told them. I said, "The people in my region have made their decision. They're going to support policies and programs of this international union. I think I will be regional director until such time as they think they have to have somebody else. When they have somebody else, they'll elect somebody else who will support the programs of this union. So you might as well forget about Region 4."

They went about their business. But I always felt that way. I felt that I was a refugee from that assembly line and when the time came (and I figured it would sooner or later) that somebody else would do a better job, that I could probably make a living for myself along the line. I always had. I just never worried about the job.

RUGGLES: I have Harold Christoffel down here. I find him a very interesting person and I wondered if you'd comment even more than you have already.

GREATHOUSE: Really I never knew that much on Christoffel, because once we moved into that local union, he was gone. Before that, he certainly was a talented person. He was very knowledgeable. He was certainly a good speaker — he was an orator. He had a lot of influence on people. I just happen to think it was directed in the wrong direction.

RUGGLES: Were there a lot of people in the union that did not have the long-range vision that Reuther and yourself and others did?

GREATHOUSE: Most of the people, really.

RUGGLES: Were they in it for just the moment?

GREATHOUSE: They were in it to take care of the immediate problem that day.

RUGGLES: Would Christoffel fit that description?

GREATHOUSE: No, I don't think so. I think Christoffel was an idealist, an ideological person, but his program really was to build a Soviet America.

RUGGLES: We haven't mentioned an organization known as the Association of Catholic Trade Unionists. They seem to have had an awful big role . . .

GREATHOUSE: Primarily in the Detroit area. We really never had that in Chicago.

RUGGLES: Did you realize you were one of the oldest executive board members?

GREATHOUSE: Yes.

RUGGLES: That's quite a career.

GREATHOUSE: Yes. You see, we got in young. I was 32 when I was elected regional director.

RUGGLES: Well, I'm running out of questions, by golly. Well, one more, and then I'll leave you. Do you think the United Auto Workers could be more democratic than it is.

GREATHOUSE: Let's put it this way. I think the structure, this set up, is about as democratic as you can get. What happens is that we're dealing with people. A lot of people don't take advantage of the structure, down through the line. I suppose there's a natural tendency of people to control democracy. I think it's a natural tendency that people get elected at all levels or are appointed at the board level or the local union level and staff level to protect their jobs and protect themselves and also to protect their point of view. In some instances there could be more democratic discussion than there is, because too many times we don't accept people that have different ideas than we do. We try to shut them off. We know better than they do. I think, by the same token, politically, if we see somebody that's trying to build up opposition and get our job, we attempt to cut them off.

But I think the structure is there, I think the procedure is there and I think that we need to have a continuing role of having people being more tolerant than what they are and people, on the other hand, getting up and taking more advantage of the opportunities that they have in local unions. You talk about a handful of people running the local unions. But why do they do it? Because the vast majority don't participate. That's always been the case with most organizations. As a matter of fact, right up here this week, I've been going into these afternoon workshops we've had with these so-called

"mock local unions" and spending a couple of hours with them on the structure of the union, both at the national level and the local level, including the appeals procedures and the goals and objectives. Trying to get people to understand that the mechanism is there and they should take advantage of it.

RUGGLES: One final thought, a prediction of the future . . . Looking at Spring Hill and foreign imports, what's going to happen with the labor market in this country?

GREATHOUSE: Well, it's going to have to change; it needs to. I worked for years with the International Metalworkers' Federation, which is the organization of the metalworkers of the non-Communist world (about 14 million people), because as we started seeing the multinationals, I argued for that and I was a voice in the wilderness for years about what was going to happen.

I first went to Japan in 1973, but in 1977 1 went over there and for the first time made a speech to them. They were then buying aircraft from the West Coast, but insisting that part of the work had to be performed in Japan. I told them that was fine, but if they started moving to penetration of the automobile industry without investment here, they were going to be in trouble. In 1977 Nissan was talking about coming over. In 1978 I went back — they had cooled off. So Shiogi, the president of the union, and I had a joint press conference over there in 1978. This is the guy they talk about being a company stooge — he's far from it. He joined with me then, for the first time, saying that any company that sells more than 250,000 cars in a year (similar models) should build a plant, because that's the optimum production for a single assembly line, 60 cars an hour on a three shift basis. Quarter of a million cars, they ought to build a plant in the United States. Then I was back, I've been back eight times.

But to get back to your question, I came back, I think after 1978, and reported to our board what I'd said. They adopted that as a policy. I said to the board then, in watching the work flow there, that unless the company and the unions got together and worked out a program and got away from complaining about lines of demarcation all the time, the only demarcation lines we were going to have to worry about were which part of the floor you sweep, because that's what's going to be left.

You got a situation there where you don't have classifications, like we've got now with the contracts in Saturn and in Fremont, California. People get paid there based on their length of service with the company. You'd hired them right out of high school or out of college and then every year you get general increases, plus longevity increases. As you get more skills, you move into the higher jobs. The company's free to move people around; you don't argue about if you're going to hold a piece up here, whether a pipefitter or a millwright will hold it.

We are in one world today, and we've got to meet that kind of stuff. I see it changing and I think this is good, because I think that if you didn't move in that direction, you're going to lose it, because the American companies have always exported technology and capital rather than cars and products. They could have exported cars, they didn't. They had the world market, they exported the technology. Jefferson says, "Profit knows no patriotism." They would just have moved out completely.

As I told the Japanese companies years ago, they got to recognize that this high consumer market in this country cannot last unless our well-paying jobs last. If they import enough cars and do enough on steel and all these others to destroy all of these high-income industries, then there isn't going to be any consumer market here for them to

sell to. So it isn't going to make any difference how many they send in, they're going to destroy that market.

That's I think the thing that we got to recognize on all levels, industry and labor. We're really operating today on a world basis, but the trouble that the union has, when the company makes a decision in the board room to build a plant or buy a plant or have a joint venture, they can set that up and work out of any country around the world and operate that from the boardroom. But when they export these jobs, we can't export the UAW, because there are trade unions in all these countries. They have their own methods of bargaining, they have their own things. So that the only thing we could do was we set up the International Metalworkers' Federation to at least coordinate the activities.

Because we wanted to move on the multinationals in 1974 (it had been there for years), we went in and elected the president of the German metalworkers, which was the largest group, with two and a half million members, as the president of the organization, but he's not full time. Then we took Herman Rebhan from our own union — he comes from the Electromotive plant in Chicago — as the general secretary to operate the secretariat in Geneva, to coordinate this, so that we could have a base in the home countries where all the multinationals are located and then be able to keep in contact with the people in the host countries where plants were being set up, to work with them in trying to solve our common problems and build them up. It's not a perfect organization, but we have been working on it and I think it's helpful.

In this session now, we've got seven trade unionists we brought over from the other countries that are in the IMF. Four weeks ago, in our two-week session there were

eight with us here at that time. So that we're getting our people and some of the other people that are here better acclimated and giving them a better understanding. So, we have to have that kind of a change, but we've got to move the union into a one-world situation, too.

RUGGLES: The UAW has been working internationally for a long time in support of other workers, hasn't it?

GREATHOUSE: Well, we've been working on that, but we haven't really recognized in the past that we had to accommodate ourselves to somebody else. What I've always said is that all Americans have an effortless superiority. We automatically assume we're better than anybody else and that everybody else ought to learn to speak English and everybody else ought to do things the way we do. For the first time I think, we found ourselves in the position that we have to accommodate to what somebody else is doing or we're going to be left behind.

RUGGLES: Well, Mr. Greathouse, I think we've covered just about everything. Thank you very much.

GREATHOUSE: Thank you.