

Ruggles: Mr. Tomasi, let's begin with your early life. Tell us where you were born and who your parents were.

Tomasi: I was born in Lima, Ohio on April the seventh, 1921. My parents, my father was Joe Tomasi. He was a native of Italy, and he came to this country around 1916 or 1917, I don't know the exact date. He married my mother, who lived in Lima, Ohio; she was a native of Lima. I'm one of four children. I have a sister and two other brothers. My whole life was spent in Lima. I attended St. John's Catholic Elementary School and St. John's High School, and I graduated in 1939, from school. I was married in 1941, and went in the service in 1942, and came home at the end of 1945. I served three years in the Pacific theater.

Ruggles: You first got involved in union activities while you were at Westinghouse?

Tomasi: Yes, at Westinghouse in 1939. When I come out of high school, Westinghouse had just brought a plant into Lima, I think it was 1936 or 1937, and they were doing some hiring at that particular time, so that the process was you gathered out in front of Westinghouse every morning, and they would... If you got your name to somebody on the inside, well you got a call, and they would come out there and every once in a while call out 5 or 10 people, and take them inside and interview them. I stood out there for quite a few weeks before I finally got somebody to get me, get my name called, and then I got hired into the plant. I lasted there from, I think I went to work in June or July, and I was laid off, let go in January because of the union activity.

Ruggles: What type of union activity?

Tomasi: Well, my first union activity incident was some guy on the line come down and wanted to know if I wanted to go to a union meeting. I was 18 years old and fresh out of high school, I said yes. I was working the second shift, so they had a meeting in the Knights of Pythias hall, but it was an independent union. They had coffee and doughnuts there, and I was one of the first guys into the meeting that night, but I didn't stay. Something told me that just didn't appeal to me. Being a young guy I went over to get a beer, and I ran into some guys from the old UE, and that seemed more like guys that would want to do something for workers than the other. I think the Independent was set up as a ploy; they knew the UE was very active in the plant, and I think they tried to counter it with an independent union.

Ruggles: It was really a company union?

Tomasi: Yes, it was a company. They didn't win anyhow, so that... But I was left go in January, and in April of 1940, they had finally settled some unfair labor practice charges at that particular time, and I was offered reinstatement. But I didn't go back to work; I never liked Westinghouse anyhow, so that was not a loss to me, not to go back to Westinghouse. I'd been hired over to Hyatt Steel, or I was in the process of being hired over to Hyatt Steel. When I went to work there, I was more happy with the job.

Ruggles: Before you went into the service?

Tomasi: Oh, yes, it was before I went in the service. I went in the service in 1942. I got married in '41, and went in the service in '42. Was already pretty actively engaged in union work.

Ruggles: And you helped organized 975?

Tomasi: Local 975 is my home local, myself, my brother and some other people who were working inside the plant at that particular time. The first union that came after I was there was the Steelworkers. For some reason or another, they just didn't want to go for an election for us, and we were kind of anxious. We even had a charter in the Steelworkers; they issued us a charter. So we packed up the charter and everything, and sent it back to Cincinnati, and found two guys from the Autoworkers. They grabbed the cards and run with them, and that's how we became Autoworkers. It was a very good experience.

Ruggles: Did you have difficulty organizing, getting people to sign the charters?

Tomasi: No, at that time there'd been some activity in the plant, and I was not familiar with it, in the late thirties. I think they called them the Amalgamated Tin Workers and stuff that attempted organization in there, so that there was some ... they were knowledgeable inside the shop. There was resistance on the part of the company. They didn't want a union. But, at that time, I think workers had more freedom to go do their thing than they have even today. We were pretty open about it, and you could get in a lot of arguments in the plant, but most of the guys, it being a foundry, most of them from ethnic backgrounds and stuff. We'd grown up with most of them, so that it wasn't that difficult on us to do it. They were pretty anxious to sign cards and get going.

Ruggles: But you didn't have a lot of trouble with the company?

Tomasi: No, they didn't; they resisted, but I don't remember that resistance as being a

threat to your job. Over at Westinghouse it was different. They went and weeded the guys out that they thought were vocal, and got rid of them. But Steel Foundry didn't do that. They pretty well probably thought that they could beat us anyhow, and didn't recognize how strong we were all of a sudden, and it was a home-owned plant. That was the other part of it, it was home-owned. A lot of the old people had been close to that plant their whole lives. They'd come in there as immigrants, and went to work in the plant. So it was a little different atmosphere I think in there than you had over at Westinghouse.

Ruggles: What were the conditions like that led to the union?

Tomasi: They were kind of rough. Down in the foundry, the working conditions were very bad. In fact, I went to work in the foundry to begin with. I went to work on a thousand-ton press, and the dust and the smoke was very bad in the plant all the time. My father worked down there, and he died very young. He died at the age of 48 with silicosis, so that can tell you something about the conditions in the plant. Most of the men didn't live too long, that worked in the foundry. Some of them started dying as early as 35, and you were very lucky, I think, if you lived past 50 in that foundry at that particular time. The working conditions were pretty bad. Over in the core room, in the other part of the foundry, where they do all the molding, the molding floors and stuff, they were more the gas and silica type, and the chipping room was all this dust, and silica dust, and the other dust from the castings. So that some days you couldn't even see 10 feet in front of you. I think that was one of the causes, I really think, they wanted to get rid of that kind of a problem, and that contributed heavily to it.

Up in the machine shop it was a little bit rougher to get the guys. We had a brand new machine shop at that particular time. We were machining rolls, which is a little bit different work than most machine shops. Those men were of a little bit different background, and were a little tougher to talk to. But we got most of them anyhow.

Ruggles: So it was mainly a need for change in the working conditions, not so much pay.

Tomasi: Well, pay. We went in at \$.46 per hour at that particular time, so pay was an issue. Let me tell you one of the big issues was the pay differentials that they had amongst the employees. Now, you may go in at \$.46, but they had some people doing the same work from \$.60 or \$.70 up to \$1, \$1.10 an hour at that particular period of time. It was creating a lot of friction in the plant because, you know, guys don't like to work for, do the same thing for less

money. That became an issue in there, so that when we finally got organized, we were able to correct all that in that plant.

Ruggles: Were there any more jurisdictional questions among the steelworkers?

Tomasi: No. They were mad at us, in fact one of the guys became director of organizing for the AFL-CIO. His name was Al Whitehouse. He was the rep that came down from Kentucky, from Newport, Kentucky to organize us. He never spoke to me after that. I became active and moved up to Root's job in 1950, and I knew Al, but he wasn't very friendly.

Ruggles: After the service you became, well you held a variety of offices...

Tomasi: I became chairman, and became very active again. In fact, when I came home the plant was on a wildcat. They wanted me to come to work at that particular time. I remember going out to the plant. I took some time off, about 30 days or so, and I'd never been home for three years, so that it was quite a ... you know, I just wanted to take my time, get reacclimated into life, I guess. I went out, and the plant was on a wildcat, and they tried to convince me that the guys weren't thinking about me, and all that kind of crap, you know, about "you did your thing, and you ought to be able to come right in and go to work". And I told them, "When you get all the rest of them back here, I'll come back with them." So, I was active right from the word go, when I came home.

Ruggles: In the late forties this was the period when all of the factional strike was going on, within the UAW. Did you feel it down here, in this part?

Tomasi: Oh, yes, we were getting them telegrams all the time. We were getting regular telegrams from both sides at that particular time. Walter would send out his telegrams, and the other groups would send us out their telegrams. So we were involved in that factional fight. Dick Gosser, who was from this particular area, was the Director then, and he was deeply involved in it, so that we felt it pretty strongly down the line.

Ruggles: The UE had in fact become recognized as being heavily Communist influenced.

Tomasi: Well, that whole thing, from the late forties, was ... there were nine unions, if I remember correctly, that were pretty heavy, and they were thrown out of the CIO in 1949, the UE being one of them. Jim Carey then took the other factions and formed the IUE. The UAW didn't have too much of a problem in that particular area. Ours was more inner-factional fights, within the union, and the forces of Thomas and Addes and them were defeated by the Reuther

forces. The Board changed hands pretty dramatically within a few years. I think '46 was the first ... Walter got elected, and then '47, the Board pretty much changed. From that time on we've been pretty much on the course that we are still on today.

Ruggles: The political fighting ended?

Tomasi: It pretty well ended at that time. I think when we went to the convention in '49 there were still some of the old forces. A few Communists, and some other factions there, but they had pretty well lost their power, and we were pretty well on course that Walter and the Board set, that we still maintain today.

Ruggles: When Gosser had been Regional Director up until '47?

Tomasi: Yes. And then he became Vice President, and Charles Ballard became the Director, here in the Region. Ballard was Director until 1968. When he left the Union movement, he resigned at that convention, and Walter Murphy was elected in '68, and then re-elected in 1970. We had two year conventions at that particular time. But Walter died shortly after being elected. He was elected in May and he died in September. And then I was elected in September of 1970 to the spot of Regional Director, and I've been Director ever since.

Ruggles: Let me go back to that period of the late forties. From what I've gathered, I've deduced that the factionalism in the ... oh, the union raiding, and the competition between the unions of the late forties had lasted over a period of twenty years. There is some friction, or bitter feelings that continues on. Is that a correct analysis?

Tomasi: Well, we had some problems during that particular era, and I can't give you all the exact dates, but we signed some 'No Raiding' pacts with various unions. Kind of got ourselves pretty well removed from that whole question of going after somebody else's members. We've stayed pretty much on a course of organizing the unorganized. The pact with the IAM still continues today.

In addition to that, the AFL in 1955 established some rules that pretty well stopped raiding in my opinion. I imagine every once in a while there is a slip in it. But there is some special rules, I think it's Article 20 of the AFL-CIO constitution, that lays out the path of what happens during these raid attempts. So I don't see raiding as being very much of a problem, and hasn't been a problem for us for a number of years.

Ruggles: Before you became International Rep you were President of the Local.

Tomasi: I became President of the Local in 19... I think shortly, just a few months before they put me on the staff, I'd been a Vice President for a number of years, and was a member of the Bargaining Committee at the plant. My first role, when I came home from the service, was the Education Director; I became Education Director in the local union. At that particular time, each of those posts seemed to be very active posts. Besides being Education Director I also ran, and was elected Vice President, I think at that particular time, if I remember correctly. Stayed as Vice President, Education Director, and then when I came to the first shift, became a member of the Bargaining Committee also.

So that happened in a relatively short period of time, when you look back at it, but it was a lot of work. We worked very hard at business. We were growing at that particular time. If you look at the Region today, and look at it back then, it was a few locals scattered from almost straight down, oh Route 25, and there was not much moving off into other sectors of the Region. If you look at the Region today, we have Locals in a lot of small... there's locals in almost all the towns in the Region.

Ruggles: Local 975 was primarily the foundry in Lima, though, right?

Tomasi: It was primarily the foundry. Then, when I went on the staff, I convinced the local they ought to amalgamate. This gave us an opportunity to pick up 4 or 5 other small shops in Lima. So, today, it's an amalgamated local union. It has been since 19...

Ruggles: That increases your bargaining power, of course.

Tomasi: Yes. Well, it helps more in the smaller shops. They really don't have much of an opportunity unless they belong to an amalgamated union. They don't have the funds by themselves. You know, ten or fifteen guys have a very difficult time. Local 12 is a good example. This local had as high as eighty-some units in it, in this particular local union. Ours had, we've got four or five amalgamated scattered throughout the region.

Ruggles: Back when you were President, in the late forties, what were some of the gains you made? What were you bargaining for?

Tomasi: Surprising, the things then dealt mostly with contract language and money as an issue. You didn't have this whole lot of questions that you deal with today. Pensions were becoming a prime issue in the late forties. I think we put our first pension proposals to the company in 1949. We didn't accomplish that pension until 1950. We went one time, I think,

seventeen months without a labor agreement in our plant. We wouldn't sign a labor agreement unless it contained a pension. Since that issue was strongly contested all over the place, we went through some difficult times.

Our people were anxious to get some more money. The company offered money a few times for us, and we kept turning it down until we got the pension issue behind us. In our plant we had an annuity program, anyhow, and we had to give up that annuity program for pension. That was an issue with some of the guys in the plant; they had been in the annuity program for four or five years, had some money put back in it, and thought that they wanted to stay in it. The company took the position that it was either pensions or annuities, and we wanted pensions, and we won out in the final struggle, and were able to successfully negotiate a pretty good pension program.

Ruggles: In '49, Ford established a pension program in the mass production industry. Were you following their pattern?

Tomasi: We jumped out of their pattern a little bit. At that particular time, the UAW had a couple ways to go on it. Ford took the position that they would couple their pension with Social Security at \$100 a month. We, and I'm not sure now, I haven't even ever researched it, we took a position that we wanted a flat rate per month per year of service. Now believe me, this was all new to us, and we had to do a lot of reading, and at times you got to the point, well, that you were dealing with the impossible. But we suddenly accomplished it. We were able to accomplish a pension free of Social Security; it had nothing to do with Social Security.

That's the way that pensions are put together in the UAW today. It's an amount of money free of Social Security. But I'm not sure we were first on that. I never even looked at the books, and have never checked it out to say whether we were first in that particular area or not. But our pension was not the same type of pension that was negotiated in the auto companies. They changed, I think it was just a year or so, and they changed their whole programs, too. What happened, the companies went in and got increases. The government increased social security and wiped out their pension liabilities in a hurry.

Ruggles: Did you get help from the International?

Tomasi: Oh, yes. Our International Union has always assigned reps to plants. That's been one of our strong features, in my opinion. Local unions don't flounder around on their own. We

had help then from International representatives assigned by the International union, along with some research materials that were put together at that particular time. It was very good stuff. We've always maintained a very strong research department, and some very capable people, with knowledge about pensions, and insurance, and those sort of things. We had all the help we needed.

Ruggles: Having a Vice President from your home Region on the International Board, was that of any help?

Tomasi: Well, if you go back, there was a big struggle going on right here in Toledo, Ohio. Vice President Gosser was aiming to put a lot of small plants into a single pension program. He took that struggle on here, and it became a very vicious struggle for months and months and months. That was accomplished. That Northwest Ohio pension program that was put in place in 1950 is still viable here in Toledo, Ohio. I do the negotiating for that particular plan. That plan today is almost totally paid off. It has funds of over \$20 million, and I think its total liability is about \$22 million; it's a very good pension program, covering a lot of small plants.

Dick's idea, at that particular time, was to have one big pension program, with all the shops belonging, and companies making the same contributions. It was a very good idea, and it worked for a great number of years.

Ruggles: He was a controversial man, wasn't he?

Tomasi: He was a very controversial guy, but a very good man.

Ruggles: Everything I've read about him, I hear words like allegations, or charges, but I never get a very clear picture. At that period of 1950, there was this big dispute going on here in the Toledo area. Do you recall people like Charlie Gross, and Clayton Rush?

Tomasi: Oh, yes, I know Charlie Gross very well. Clayton Rush, just knew who he was. At that particular time, Toledo was the regional headquarters, so that we were always coming into Toledo for meetings. I was coming into the city for years and years before I moved here, and became Director. We had close ties with everybody here in the region; it was a very close-knit region, it still is a very close-knit region, here in northwest Ohio. We were part of that particular struggle, and Dick was very good at getting everybody involved in struggles. We were very much a part of it.



Ruggles: Describe him for me, as a personality, and why he was always being accused of these things.

Tomasi: Well, he was a tough guy. He projected a very tough type of image. But Dick was not that kind of a man. He was a very good guy. He was a disciplinarian, there is no question about that. He put rules into effect, and he wanted them followed, and there is nothing wrong with that. I think it's the only way to really operate, myself. It's a very good idea. I've been the beneficiary of that kind of discipline, myself, so I kind of agreed with what he was doing.

He was tough, but he also, if you look at his history, and you look here at the Toledo area, he had some rules put into effect here, and he followed them religiously, about all the small plants. He established the labor-management citizens committee to avoid any kind of strike in between contracts. He put in a system where most small employers, if they got into difficulty, could call LMC and get some help, so that they weren't running into trouble with their employees all the time. Kind of changed the image of Toledo from a tough labor town to one of good common sense, and the strike ratio here in Toledo, as compared to the rest of the nation, is one of the smallest in the country today, even yet today. During that entire period of time that he was in power here, there were very few labor disputes in this particular area.

Ruggles: One newspaper, I believe it was the Toledo Blade, referred to him as sort of a hell-raiser, but even defended him when he went to prison. They felt that that was a put-up job. Can you discuss that?

Tomasi: Yes. I don't know who perpetrated that whole thing, but there was never any proof, at least in my opinion, and the record pretty well speaks for itself, that he committed any kind of a crime. It was kind of a... He was sent to prison because of his personality, more than anything else. Like I say, he didn't like to be pushed around by anybody. He probably made some errors during the trial. He had a habit of calling younger men than him, of calling them 'young man'. And he did that to two or three of these prosecutors for the government, and some other things that I'm sure rankled the hell out of them. So they were able to convince the jury that this guy was a bad man. The record itself, and we kept a pretty good record of it... In fact Emil Mazey, if I'm not mistaken, came here about every day and sat during the trial, and wrote a little story about it afterwards, about the conviction.

It was a tragedy, because he'd done so much for people, he established some things that very few labor leaders have established in their tenure in office. I haven't had the opportunity to do much of anything because we've been fighting for a life for a number of years. But he established a children's summer camp up here at Sanilac, Michigan. He established a good health and retiree's center, and those were real monuments to the man, things that were years ahead of themselves. Today the health care thing has changed dramatically, but we still maintain the center. It's in kind of rough shape, financially, and there's been lot of change take place, but it's still there yet.

Ruggles: What happened to Gosser?

Tomasi: Well, he went to prison, then he came out, and he resigned. I think he resigned when they sent him in... I'm trying to remember dates. Anyway, he came back here and died in December 1969. He had had a kidney problem; he'd been on dialysis, and that was pretty much a new procedure back in those days. He lived at the clinic; there was an apartment established there for him. He lived at the clinic, and died in his sleep. Very natural; I think his heart and everything just gave out on him.

Ruggles: There was an intent, or a request at least, that President Johnson pardon him. Did that ever go through?

Tomasi: No. We met... I happened to be fortunate enough to meet with Walter Reuther and Chuck Belvin. Walter Murphy and I met with him in California during the AFL Convention. We tried to arrange some meetings through Walter with President Johnson to get him a pardon. It did not go through. I don't think there was ever anything on it after that, and again, memory will have to... No, I don't think anything was ever done after that, for him.

Ruggles: In 1950 you became an International Rep. Let's talk about your role as an International Rep. Just what kinds of activities does an International Rep concern himself with?

Tomasi: Well, first, when I was put on in that particular area, I was servicing shops from Lima down to Troy, Ohio, which is the other end of the region. I had shops in Waupock, and Delphus, Lima, Pickway, Troy, and so it was a service arrangement. As a servicing rep, what you do is take care of all the grievances that come out of those particular shops in your step of the grievance procedure. You were negotiating contracts, and at that particular time, doing a lot of organizing, because we didn't have too many plants down through that particular area.

In the years that I was there, we were able to organize a lot of plants. We organized a Ford plant, which I considered. It came into Lima in fifty-six, and we had a drive in there. It was kind of unusual, because we didn't have one meeting with the people. We did it mostly through personal contacts. When the election was held, we won that election 598 to 6. Those six no-votes were all cast against us there in a Ford plant in Lima, Ohio.

Ruggles: Pretty good organizing job.

Tomasi: That was a very good drive. Then, Ex-Cello came into Lima. We organized the Ex-Cello plant, and that was a very good victory. Randall Graphite, and quite a few other plants down through there that we organized. Hayes-Albin over in Spencerville, Ohio. When I left, I think we had seven going in, and when I left we were 32 plants down through that particular area. I negotiated most of the agreements with the committees during that particular period of time.

Years ago, we were doing a yearly, remember we were doing that every year, and every two years we were back in the same shops again. In 1950 there was a dramatic shift in our position, on agreements. We put the five-year agreement in, you remember, on the Big Three. We were following through with some agreements like that throughout the Region. We didn't get a lot of them established, but then in 1953 we had that "Living Document Theory" we threw at 'em, and were able to make some changes in those particular agreements. Then after '55 we pretty well settled down to 2 and 3-year agreements, so that this question of doing it every year kind of went out the window. Thank God for that.

Ruggles: How did the company receive the Living Document idea, do you recall?

Tomasi: They got pretty hot about it in some areas. In a few of the plants they just became pretty furious that General Motors and them had opened those contracts up for change, but once it was over with they pretty well... They were making money then, and it really didn't affect them much, they just didn't like the idea of opening up the contract in between the dates.

Ruggles: Was the Living Document anything other than just opening up certain clauses in the contract?

Tomasi: No, we opened it up... most of it was over money. We didn't tamper too much with the language in the agreements at that particular time. It was mostly this money issue. We felt that the workers were, you know, kind of falling behind. If I remember again, I think it was

for ten cents. We got ten cents in 1953 and some extra money for the skilled trades. And that pretty well settled it 'till fifty-five, and after that we never went back to that type of thinking again.

Ruggles: And that, until '61 you were an International Rep, and doing this type of thing, servicing small shops?

Tomasi: Well, there was some pretty big shops down through that area. We had Superior Coach, which is one of the largest school bus manufacturers in the country, located in Lima. Baldwin-Lima-Hamden, which was a huge maker of cranes and shovels. They made steam engines and stuff, originally; they were not making steam engines in the fifties, but they were doing some diesel work, and they were also involved in a lot of work for the Korean War. They made tanks, and hulls, and amphibious stuff down there during the Korean War. Big plant, it went up to about 3200 people. Today it's closed up. It went through a series of changes and finally ended up as Clark Equipment. Then a few years back Clark Equipment closed the plant, so that facility laid idle for all these years. I understand now there's some movement now to start some small establishments in that facility.

Ruggles: You mentioned Superior Coach just a minute ago. I had a note here about the United Steelworkers were competing with you there. It was back in the late sixties. Did you finally organize the Superior Coach?

Tomasi: There was never any competition for Superior Coach after we took them.

Ruggles: This was out of Ohio. They had a Mississippi plant as well.

Tomasi: Oh yes, now that's different. Yes, in Kosciusko, Mississippi. They went down there and opened up a plant to compete in that Southern market, because the school bus companies were located... Their chief competition was Blue Bird down in Fort Valley, Georgia, and at High Point, North Carolina there was a plant, but we had that plant, in High Point. And one in Conway, Arkansas; Ward Body in Conway, Arkansas. Those were the chief competition to Superior Coach. They were unorganized, so they went down and started the Kosciusko plant. The Steelworkers beat us out in an election down in Kosciusko for that particular plant. All of them are closed now. That's one of the facilities that went out of business.

Ruggles: Organizing in that kind of a climate would be a little difficult.

Tomasi: Oh, yes. Organizing in the south is difficult. Organizing anyplace today is

difficult! It's difficult right in Ohio, because, number one: labor laws changed dramatically, in my opinion. The government today is not treating labor law as it was originally designed. The Wagner Act, and those acts, says that it was to enhance the labor to organize. We have a government now that's taken the opposite position: they put people on the National Labor Relations Board who are anti-union, people from the National Right to Work Committee, who are definitely opposed about anything that's going on in organized labor for all these years. The climate has changed dramatically in organizing; very tough.

Ruggles: How about at the worker level? Has it changed there? Has willingness to join...?

Tomasi: I think there's a lot of fear out there now, amongst workers. Number one, they recognize unfair labor practices, and the right of companies to fire employees, and the problems you have of getting them reinstated to their jobs. The fear of losing their plants. We've lost a lot of them in this part of the country. They use that; they indicate that right off the bat. They tell people, "If you organize, your chances of having a job here are pretty nil", so that all the fears and frustrations that have occurred in the last few years, you now face them in every organizing job.

The other part of it is, that they can look right up the road and see a plant that's gone out of business. It's not like it was years ago, when everything was booming, and we were growing. It was kind of a different situation. Today we've been in the reverse. We've had about five years of very tough times. We've lost a lot of plants. I think here in the Region, we've lost around forty plants. Just in Lima, as an example, we lost a big Baldwin-Lima-Hamden plant, or Clark Equipment. We lost Superior Coach, and a couple others. We're losing Randall Bearing, is now going out of business. So that's right there, it's right home. It affected that whole city. You go down the road a little piece, in Marion, Ohio, we lost a big Tecumseh Products plant. There's been a lot of movement here. In Toledo, Ohio we've lost a number of plants. So that fear is there.

Ruggles: Is it foreign imports, or plants moving south?

Tomasi: Both. Foreign imports are having a dramatic impact on the parts plants. We're losing a lot of work to foreign imports. A good example, again: Tecumseh Products is a maker of compressors. They had plants up in Tecumseh, Michigan; they had a plant down in Marion,

Ohio, both doing essentially the same work. They had some plants scattered in other parts of the country, and some plants overseas. But all of a sudden the pressure on compressors got to be pretty heavy, from Singapore, and from Japan, and from Italy. There was an over-abundance of compressors, and Tecumseh was forced to kind of pull in their horns a little bit, and restrict their operations in that particular area, so they came to us with some, tried to get some wage concessions and stuff out of the people down in Marion, Ohio. We ran into a very vicious strike down there, and when it was over with, they just closed the plant. Within ten months after the strike was over they closed the plant. That was 1800 jobs down the tubes.

Up in Tecumseh, where they have an independent union, they had around five thousand people up there, and they're down to 1200 people. So that you can see that they've shrunk considerably in that particular. And that's true about any part that you can lay your hands on. I heard Dana, you know, they were big in the rear axles and drivetrains, they were big in that particular area. We're down to about 750 people from a high of 2800 people.

Ruggles: What are these men doing for jobs, say these 1800?

Tomasi: Well, the people down in Marion are having a tough time because the opportunity down there is pretty slim, on getting jobs. Here in the Toledo area they've been able to move around, and pick up other employment. But employment that they find is much less wage rates, and much less benefits than they had in the organized plants. Been pretty tough.

Ruggles: What's the future hold, in this respect, for organized labor? Saturn-type agreements?

Tomasi: Well, Saturn is going to be one type of thing that we have to look at, especially for those manufacturers that want to make small automobiles. I don't think we have to worry too much about that with the big cars, not right at the present. I see a threat to the big car coming from overseas. Japan does produce mid-size cars and better in Japan itself. Having been over there a couple times, and went through the plants, they produce a very good automobile, there's no question about that. But Saturn-type agreements, we have to look at them, at the present time, as it relates to the small cars. If Chrysler or Ford decide to move off into that kind of an area, I'm sure we're going to have to sit down and talk to them, the same way we did with General Motors on Saturn, and what we've done at NUMMI out on the west coast, with Toyota and General Motors.

The guys in the parts industry are in a more precarious position, in my opinion. The buying of parts... they're coming from all over. In fact, I think it was Chrysler just the other day, talked about buying engines in Mexico, even though they have the plant down there. It was for a different venture; they're going to start bringing those engines out of Mexico. Ford is already bringing engines out of Mexico. When you take an engine, and then take all the component parts on an engine, and look around to the Brazils and the Koreas, and all the rest of the countries now, that are deciding that they ought to be into this particular market, I think there is a real threat to those jobs.

Ruggles: And no real solution at the moment.

Tomasi: None that I can see. The government sure as hell isn't giving us any help. Again, if you look at free trade versus this protectionism that they claim that's our kick, I don't think that the American manufacturer, and I'm sure the American workers, wouldn't mind free trade if the rules of the game were the same. But you can't play with unfair rules. The field has to be even, that you're playing on.

Number one, if you look at the wage part of it, there's only about seven or eight countries... In fact, I just have an analysis that I had done on this question of wages compared to other countries that are producing countries. But the wages ought to be pretty well equal, and the only ones that we can get equal with are the countries of Europe. The Swedens and the Germanies, and those countries. Japan to some degree now. But when you go beyond that you're talking about wages that run from sixty, seventy cents, and somewhere thirty cents, up to a dollar an hour, or a dollar and a half an hour. Just pick any figure you want to pick. We can't compete in that particular area, so there has to be some other rules established.

Now when it comes to the benefit areas, again, you have to take a look at where America stands, versus all the rest of them. We're the only country that still negotiates for insurance; we negotiate for pensions, we negotiate for vacations and for holidays. A lot of the other countries don't do that; those are part of their national tax systems. Again, that makes the field kind of uneven. We need to put some other barriers up and say to those people, we'll treat you like you treat us. If you make the field clean and level, we'll attach the same rules for products going into your country as you'd pass on products coming into our country. In that respect, we might be able to kind of correct it a little bit.

Ruggles: You could become a free trade advocate it...

Tomasi: If all the rules were right, you know, but I sure as hell am not there today, not by any stretch of the imagination.

Ruggles: We drifted away from your role, but that's good, that's all right. I just wanted to go back to your career. After International Rep, by '61 you had become Sub-Regional Director. What is the Sub-Region?

Tomasi: Well, what we had then, and we no longer have that title anymore. They divided the Regions up a little bit, and you acted kind of as the Coordinator for organizing, and the other Reps in the area, if they needed some help they'd call on you to get some help in negotiations. And other problems that you run into: grievances, arbitration, all the other stuff that you have in this business. So, they appointed me Sub-Regional Director. Then, shortly thereafter, they made me Assistant Director. You had a little bit more responsibility at that particular time.

Ruggles: As Sub-Regional were you autonomous, or were you responsible to Ballard?

Tomasi: No, Ballard was the Director, and you had to report to Ballard. Walter Murphy and I served as Assistant Director. We had two of them in the Region at that particular time. It was not a particularly good arrangement, although Walter and I got along beautifully. I really liked him, and that's not the problem. The problem is the question of who authorizes strikes, and all the rest of the stuff. They kind of left us on our own in that particular area. Chuck said to us, "You know, if you guys have the authority to do it, but this office has to be cleared on all this kind of issues". Walter and I were able to work it out, and it worked out pretty good. I took everything outside the Toledo area, and he kept everything inside the Toledo area, because most of our membership was concentrated here in this particular area. We were able to pretty well achieve a balance and work pretty good for a number of years. Then when he became Director in 1968, not only did he decide that, and I wanted it that way, but the Board took the position that we ought to be getting rid of these.

Ruggles: You said in '68 you wanted Murphy to become Director?

Tomasi: Yes. When he became Director we wanted to get rid of this two administrative assistants, so we went to one administrative assistant and the director. It has worked that way pretty well since then.

Ruggles: In 1970 you became Regional Director?



Tomasi: Yes.

Ruggles: That must have been a traumatic year for you.

Tomasi: Well, it was.

Ruggles: Reuther died; Ballard died; Murphy died.

Tomasi: Murphy died, and Gosser died. They all died, you know, very quickly. Dick was first, in December '69, and then Ballard and Reuther died within a day of one another. Walter was killed on the tenth, or the ninth, and Ballard died on the tenth of May, and then Walter died in September. So it was a very bad, traumatic year for me. Then I became Director. You know, the feeling isn't good when you get there by reason of somebody else's death. It happened, and I was able to move in, a keep right on going.

Ruggles: Most, so much of the UAW is measured by Walter Reuther's contributions, and yet most of your tenure as Regional Director, or all of it, has been under Woodcock, Fraser and Bieber. Has it been any different than when you were International Rep?

Tomasi: No, I don't think so. You know, I tried to compare all these men because I knew all of them pretty well; Leonard and Doug and Owen very well. Walter was kind of an aloof person. I don't say that in any bad sense, but he, as you know, he suffered some pretty bad experiences. He was shot, and they kind of put a ring around him then. You remember, he had some bodyguards and stuff. It was very difficult to get to see him. I know I don't have any quarrel with that; it just made him a little bit different kind of a person. He was aloof in some other ways, I think, based on the fact that he became a world personality, rather than a home boy. That made some changes in the way he approached people. But when you got to know him, he was very down-to earth; nothing wrong with the man. He, in my opinion, we needed him, and he was just... he could inspire people to do things, no question about that. Probably one of the greatest orators in the union movement. I've listened to a lot of them, but I think he could hold people for a long period of time better than any man I've ever listened to. He had that kind of a personality. He was not just a figure for the UAW, he was a figure for the world. And that put him on some kind of a different plane. Great leader, and all those sort of things.

Leonard isn't that kind of a person. But Leonard, in my opinion (I don't want to get any of them mad at me), I consider him to be a very intelligent man, a tremendous administrator. When Leonard does things, they are in order. He's always in order. I never knew him not to

know exactly where he stood on an issue, and you couldn't hit Leonard with any kind of a phony question. You came at him straight or you got the kind of answer you probably wouldn't like once he gave it to you. I found him to be a very orderly person, a very good administrator, and I think a hell of a union leader.

Doug, again, was charismatic, and more of that kind of a leader, a very good guy. All of them are very intelligent. They just need to be, and they have to be, so that's never a question. Owen, I think, has proven... he went through some very tough years, I think, as tough as anybody faced in our union, and he's proved to be very capable of handling that kind of a toughness. Now, he isn't going to have the charisma of a Doug or a Walter, and maybe Doug got that because he was very closely associated with Walter. You know, he was his administrative assistant for a number of years. I think Doug was one of the best constitutionalists we've ever had in the union, because he handled that as part of his duties as administrative assistant. Whenever I would call him, I can recall years ago, he could always come very fast with the answers to you. He didn't need to search around for them, because he had a very good feel for the constitution. Each one of them have been pretty great people. They are a little bit different; each one of them are a little bit different.

Ruggles: Going back to Woodcock, he was President when you first took over the Region. Can you recall any personal experiences or incidents that explain his character, or his role as President?

Tomasi: Well, his biggest challenge was the 1970 negotiations, when he took on General Motors for that 67 days. I just think he handled it very well. Him and I had some problems with the Mansfield local at that particular time. I'll give you a little... We had some people down there that were discharged, and they were a couple of characters. I kept attempting, I kept telling them, Leonard, that I couldn't get a settlement in Mansfield unless these two guys, we had some solution to that particular problem. So, I kept hitting on it pretty heavy, and finally he says, "Why don't you come to Detroit? I'm going to arrange a meeting. I want you in Detroit", along with the rep that I had servicing at that particular time. We went into Detroit, and there was a little room up there in Solidarity House. He sat me down with Bluestone and Ernie Moran and him and I and the rep, Davey Beyer, and he says to me, "Joe, you must feel that we're not capable of delivering on this thing. And so, since you have some doubts in your mind, I've

arranged a meeting over in General Motors with the top brass of General Motors. You go over and try to convince them". You know you've been had at that particular time. So I started, "Just a minute. I didn't ask..." "No, it's arranged. Bluestone and Moran will go with you". What the hell can you say? So I went over to the General Motors building, and started laying out a case. One of the things that had been said down there was, well, those guys would turn it into a hay barn and all this sort of stuff, all that bullshit that you hear in negotiations. These guys looked at me. There was three vice presidents from General Motors, and they concurred that that would be their next move: to make that into a hay barn. I was holding four hundred thousand people in the streets because of me. Oh, I really got it good, you know. They had no intentions of putting those two guys back to work, and that's where we ended up at. So I went down to Mansfield, and started in on a Wednesday, with a guy named Bob Brown. Davey and I went in, and we worked very hard at trying to get the thing behind us, the whole problem of the local negotiations behind us. On Saturday night late we still hadn't made those two key guys. And Rowe says to me, we're up in a little room all by ourselves, about midnight. He says, "Why don't you give Leonard one more call?" My better judgment says don't do it, but you know, when you're up against a wall. I said, "All right". So I got his number, and gave him a call, and he was in bed, and started to talk to him. He says, "Where are you at?" I said, "I'm in Mansfield, I've been here since Wednesday". It was pretty cold then, I can't remember what month that was in. November? It was pretty cold at that particular time. He says, "You've been there since Wednesday?" "Yes", I said, and I was getting tired. He said, "Why in the hell don't you go home and get some sleep?" and he hung up the phone. [laughter] I knew I was out of business at that particular point. We didn't get the two guys back to work; we got a settlement. We eventually got one of them back to work, not at that particular time. That was quite an experience, but I liked him then. I just have a lot of respect for Leonard Woodcock.

Ruggles: How about Fraser? Do you have any incidents with Doug that you remember?

Tomasi: Oh, yes. I'm trying to remember any particular one with Doug that was like that; I can't recall any. Doug was always fast to get you in a jolly mood, you know, unlike Leonard. He always kept you in a different kind of a mood when you're in a lot of trouble. I don't recall any particular incidents. That one always stuck with me, with Leonard.

Ruggles: It was during this period that paid personal holidays, thirty and out came in.

What do you think in the last fifteen years has been the major accomplishment in your field of union activities?

Tomasi: Well, thirty and out probably was a biggie. I'm looking now, and we really don't know all the effects of it, but this last set of negotiations produced this job security, job bank idea, that's just now beginning to move into place.

Ruggles: This is in 1985?

Tomasi: Yes. Eighty-four we put it in, last year in '84, so it's just now starting to have some effect. I don't know what it will finally mean in terms of protecting the workers, but if it works as it was intended, and it looks like it's going to stay on that kind of a path, it really adds security to workers that they've never enjoyed before in their life. Not only in this country, but I don't there is any other country offers the same kind of security, where you, say, get a year of service and apply your seniority that you're guaranteed damn near lifetime employment. You are protected against this question of new technology, imports, and this sort of thing. Not protected against the ravages of the market, but you're protected against these questions that always put fear into workers' minds. That, I think, is going to be a real biggie, when you compare it with the rest of them. But, if you look at SUB, and you look at pensions, I think pensions were the ultimate thing we ever negotiated. In any labor movement, I just think the way we established pensions, and the protections they give people who retire, are just outstanding in this country. Our people enjoy a pretty high level of security. They go out with full pensions from the auto plants, or any of the rest of our plants. That was the biggest thing.

SUB had to be the next item. This last one may have some impacts that we haven't even recognized yet. I think it's been very good. Our cost of living theory, all those things, have just enhanced workers' wages right up, kept us afloat. Workers never really had to be concerned about, again, the ravages of inflation. The only problem, if you look at cost of living per se, the problem with it, it's extended us up to a pretty good level in wages. But most of that money that's there, and I don't have the right figures for you today, maybe a third or better of that money is strictly money that was put through because of inflation. It had nothing to do with pulling workers' wages up. In other words, you got pulled up by a device over here, the three percent thing. But then we're laying up here someplace, and as a result of inflation. I don't know what that really means, in terms of workers, you know... If we hadn't had any cost of

living, would we be in the same place, is what I'm trying to say, and I don't know. If you look around to other industries, the answer is probably yes, but not as high as we are today, because most other industries don't enjoy the wages of auto workers.

Ruggles: AMC is supposed to be the highest paid in the country, I've heard. Is that true?

Tomasi: AMC is, yes, they are. They're there as a result of some other little gimmicks that were put into place in AMC.

Ruggles: And yet at the same time you have AMC now demanding concessions from UAW.

Tomasi: Yes. They just went after the guys in American Motors, up in Kenosha, but here they didn't demand concessions in the Jeep plant. Jeep is an acquisition of American Motors, and our wages probably are on par or maybe... They were on par with the Big Three, but maybe not quite as high as they were in Wisconsin. We were able to negotiate a new three-year agreement here without any difficulty the last time.

Ruggles: Was it in Kenosha that the workers got so upset about concessions that they started beating on the cars?

Tomasi: No, that was here. That was here in the Jeep plant. What happened, we've got that employee investment plan, and that's a plan that was negotiated with all the AMC plants. Even though we're not part of a master agreement, we have our own separate agreement here in Toledo, Ohio, we're part of that particular plan. That particular plan says that, once the money was taken from employees and put into these savings funds that, at a certain point in 1985 we could make a decision on how we got that money back out of the till. There were two gimmicks that could bring it back to us: profit sharing or a wheel tax. It said in there that we had the right to make the decision. Well, when we get to that particular point with AMC, they make a decision that we can't afford the wheel tax thing, and the only way you can get it is out of that little bit of profits we generated last year. That would have amounted to about, well, they got about three hundred dollars per employee. These guys have got invested an average of around five or six thousand dollars apiece, so they got pretty upset about that. Because it was invoked on them, they got madder than hell at the company, and went into kind of a rage out here. In some areas they started beating on some cars, yes. It was not good, I don't think that's... If they wanted to react, they should have reacted in some other fashion. It was all right

to protest, but I don't think that's the way you protest.

Ruggles: Have you had many racial problems in the Toledo area, or in 2B altogether?

Tomasi: No, we went over it pretty easy. One time when Walter was Regional Director, there was some incidents here in Toledo, Ohio, but it didn't have anything to do with our union. That was something that occurred here on a racial basis that we got involved in, but not dealing with plants. We've had very little in the whole region of any racial problems. I think that's, again, due to the general attitudes in these areas are pretty good on that. There's always some guys that want to battle you on it, but I mean it's not been an open, anti thing of any kind.

Ruggles: I've noticed, in taking a look at the past Directors of the UAW, there seems to be a tremendous social consciousness on their part, far beyond what their job would require of them. Going out into the community in a lot of civic and community organizations. Is there an unspoken code of ethics, or is it an ethical position that almost demands of a UAW Director to be involved in the community?

Tomasi: No, I don't think so. I think that's just something that we've brought with us as a union. I've always been involved; I was involved in Lima in about everything you could get involved in. And I am here in Toledo; I sit on a number of boards. United Way, the Blue Cross, hospital boards, Lucas County Children's Services board... All of them require time. They don't take time away from your job because the meetings, they either give you a noontime meeting or a nighttime meeting, or a weekend meeting, so it's not, it doesn't take away from the job. They do demand a hell of a lot of time, but I think it's part of our makeup. Maybe the guys who, if you look at them all come out of the same kind of a mold, are socially conscious on our own, and maybe like to do it. Must be, I never had a problem with it, because I just really believe that if unions have strength, and if that strength can't be used for other goods, that eventually people will look at you as being self-centered, and really not put a lot of faith in you. I think it's one of our strong points, that we are involved in communities. We're deeply involved in most of the communities we operate in. We don't shirk our responsibilities on anything. If people are in trouble, we seem to be willing to always go out and help. I think that's good, I think that's your obligation anyhow.

Ruggles: Did this grow out of the demand for justice in the early days of the UAW?

Tomasi: Oh, probably, that's where it come from.

Ruggles: But I'm putting words in your mouth.

Tomasi: No, no, you're putting the right words. It probably is part of our, when we started, we started on this trend, and we've never gotten away from it. We're very involved. As a union, I think we are very involved in about everything you can think of.

Ruggles: I know when Gosser was having those problems, there was a threat, at least, of the UAW pulling out of all the community organizations. But they backed out of that, too, didn't they?

Tomasi: Yes, they backed away from that. Chuck Ballard, that was one of his... He said, "To hell with them, if that what's they think, I might as well get out". But he changed his mind about that.

Ruggles: When Ballard was Regional Director, there was a question of a lot of organizational problems in Region 2B that aren't clear. That might be a minor point. Pat Greathouse was coming down here, or trying to come down here, and make contact with Ballard at Reuther's request, to solve regional problems that seemed to be quite significant. This would be about 1963.

Tomasi: That's during that whole period of time when Dick and them, Dick was having his difficulty. Is there anything specific?

Ruggles: Just that Greathouse was trying to get a hold of Ballard, but couldn't get a hold of him. There was a series of letters, 8 or 10, between Ballard, Greathouse, and Reuther. "Why don't you call?", "I have called", "No you didn't," and "Why don't you write?" and so on.

Tomasi: Ballard was bad, Ballard never liked to put a lot of stuff in letters. I don't know if you recognized that or not.

Ruggles: Well, there seemed to be some animosity there. Maybe it was, he just didn't have any reason to write.

Tomasi: I don't know what that's about.

Ruggles: The letters are vague.

Tomasi: Well, Pat was Director of Organizing then, you know, and probably dealt with... we had some organizers here in the Region that signed with Pat. There was some difficulty with one of them, and I had charge of organizing in the Region then. We had some meetings with Pat, and I can't remember if that was 1963 or not; probably was, at that particular

time.

Ruggles: I mentioned it because in '68, a few years later, there seems to be some continued friction between Greathouse and Ballard in that Ballard is suggesting that Greathouse has one of his staff people down here campaigning for Regional Director. Does that ring a bell with you, or does the name Tom Kinney ring a bell?

Tomasi: Oh, Tom. Tom died here, shortly... Tom Kinney was a staff member here on the Region 2B staff. Came on staff in 1948. Then during the ensuing years he had some difficulty. Tom was not one, a great lover of Dick or Chuck, either one. That's what somebody's letter might refer to at that particular period of time. He left us and went with the organizing department. Stayed up there. Then he was always shooting in here, trying to create little political problems, and that's probably absolutely right. He was down there trying to find out if he could run somebody for Director. But nothing ever came of that.

Ruggles: You had a headache with a guy named Lawrence Lucas, too, didn't you?

Tomasi: Lucas was out of the same plant that Tom come out of: Standard Products.

Ruggles: Lucas wrote a newspaper column, and was pushing Kinney for something.

Tomasi: They come out of the same plant. But that never amounted to a hill of beans.

Ruggles: Is that type of thing routine in most regions? Do you have this every once in a while?

Tomasi: Generally, in some regions it gets more serious than that. They have opposition. But here, in Region 2B, so far, we've been pretty ... Once the caucus makes a decision, it's generally over with. Everybody gets their chance up to the day of the caucus, and once the region makes a caucus decision, they generally stayed with one guy. But it's open, you'll get those sort of things, because we are open. If anybody decides that they might want to try it, they can try it.

Ruggles: It's not considered a breach of ethics to go against the caucus decision?

Tomasi: No. Once the caucus decision is made, yes. When a caucus was held, generally if there was any opposition, it disappears once the caucus makes a decision.

Ruggles: 1966, Governor Rhodes (he was a Republican, wasn't he?)... Ballard supports him, or at least he went around with him. The International Office got a little upset with that. That a Regional Director...



Tomasi: Sixty-six? What was going on in sixty-six, if Ballard was in?

Ruggles: He was helping Rhodes tour the state, and at least got ...

Tomasi: I don't think he got an endorsement. I think that was mostly Ballard; he probably had some reason for doing it.

Ruggles: He got a strong letter from Emil Mazey, saying that he shouldn't be doing that, and I just wondered if there was a reason why a UAW Regional Director would be touring with a Republican governor?

Tomasi: I'm trying to recall what...

Ruggles: Sixty-six was right in the, that would be mid-year of the Presidency. Johnson would have been in office then.

Tomasi: What the hell was Chuck doing there? Is there any other kind of letter in the thing?

Ruggles: Just a curiosity question.

Tomasi: Did Chuck answer him in any fashion?

Ruggles: No, there's no reply. There are some newspaper articles.

Tomasi: Let me take a quick look at that. Maybe I can add some light to that. I can see the newspaper articles.

Ruggles: That would be a rare situation, where a UAW Regional Director would support, or appear to support, a Republican governor, wouldn't it?

Tomasi: Yes. Maybe he was mad. [pauses to look at articles and letters] Hmm. You know, Steinberg was involved in that; I wonder what the hell... Steinberg! Well, they were always... the Teamsters were always Republican... they always supported Rhodes, that's for sure. [pauses]

Ruggles: It's been quite a few years; that's almost 20 years, so... it's really not fair of me to ask you that, twenty years back.

Tomasi: No, generally I remember those things. Let me tell you what happened. In Lima, we took care of our own political situation. We never supported this guy. [still looking at papers] Undoubtedly, let me tell you, probably Rhodes did something that Ballard kind of liked, and Ballard was the kind of guy, if he...liked you, pretty well, he might have supported you. I doubt...[unintelligible] probably disappeared with him. I'm sure there was no endorsement

for Rhodes out of that thing, none whatsoever.

Ruggles: Back to the social consciousness of the union. There's been a great support for the Grape Boycott and the migrant workers throughout the country, but a lot in the Toledo area, too. Have you been involved in that?

Tomasi: Yes. We, originally, here in the Toledo area, when FLOC came into being, we gathered up some money for them. We got some support from the International. In fact, I delivered the first checks to Baldimar Valesquez. How many years ago was that? That has to be almost twenty years.

Ruggles: That's sixty-eight, thereabouts.

Tomasi: We helped them, here in the Toledo area, when they took on some growers. I think Walter at that particular time, stood on a picket line with them, and we've been generally supportive of them, and then they kind of drifted away. On their own, they came back this year again, strong. They'd been on a Campbell boycott thing, and we have not joined them on the Campbell boycott issue because of the very fact that Campbell's is organized by other AFL unions, and the AFL has taken a pretty strong position against the boycott, and we've stayed with them on that issue. We haven't stood in FLOC's way, but we won't join with them. This year they held their convention here in Local 12's hall, in fact, August the third they just had their convention. They had Cesar Chavez in here, and Monsignor Higgins was in with him. They haven't come back and asked me for anything in particular, but that commission is set up under John Dunlap, may come up with a solution to their problem. Doug Fraser's also sitting on that commission. In fact I talked with Doug yesterday a little bit about it, and he will be meeting. I think Dunlap is in Toledo now, and has been here for a number of days, just getting some preliminary detail together to try to come up with a solution to the problem.

Ruggles: That's a tough one, migrant workers, they've got it tough.

Tomasi: Oh, sure. They have a tough life. And it's difficult for them to ever maintain an organization, because, you know, tomatoes. You put them in the ground to get ripe, and you pick them, you're gone. It's not like a factory, where they're there year around. They're only there for a few weeks here, and then a few weeks in the pickle fields, and then they're up in Michigan picking something else, and then they're back in Texas again. So, to sustain that kind of an organization is very difficult. In fact, I don't think, just to be very honest about it, they

might be able to put an organization together where they have some control (I don't know if control's the wrong word to use), but have some say so about workers coming out of the areas to come in here and do migrant work. They might be able to get a document to pay for hand-picked tomatoes or hand-picked pickles, and those sort of things. But other than that, I don't think they can do a lot. Seniority questions and them will probably just be nil in any kind of an agreement that they finally conclude. It's a very tough business, and it's very tough work, too. You go out there and watch all them kids and stuff in that mud the last few days. Not the best way for us to be saying that these are our workers.

Ruggles: Well, we're almost out of tape. Let me wrap it up here with a question. You came out of Lima at the age of nineteen, and now you're about to retire as a Regional Director of one of the largest unions in the world. Would you do it any differently, if you could do it all over again?

Tomasi: No. It's a challenging job, and at times it gets pretty, you know, almost every day there's something. At times it's very tough, but I've enjoyed it. I don't regret any of it. None.

Ruggles: At the risk of sounding corny or trite, do you feel that you're part of history?

Tomasi: I hope I have been.

Ruggles: The UAW certainly made an historic impact on this country.

Tomasi: You know I had an opportunity to move a few years ago. But I didn't choose it. I think there were two or three reasons for not doing it. Number one, I didn't have that many years left. Number two, the moving was a factor, and a few other factors, personal things. But, this is a great union, and you feel pretty good about being part of it. It's not one that even when things become tough on you that you ever feel that maybe you could do better somewhere else, or have any of those kind of feelings. I felt very strongly about the thing when I was young, and I still feel the same way. Just wish I had twenty more years to go.

Ruggles: Well, before those twenty years are up, I'll come back when you're retired, and we'll talk some more. Hope you get all your papers together. Thank you, Mr. Tomasi.