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YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Lordstown GM Project

Personal Experiences

O.H. 2148

Mr. Patsy J. Cua

Interviewed By

Michael Samek

On

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**Interviewee: Patsy J. Cua**

**Interviewer: Michael Samek**

**Subject: GM Lordstown Project**

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This is an interview with Pat Cua for the Youngstown State University Oral History Program, on Lordstown GM Project, by Michael Samek, on March 11, 2004, at Mr. Cua's home, at 6:30 PM. This project was funded by the Ford Foundation.

**S: I'd like to start, Mr. Cua, by thanking you for letting me into your home.**

**C: You're welcome.**

**S: Thank you very much. If we could start please, could you tell me when you were born, Sir?**

**C: September 4, 1936.**

**S: 1936, and where were you born?**

**C: Right in my dad's house, 440 Devitt Avenue in Campbell, Ohio.**

**S: Not too far.**

**C: We pronounce it "Camel." It's the native culture. Everybody pronounces in "Camel" instead of "Campbell."**

**S: Okay. Do you have any brothers or sisters?**

**C: Just myself.**

**S: Just yourself, okay. Could I have the names of your parents, please?**

C: Josephine Cua is the mother, or Guiseppna in Italian, and Pasquale Cua is my father.

S: Did either of those folks go on to get a college education?

C: When they were in Italy education was up to about the third grade. When they came here they wanted to go to school, and they did. My dad went to night school so that he could learn how to read and write. My mom, she was seventeen years old when she came here, and she went with her younger sister. She would go to school with her younger sister so that she could learn, but neither one of them graduated from high school.

S: Okay, interesting. Could you please tell me about the neighborhood that you grew up in, if it was a neighborhood?

C: It's a neighborhood in Campbell right behind the new St. Lucy's church. It was all kinds of nationalities—Italians, Slovaks, Greeks, Croatians, Hungarians, and all the ethnic backgrounds. It was rough. It was rough growing up there. When you went to school it was rough. You had different kinds of gangs, and we started high school actually in the eighth grade at Memorial High School. It was rough, and when you were younger like that, the bigger kids were always trying to pick on you. You always had to defend yourself or learn how to take care of yourself real quick because it was a pretty rough atmosphere.

S: Toughened you up early.

C: Right.

S: Could you imagine walking through your neighborhood and describing it? You started to, but could you describe the buildings, the setting?

C: At that time when I grew up in Campbell, everybody lived by the Youngstown Sheet & Tube towards the bottom of the hill. My dad's house was at the top of the hill, at the beginning of the hill. Behind my dad's house were still farms. There were still two farms in Campbell. One I can remember was called Creed Farm. It's Creed Circle now. They have all new homes in that area. The other farm I can't think of right now. Everybody lived at the bottom, and they had around twenty thousand people during World War II. The population of Campbell was mostly at the bottom of the hill there, and everybody would walk to work. My dad would walk down there to the Campbell part of Youngstown Sheet & Tube, and then he would walk towards Center Street Bridge in Youngstown. He walked miles just to go to work, and he came back that way. He did that for forty-four years. He came here. My dad came here in 1922. He was twenty-two years old. He came from Ellis Island into New York, then from New York City into the Campbell, Ohio area. He worked at Youngstown Sheet & Tube for forty-four years. It was mostly like Berlin Center is here. There was mostly like a farm atmosphere once you walked up towards the top of the hill towards Route 422 because it was all vacant land at the time. Later, probably in the 1950s, everybody started moving up the hill. It's populated all over in Campbell now.

S: Interesting, very interesting. Could you tell me about the home you grew up in? What was it like if we could walk through that house?

C: My mom and dad's home, it was really a small home. It was a two bedroom. It was actually a three-room house when he first bought it, and he added. He added three rooms. When I grew up in there my mother took in her sister. My mom and dad took in my mom's sister and her husband. I grew up with my aunt's three children. They were all born at my mom and dad's house. The door was always open. There were always people at the house. When you sat down to eat supper, everybody would be coming to visit at the time. You'd have maybe ten or fifteen people sometimes sitting down. There was only supposed to be three of us—my mom, dad, and I. The milkman, he would come in the house, deliver the milk in the house. The money would be in the house. He would just collect from inside of the house whether you were home or not. He'd come inside the house. The insurance man and everybody would come into the house, and you could trust people more. It was more enjoyable, more friendly. At first you didn't have television until later. I would say it was in the late 1940s when everybody started getting a TV. Apart from TV people were more friendly. They'd visit more. It was a more enjoyable time.

S: It's amazing how things change, isn't it?

C: Yes.

S: Where did you go to school, Sir?

C: I went to grade school at Pennhill Grade School. I was at Pennhill from first grade until the seventh grade. I was in kindergarten at Gordon School. Then I went to Memorial High School starting in the eighth grade, and I graduated in 1954.

S: Okay. How about after that? Did you continue on after?

C: I attended Ohio University. I played freshman football for Ohio U. I transferred not even one year later. I transferred to Youngstown. It was called Youngstown College. I was in education. I attended college for three and a half years and never received a degree. I also attended college at Kent State, took some credit, some college courses at Kent State University. I never received a degree in anything. I did later on attend Barber School in Cleveland, and I went into business for myself. First I worked as an apprentice barber, and then I went into business for myself until I started work there at GM in 1970. From 1960 to 1970 I worked as a barber. I started at General Motors on August 6, 1970. At first while I was attending college, I did work in the steel mills. I did work in the US Steel Ohio Works and the Republic Steel. I worked there first for a couple of summers, and then later on I ended up working at US Steel Ohio Works for four years prior to becoming a barber. I became a barber in 1960. I worked in the steel mills before that.

S: Wow. Before I leave the school subjects, could you tell me maybe a favorite teacher or subject whether it be from grade school, high school, or college? It doesn't matter. Any influence on your life, someone that maybe made a big impact?

C: I can't really say that with education. I can't say that because in Campbell the teachers in my opinion . . . This is my opinion: Campbell was always operated by the mob. There was always a godfather. He would hire the teachers. Up until Lenny Strollo got arrested, that's the way it operated. The teachers weren't too interested unless you were somebody important. As far as teachers there were a couple of teachers that I could probably say. Mr. Gustinella, he was a history teacher. He gave me good advice about what to do when attending college. He gave me good advice about what to do. Mr. Patsy Nofy, he gave me some good advice. Other than that they didn't really help you too much because of the atmosphere in Campbell. Campbell was a rough area. Most of the people were good. Ninety percent or more were very good people, but they came from backgrounds that had dictators from these foreign countries. They had dictators. They had kings. One thing they learned over there in Europe was to mind your own business. When they came over here to Campbell, they minded their own business. If you asked them who their neighbor was, they'd say, "I don't know." My dad lived in the same house for over fifty years, and somebody asked him who lived next door. He said, "I don't know."

S: Wow.

C: They were taught to mind their own business, and that's why the mob always took over in the city of Campbell.

S: That is amazing.

C: Yes.

S: It really is. Before we started the interview you mentioned sports. Can you tell me about some of the sporting or extracurricular activities that you were involved in at school, or high school, or college?

C: When I was in grade school I played basketball. I was very good in track, very fast. There's no football in grade school. I did play baseball also and junior high football. I played varsity football. We were in the Steel Valley Conference, and I was second team All Steel Valley at left halfback when I was a junior in high school. I was first team All Steel Valley at left halfback in my senior year. I attended Ohio U, and I was on their freshman team. I was a halfback. That's a long story. I was a walk-on. I didn't receive a scholarship because my grades weren't that good in high school. I was a walk-on, and I wanted to do it on my own. I participated in their freshman football program. They had a coach named Carroll Widdoes. He was at Ohio State at first. I think it was around 1944 that he was like Coach of the Year for Ohio State, for the country representing Ohio State. He was the coach at Ohio U. He wanted a low-key program, and when he was at Ohio U it was less pressure. I learned a lot off of him. Then I attended Youngstown, and

went to camp with them, and made up my mind that I wanted to go ahead and concentrate on studying because when I was in high school I had a coach that all he wanted to do was win. He didn't care about you receiving an education. He would even grab, even beat up on his teachers to make sure that all his football players were passed. You lost your incentive. After a while you saw that you didn't have to do anything, and you didn't do anything. I didn't. My parents were from Europe, and they didn't really have the knowledge to really guide me the right way as far as education. He was a great coach. He was in the Ohio Hall of Fame, John Knapic. When it came to education, he didn't care about that. At that time there were very few kids receiving scholarships to colleges because of that. There was some because of the background in Campbell. It was the ones that were somebody in Campbell. Their father was somebody in Campbell or their mother. They made sure that the person did concentrate on his studies and did well with his studies. Everybody else, if your parents didn't talk to the teachers or if they weren't somebody, they didn't care. It was very easy to get real lax about your studies. I was more serious about studying when I went to college. When I did attend Youngstown, when I transferred and I didn't want to play football anymore, they gave me a hard time because it was not a state university at the time. It was just Youngstown College, and you had a couple of people that would run Youngstown College at the time. You have Dean Smith and a guy named Jones. You had Dyke Beede. A lot of the boys that were in athletics there at the time, they would play football for say two years, and that would be it because they never would graduate. I didn't want that. I wanted to go ahead and learn and try to get a degree in education. When I did that the teachers gave me a hard time. The professors gave me a hard time. They would give me incompletes even though I would turn things in. I worked very hard. There were some people that I even worked with that were working with me; they got passing grades, and here I had helped them. They would give me an incomplete and give me an excuse like, "The report's too long" or some stupid excuse because I wouldn't go ahead and stay involved with their football program.

S: Wow. Are you married, or have you ever been married, Sir?

C: I was married for the first time in 1962, in May of 1962. I was married for twenty-one years. My ex-wife's name is Diane. Her maiden name was Muni. We got divorced in 1983, July of 1983. I remarried in 1994 to my wife, Barbara. Barbara J. Best was her name.

S: Okay. Do you have any children from either of these marriages?

C: I have three children, three boys from the first marriage. The oldest boy is forty-one. The second boy is thirty-nine, and the youngest is thirty-five.

S: You told me you started; I think you said you started at GM in 1970. How did you get the first job? What was your first job?

C: At GM?

S: Yes, at GM.

C: Okay. When I hired in at GM I was in production B, in production labor. At that time it was at Fisher Body plant, now called Fabricating plant and Stamping plant. At that time they hired thousands of people all at one time. They hired something like thirty-three hundred at one time. I worked in production for twenty-six, not quite twenty-seven years, as a production B welder operator, relief man. I was in the union. I was elected as a committeeman in the union for three terms. First I was an alternate for one term. Then I got elected as committeeman for three terms. We negotiated for the production department, the contract, health and safety. You dealt most with the superintendent, plus with labor relations.

S: Okay.

C: I did that for approximately nine years, and I worked there not quite twenty-seven years.

S: Okay, you were active in the union for about nine years.

C: I was an elected official for about nine years.

S: Okay. Were you ever part of a strike? Since you started talking unions here, let's go down that line.

C: When I first hired in there we went on strike. I hired in there on August 6, 1970. We ended up going on strike. I believe it was in September of 1970. We were out for seventy-eight days I believe. We were out. In fact, I went back to barbering for a while until the strike was over. I went up to the Twinsburg area, Northfield Village really, and worked there during the strike until the strike was over. That was our longest strike since I worked there.

S: Interesting.

C: As far as wildcat strikes, they had wildcat strikes. I believe a wildcat strike was probably I would say 1972, and that came about not because of people looking for trouble or anything like that. When we first started at the factory . . . Every plant that GM starts starts without a union, and you have to vote on whether or not you want a union at the new plant. We voted on the UAW, and it took about five years. It took from 1970 until 1975 to establish the union there. Up until 1975 we were pushed around a lot. It was like being in the Marine Corps. They would work you any amount of hours, twelve hours a days. I was working seven days for twelve hours a day. I got chronic fatigue from working so much. My doctor said to take some time off. I went in the plant. The doctor, his name was Doctor Heruni. He was actually a baby doctor. That's who they had working as their physician out there. He said, "If you don't want to work, quit." I had to

continue working whether I felt good or not. They worked you so hard and so many hours that people didn't care anymore. That's how your wildcat strike occurred. People decided, "Well, we're going to walk out. We've got to do something about this, about these working conditions, the way that they treat us out here." That's why that happened, not because the people were looking for trouble but because we were being pushed around quite a bit. It took up until 1975 to really establish that, our local. Our local's not tied in with the assembly plant. The assembly plant started in 1965. We started five years later. It was rough. It was like working in the, like being in the Marine Corps.

S: After it got up and running, do you feel that the union did a good job of representing the employees and improving conditions?

C: Yes, the union did a real good job. It took time. The union was okay up until Ronald Reagan got elected and he broke the airline controllers.

S: In 1981.

C: He broke their union, and all the unions became weakened. They've been going downhill since. They went from thirty-three percent union membership across the United States to probably around not even fifteen percent today.

S: Or less than, yes.

C: The union was hurt severely by Ronald Reagan, and it still hasn't recovered.

S: As the years went by did you have to give up concessions, or was that not something that happened in your tenure at Lordstown?

C: In my belief, the way I believe, yes. If you've got a piece of pie, and you share the pie, and there's five in your family, and you cut five pieces of pie, and you share, that's the way the union believed before. Later the union didn't operate like that. They went for higher wages. Instead of sharing the piece of pie with more employees, they went for higher wages and ended up with less people. They had over five hundred thousand people working for General Motors in 1970. Today there's somewhere around two hundred thousand, one hundred and eighty, maybe one hundred and eighty to two hundred thousand. That's a big drop. Their wages went from when I started in 1970 from 3.47. The way I understand it I just talked to someone at the plant that's in my classification, a friend of mine, and they're making twenty-five dollars an hour plus benefits but with a lot less people. When I retired I was making twenty plus benefits. My theory was that's the way the union would operate years ago. They would share and try to keep as many people as possible. They eliminated that practice and just took care of less people for more money. In fact, there's a plant in California. When I was a committeeman for the union, for the UAW, we went to hear about the contract. We went to I believe it was in Detroit, went over there and talked about the contract. This plant in California, with the first offer by the company they would have survived. They would have still had their jobs. The membership voted down that first offer across the country.



They were out on strike for a few more months. Then when they did ratify a new contract, the people that worked at this plant in California, they all lost their jobs. None of them had seniority anymore. Under the new agreement all the people there in California in that one plant were eliminated.

S: Who shot themselves in the foot here? Was it international? The international union or local? Who makes these decisions? It sounds like this is a major turn in the road for the union.

C: The international union and . . .

S: The local.

C: And your locals, the leadership in the locals plus your international. They have people walking around in Lordstown at the assembly plant, in at the fabricating plant, that are doing jobs that foremen or supervisors would do before or people that were in salary. They eliminated a lot of their people, and they gave the people that were really vocal in the union these gravy jobs. They, General Motors, eliminated their own people, their salary people, and gave these jobs to the union for less money. These people are glad to do them because they're not working production or doing some hard form of work. It's a buyout. In Lordstown I would say that you have at the assembly plant at least a hundred or more that are walking around the floor not assigned to their regular jobs. It's a sell out. It's the same thing at the fabricating plant. The fabricating plant has probably at least fifty people or more. They're walking around. The people that are more vocal they took care of, and the rest of the people are not taken care of. They have to do whatever. They have to just go along. When I started we had to work very, very hard. They're going from working very, very hard to where it was half way decent, and they're back to maybe working harder than when I first started. They're going into this team concept. This team concept, what they want to do is get someone from the production area—skilled trades or production, it doesn't matter where—that would lead the people they're working with and more or less tell them what to do instead of a regular supervisor. Well, that's an old theory. That theory was used in the steel mills in the 1950s. When I worked in the steel mills in the 1950s, they had the team concept. We would call him a push foreman, but he was actually an hourly person that belonged to the union. He would be afraid. He would be afraid to walk out of the steel mills because of the way that he aggravated people working. He was afraid somebody would give him a hard time or get in a fight with him after work. It didn't work. The steel mills dropped it in the late 1950s, the team concept. This is what General Motors and the auto industry is going back to now. They're going back to something that was in effect in the 1950s.

S: And didn't work.

C: It didn't work then. They did away with it.

S: Would you please tell me about your typical day? Just from the minute you punch in or start, what's your normal shift like?

C: Your parking lot is probably I would say over a quarter of a mile from where your job's going to be located at the fabricating plant.

S: Okay, Sir. You were saying about your typical day.

C: I would start at 7:00 in the morning. At first we didn't have rates when I first started, but once the union became more and more established, then they put rates on every job. I worked in what they call metal assembly. You had two sections there in the fabricating plant. One's the pressroom. You have blank and sheer, pressroom, and metal assembly. Blank and sheer, they would cut the steel coils, cut them into pieces of metal that would be the size of a door, a floor pan, any part of a car. They would cut it into different shapes, and it would go across the aisle way to the pressroom. Then they would go ahead and start forming that metal into a door, a floor, a roof, whatever. Then from there all of these parts from the pressroom would go into metal assembly where I worked. We were all welder operators. We nest all those parts—the inner part of the door, and the outer part of the door, and the small part. You'd weld all those parts together. You have a line, a long line. You would start with the inner part and outer part of the door, and you would start welding these parts together all the way down the line. When you get to the end of the line you would have a complete door. Then from there material handling would pick those parts up and take it to where they had this chain bank by this trestle way. They would get these nine-foot racks of doors and like I say all parts concerning the car. They would put it on this chain bank. These racks would be attached to this chain bank, and this chain would take all these parts through this trestle way into the assembly plant. In the assembly plant they would pick up the doors, and the roofs, and the floors, and whatever. Then they would assemble. On their assembly line they would assemble the parts together, but our job was metal assembly where I worked. There was a lot of smoke, a lot of toxic chemicals from the zinc, galvanized, and copper metals. You would receive flu like symptoms from that smoke, from the zinc and the galvanized, and the copper nuts would be welded together. There were a lot of people that ended up getting sick from working under those conditions, and the ventilation was never that great. Nowadays I would say prior to 1996 they're mostly into the underbody now. When I retired they were just making the underbody for the car next door, for the Cavalier. For this new car I understand that it will be the same procedure. They'll be making mostly the underbody for the new car that's going to be built there in Lordstown. Anyhow the ventilation was never that great. There was a lot of noise. You had to wear earplugs all day long, especially in the pressroom. It was louder in the pressroom. Metal assembly was loud but not as loud. I lost fifty percent of my hearing in each ear from working out there even though I wore earplugs all day long. In the pressroom in the wintertime they don't even have to heat the pressroom. The heat from the press heats up the whole area. In metal assembly they would have to heat somewhat, but they have their own. GM had their own gas wells out there that they dug and had. When they first came out here in 1965 and later on, they went ahead and drilled for oil and gas so that they'd have their own gas. Plus they sold. They sold their gas to other GM plants.

S: Wow.

C: So they did okay in that regard, but as far as our workday it was dealing with the chemicals, the atmosphere. Then you had rates. In the pressroom you had rates, a thousand. It was not unheard of to hear of a rate in the pressroom of fifteen hundred an hour. You worked so fast, and in the pressroom that's where you could lose your hand or your fingers because those presses would repeat themselves. Sometimes they would repeat themselves. Metal assembly was less dangerous, but sometimes even the well presses there would repeat themselves and catch your fingers. The rates were lower in metal assembly. I don't think that there was ever a rate higher than say five hundred an hour. You would get done. If you for example had five hundred and you had to run an eight-hour rate, if you ran your parts, your four thousand parts for eight hours, you were done. You were done for the day. You had to clean up your area, and you could go to either the cafeteria or to the locker room and take a shower. You had to stay in the plant until your quitting time, 3:30 p.m. When we first started with rates we made rate on the line I worked on. I worked on this floor pan rail line. We made rate two hours ahead of time. You had to work hard. To make rate you had to work a lot faster, extremely fast and sometimes dangerously. Sometimes when working fast like that the weld head would come down and maybe catch your finger. There were some people that lost their fingers. Anyhow we got done two hours ahead of time this particular day and went upstairs to the locker room to take a shower. The whole line did, our whole rail line. Here's the supervisor. He comes into the locker room. We're trying to dry off with towels, and he put us on notice and told us to report up to labor relations. Everybody got a written reprimand because at that time they wanted you to just stay in your work area. Once you got done even though you were done you had to sit right there in your work area. You could not go to the cafeteria or anywhere else. You had to sit right there and not move until it was 3:30, your quitting time, then leave, go home and clock out, or go upstairs and take a shower. A few days later the union did resolve that matter, and the reprimands were taken off of our records. Everybody was permitted from that time on if they wanted to, to go in the cafeteria, to go in the locker room, whatever. You couldn't leave the plant, as long as you stood in the plant, stayed in the plant. Up until that time they would reprimand you. They would treat you like you were in the Marine Corps. They would call you with their finger. They would bend their finger, and they would do this, call you like—I can't do that on tape—but they would call you with their finger. They wouldn't treat you like a human being. From up until 1975 we had an excellent workforce. I know we had wildcat strikes and different kinds of problems, but later as time went on the GM Corporation, the company did acknowledge that they were at fault for most of the problems out there. I'll tell you why because from 1970 to 1975 they would make you run the pressroom. They would get those steel coils that were rusted. They were not coated at the time with zinc and galvanized like they are today. They started the coating with zinc and galvanized in 1975, late 1975. That's when the quality of the cars improved. Before 1975 you had rusty metal. If you would tell your supervisor, "Well, this metal's rusty. I don't want to weld these parts together," they would give you an order to do it or go ahead and fire you. You had no choice, and the union had no clout. Up until 1975 they had no clout, and you had to do what you were told. That's why that Vega, that first car that they had there when I was there—They started building that Vega in 1970 when they built the fab plant—that's why that Vega in six months was falling apart because it was welded together, it was built, with rusty parts.

We were instructed to do it. We couldn't do anything. We couldn't see anybody. We couldn't go anywhere for help. We just had to do what they instructed us to do.

S: Your hands were tied.

C: We couldn't do anything.

S: Wow.

C: Then after 1975 then it all changed. Basically that changed because of the foreign competition, because of Japanese automobiles. Their cars were built with better quality, better metal. If we wanted to survive we had to.

S: Adapt.

C: Yes, we had to adapt to it.

S: Customers notice, don't they?

C: Yes.

S: They buy what's best for a lower amount of money.

C: And that's what made our American auto industry, the cars, much better. They could still improve. It's not the workers because the one plant I was telling you about before when I was saying that they eliminated their jobs.

S: In California.

C: In California, okay. They later on came up with a joint venture with Toyota and GM. They were building this GM Prism out there. Actually that's a Toyota built by GM employees. Their quality as a fact was better than the car that was made in Japan. The quality of the car here in California was much better than the one in Japan, so it's not the American workers. If the company permits the workers to do their job in the right way, you'll get a real good product, but they would give you a hard time. Like I said, right now since 1975 until the present time they have to compete, and they have to do better because of the foreign competition. That was one good thing. I don't think like a traditional union man. The traditional union man, he doesn't want that competition. He wants just General Motors, Ford, and Chrysler. We're going to make the money, but we didn't have a good product like that. You do have a much better product. The only problem is with this free trade. We need to do more about helping our people here. I think we have to have free trade, but we still have to take care of our people where we have jobs for our people here. It has to be fair trade, not just free trade. It has to be fair trade. If they're not doing the right thing in these different countries, if their health and safety is below standards, and the quality of life, and so forth, maybe we shouldn't participate with them in free trade. We should have conditions for free trade. I think that

we can't get away from it. You can't get away from free trade because they can do the same thing to us and not buy any of our products. We have to participate. Where I worked I worked towards the end, the last twelve or fifteen years in the plant, I worked on what they call the compartment pan. That's where your spare tire fits right in in one area. The compartment pan's the backside of the car underneath, underneath of the backside of the car. We were shipping parts to Mexico, and they had an assembly plant there in Mexico, in Mexico City. We're sending them parts, and they were building this car, the Celebrity. They stopped making it here, the Chevy Celebrity. In fact, there were several cars, the Pontiac and the Buick. There were several cars, the Oldsmobile, that would fit onto this compartment pan. Anyhow towards the end they would only ship it to Mexico. They would still make the Celebrity there, but they would sell the car in Canada and different parts of the world, maybe I think in Europe also. Anyhow we're working for them.

S: Right.

C: And shipping parts there, but if it's fair, it has to be fair. If you don't have competition you're not going to make a good product either.

S: Interesting. I was going to ask you about NAFTA and outsourcing, but you just kind of covered both of those very nicely.

C: Yes.

S: What different cars were made out there in your time though? You mentioned the Vega. What else was made?

C: When I was out there the Vega, and this Cavalier, and the Pontiac.

S: The Spitfire, Sunbird?

C: Sunbird.

S: Sunbird, okay. Now there's a new one. Cobalt I think they're calling it?

C: Yes, they're going to make the Cobalt here starting . . . I guess they're probably making parts. They're making some test cars now. They would start selling that car this summer.

S: Were there career opportunities? I should say advancement opportunities for you. Could you move up the latter if you wanted to, or were you pretty restricted?

C: I was thirty-three years old, and I got involved in the union in 1993. When I no longer ran for union office, I was considered too old to get into the apprenticeship program. They also had the EIT program. It's on the job training to learn a skilled trade—welder maintenance, or tool and die, or machinist, or whatever. Your skilled

trades actually run the UAW. Most international officials, most of them, not all but most of them, are from skilled trades. There were things in the contract that they could have done more in Lordstown to promote people from production into skilled trades. There were more things they could have done, but the people that were in skilled trades, they always talked about the sanctity of the trades. They always wanted to be in the higher standard and didn't want to give the production person a chance. It was hard for a production person to move into skilled trade. They would hire skill trades from outside the plant.

S: Interesting. What was the best car that you folks made in your opinion?

C: They started making good cars all across the country with GM from 1975 when the metal improved and the steel coils from the steel mills were coated with galvanized and zinc. They wouldn't rust. I guess they could rust once you get past that, if you scratch the car or damage the car, past that coating. For the most part they're not going to rust where prior to that they would rust. The quality improved from 1975, and the best car was the Cavalier and the Sunbird. There were other car parts that they made, but the fabricating plant, we actually shipped to twenty, approximately twenty plants. We made parts for the Saturn later. We made parts for the Cadillac, Buick, Oldsmobile. We made parts for probably every car.

S: For GM.

C: With GM. The parts that we made where I worked, we made parts for not only the Cavalier and prior to that the Vega, but we made parts for these other cars too. We're constantly shipping. That's one of the biggest shipping, the way I understand it, it might be one of the biggest shipping depot in the United States.

S: Wow.

C: Because they have cars that are stored there from all over, from all over the United States, from all the different plants. We made parts to a lot of different cars. The Saturn, they were more particular about how they made the Saturn parts because Saturn had their own; they had their own plant, their own standards. They were like an individual company. They were particular. They would tell you exactly how they wanted their parts made, built, and what kind of containers to place the parts in. They were real particular. I would say the Saturn, the quality of parts for the Saturn, was the best.

S: Interesting. What do you drive?

C: I have a 1998 Chevy Venture Van, and my wife drives a 2003 Impala, Chevy Impala.

S: General Motors?

C: Yes.

S: Okay.

C: General Motors.

S: Always been driving GM?

C: Since I worked out there, yes, I've been driving GM.

S: Do you have other family members that either do work or did work out there at the plant?

C: I have a cousin that works out there. He still works out there now. He started there in 1979, and he still works out there. My sons don't work there. None of my sons work out there.

S: Okay. Before you mentioned safety. Did you ever see anybody get badly injured, maybe even a fatality at the plant?

C: We had people lose their fingers in the pressroom and where I worked in the metal assembly from the presses sometimes repeating themselves. Skilled trades, they had a higher fatality rate. They did for especially electricians. We had a material handling forklift driver that got killed out there, had an accident out there and got killed when I was working out there. There were probably more people than that. There's a girl, a young lady. She's not a young lady anymore. She had her hand cut off in the pressroom. The press either repeated itself or something. Something happened there because the rates were so high. When you're talking say fifteen hundred an hour, that's fast. Who knows what happened?

S: Yes. Did it get better as the years went by with OSHA coming into the picture? Did safety get better or worse?

C: Safety got better usually under the Democratic administration. Now I'm an independent voter. I'll vote Democratic, but also if there's a good Republican, I'll vote for a Republican. I'm registered as a Democrat, but I'm more of an independent. It seems like when you get these real conservative Republicans in office, you see a lot of those things with OSHA. The standards are not so high. When the Democrats are in office, their standards are a lot higher.

S: Interesting. What about your leisure time? When you get off of work do you spend time with coworkers, clubs, organizations, down at the bar?

C: I don't hang out in bars. That's not to say that I don't ever have a drink; I do occasionally, but I don't hang out at bars. When I first worked there we didn't have time, working seven days, twelve hours. I had three children when I moved out here. I moved out here in Berlin Center from Campbell in 1976, and I would have things to do out here. I have fifteen acres, and raising my three children, and a large garden, and activities with

the kids in school. I didn't have too much time. Then when I did have time later as far as organizations, at one time when I was a member of the Catholic Church I was in the Knights of Columbus. I wasn't active there when I worked at GM. When you're at GM working like we were working out there, you don't really have that much time. I would get up at 4:15 in the morning. You don't have that much time. When I got home there were all these things that I had to do out here in Berlin Center.

S: You were probably whipped by the end of the day.

C: Yes. When I lived in Campbell—when I first started I lived in Campbell, Ohio—I was involved with the kids with Cub Scouts. I was a Cub Master, and I was involved with them like that. There's really not too much other time for yourself.

S: Tell me about your coworkers. Did you have like a favorite friend or a coworker, someone memorable?

C: There's several. There's Ronny Brooks, Walt Steffey, John Polish. There are a lot of other guys that I enjoyed working with, but we called working out there like working at the zoo, like being in the zoo because they brought in people from all walks of life. There's a big drug problem out there, gambling. I was in business prior to going to work out there at Lordstown. I had a barbershop, and when I did work in the steel mills in the 1950s, in 1955 to 1960, you didn't talk. You didn't use foul language like they did when I first started out there in Lordstown. Everybody would; they used the word F for everybody out there. When I was growing up, and when I worked in the steel mills, and when I had my barbershop, we didn't do things like that. It was more clean. It was more well behaved people. When I worked at Lordstown they would call you things that when I was growing up were fighting words. They'd call you an MF for example. When I was growing up, if someone called you that, they couldn't talk to you about your mother like that. You would get into a fight over something like that. In Lordstown that was common for these guys, for these men out there to go ahead, and the women. The women started coming, started working out there pretty actively from the 1970s on, and they were the same way. The language was terrible, and that was not my era. The way I grew up was not like that, and I never saw drugs. I saw marijuana out there for the first time, guys smoking right out there on the job and in the hallway or whatever. I did not even know what it was. When I was a committeeman that was one of the biggest problems that I had to deal with, with people that were into drugs or were into alcohol. Usually you never heard from the good people. You heard from the people that were always in trouble, the alcoholics, the drug addicts. It's a big problem. The union I think was wrong for all that resisting testing for drugs. I think nowadays before they hire somebody they have to go to a seminar for about one week. I think part of it is drug testing. They check your home, everything about your life, to see if you are a qualified person and don't have the problems. The way they hired before, they hired a lot of people with problems. It was hard to work like that out there.

S: Yes, you found out about the problems later.



C: You had to work with those kinds of people. That was the hard part. Sometimes people would bring in; sometimes you'd find a bullet, or a pistol, or something that people would bring in. It was a very, very rough atmosphere. I didn't enjoy that part. I could say there were nice people out there, but the others things that I'm talking about I did not enjoy and I don't miss.

S: Did you see signs of discrimination or different ethnic groups being treated badly, racism, or sexism even, the women being treated differently? Any signs?

C: Women from 1970 until they put that sexual harassment part in the national agreement. I think they put that in the contract in the late or early 1990s, late 1980s or early 1990s. Up until that time they were abused. The foreman would try to solicit them for sex to get the foreman off their back. He would try to solicit them for sex. They were all excellent workers. In fact, they worked just as good as men in some cases, in a lot of cases better, in a lot of cases faster and a better quality. They were harassed at first up until that sexual harassment part of the agreement, the national agreement, came into effect. As far as black people, I'm trying to think. They had something in the contract when I was out there, well, later, not at first. In the mid 1970s they put something in there about discrimination, but I can't really say that they were really discriminated against. I can't really say that. Maybe occasionally.

S: Sir, did you ever see signs of discrimination or racial tension or problems at Lordstown?

C: Yes, with women like I was saying before, like with women's sexual harassment until we came out with something to protect them years later, but they had a problem with sexual harassment. Affirmative action didn't work right. It helped people, the minorities and women, including the white women. The white male had a hard time moving up the scale with GM. As far as I'm concerned that's discrimination. Plus the way they hire now, they hire according to the people that work there. They, the hourly workers, can submit one name, plus the supervisors could submit one name each. Everybody that works there can submit one name. There's all relatives working out there right now. It's not fair to the people that don't have anybody working out there. I think that's the worst part as far as discrimination. I know with this substance abuse program, we tried to start that up there. It was in the contract, and the company gave us a hard time with that. It was already in the contract. They agreed to it, and they wouldn't let that program start off. They wouldn't let the people go ahead and function in that program. They would have people on drugs or alcohol, elderly people, people having problems with domestic problems, divorce, whatever. Bob Thomas, they appointed him to that job, the international union, around 1975. I happened to be the UAW committeeman in production at metal assembly. He was in my district, and he would be on a committee call all day long. I don't know how long. It was for several, maybe for a couple weeks, until the company, until GM recognized the program. That benefited them too because they were helping the people whether they were management or the union people if they had alcohol or drug problems, or elder care, any kind of problem that involved the person in some way. They would try and help them, but they gave us a hard time with that.

That was terrible too. Like I said I think the biggest problem today is the way they hire their relatives.

S: Next of kin.

C: Yes, that should be against the law. I would think that somebody would take them to court. They could win that case, but so far no one's ever done that. Some employees would submit a name for you, some people that work there, some of these employees will ask you for a couple hundred bucks. They'll ask you for a couple hundred dollars to submit a name, and you don't even know if you would be hired. There's not too much of a chance that that person's going to get hired anyhow because there's a lot of people applying maybe for a few jobs. That's the most unfair thing, plus affirmative action, the way it works. It didn't help the white male at all.

S: Helped one group, hurt another group.

C: Right.

S: Were you aware of any job segregation by race? Were blacks assigned a certain job or maybe even by gender? Were women assigned a certain job that men were not? Anything like that?

C: I don't recall anything like that. That I don't recall. I never saw that happen.

S: Okay. We talked earlier on the last tape about the union and about your time in the union. Was there a union sponsored newspaper?

C: Yes, it's called *Focus*. Your president, shop chairman, he's the main person with the UAW. He's the main negotiator. He puts an article in there. The president, the vice president, all the officers, submit an article every month. They write about different things that are happening, either nationwide or in the plant.

S: A monthly paper?

C: Monthly paper.

S: Once a month, okay. How do you feel about something that's been going on a lot lately, outsourcing of work and jobs at Lordstown, parts, and you name it?

C: I think outsourcing occurs. In my opinion it occurs because of high wages, because we're not sharing. We're not sharing that pie like I talked about on the other tape. We're not sharing the pie. Your actuaries look at what GM could afford to pay the labor force, and in the past the UAW, in the beginning they would try to accommodate everybody that worked for them and try to increase jobs not decrease jobs. I'm not saying we wouldn't lose any jobs. Because of automation and robotics and all that we're going to lose some jobs, but we could have done more in sharing by not having our wages so high.

Include more people and you wouldn't have that outsourcing because they pay those people less. There's plants in Salem, Ohio. There's going to be plants around here with that new Cobalt around Lordstown. They're going to be paying these people less for parts, to make certain parts, where you could make them in house if you weren't so greedy and you wouldn't have your wages so high. We have a lot less people from five hundred thousand people in 1970 down to probably like one hundred and eighty thousand people that work for GM nationwide.

S: Wow.

C: Outsourcing is created because of the high wages and the benefits. I'm a union man, but you have to look at what a company can afford. The international union, as a rule they have actuaries that work for them. These accountants go in there, and they can tell you what these companies can afford to pay. They tell the union that this is what they can afford to pay. Instead of including everybody, the people that have the top seniority, they're concerned about themselves. They look out for themselves, and they want the higher wages. As a result you have outsourcing. The union says to the UAW that they're against outsourcing. They always claim that they're arguing with the company. They even have people that are appointed to that job to try to get those people in house within the plant, and it never happens. It constantly happens. It has happened. Probably at least since 1970 it has happened. Plants have made parts around here, around this area. In Salem, in Austintown, different places like that have made parts for the fabricating plant. A friend of mine that is a union man out there also has a tool and die shop in Salem, Ohio. He was outsourcing. He was a committeeman out there in the tool and die department. He got called for a committee call for outsourcing, and here it was his truck from Salem with parts. He had to excuse himself, let his alternate function, and answer the call. It goes on, and they know it. They recognize it. That in my opinion is the problem. That's why it occurred was because of the high wages.

S: It's so entrenched. Is there any realistic way to get away from outsourcing? Is it going to happen, or is this something that we're just going to deal with, fewer and fewer jobs?

C: The only way that you're going to stop outsourcing is if the wages are more in line where GM can afford to pay these people. If they have to pay the standard price that they're paying the people that work in house, that work in the plant for them, they can't afford it. You would have to drop the wages. Everybody's wages would have to come down, including these people. That's the only way that you could do it.

S: Probably not going to happen.

C: It's not going to happen unless they're not so greedy and they start including these other people that are working at these small plants.

S: Interesting. What was your most memorable day of all at Lordstown?

C: When I retired. I was very happy to retire. It was time. I could see the handwriting on the wall, the union going backwards instead of forwards, more work pushed on people. From the 1970s, say the 1970s until the late 1970s, it improved. Conditions improved, and then it started getting worse out there because of less people, less manpower, and higher wages. It made it tough on the people out there. I appreciate the fact that I got a job out there, made a good living. I thank God for that. I made a good living, was able to support my family and do well for myself. When it comes to that, that's fine. As far as some of the people that you had to work with, they're hard to tolerate. There's a lot of nice people out there. I had a lot of nice friends, but there were also a lot of people that we'd call it a zoo. There were all kinds of different people. They had no manners, real foul language. It was not the way it was when I was working in the steel mills in the 1950s. When I worked in 1955 until 1960 in the steel mills in Youngstown, it wasn't like that. The people had more respect. They didn't go around calling each other MF. They had more manners. Their self-respect wasn't there. Granted there are a lot of people that did have self-respect and were good people, but too many of them were not. I didn't appreciate that.

S: What do you think is going on? Where did we go wrong here to go from respect and decency in the workplace to like you said, inappropriate language, drugs in the workplace? In your opinion what happened to our American society, or what happened at Lordstown?

C: I think it's all over. I think it starts in grade school. It starts in schools. When I was growing up drugs weren't available. They weren't around. Young kids would smoke or they would drink, but there was no such thing as marijuana or anything like that when I was growing up. That was in the 1940s and 1950s. Nowadays it's all over the place. How do you stop it? Probably by drug testing. You probably would have to drug test in the workplace, in the schools. I think that's about the only way. The parents can't really help it. Once their child gets on a school bus and goes to school, they don't know what that child's going to run into on a bus or around the school kind of atmosphere. At work, that's the first place that I saw marijuana was at GM in the 1970s. I saw people smoking it in the plant and on the job. I didn't even know what it was, but it's just too available. I would say you'd have to start with drug testing. I don't think you could completely stop it even with drug testing.

S: Interesting. I'm a teacher. They're talking about doing random drug testing even in public schools.

C: Yes.

S: The ACLU is all against it, of course. Did they drug test at Lordstown?

C: I can't swear, but I think now. I think for a long time. I think since the 1990s they would take these people, potential hires, and they would interview them for several days. I believe they gave them a drug test too. I'm pretty sure that they do give them a drug test, and they really checked individuals out. They don't do like they did when I got

hired in Lordstown in 1970 because at that time they needed to hire three thousand people at the truck plant, the new truck plant, the van plant. At the fabricating plant, they were just starting in 1970. They had to hire six thousand people plus some people at the assembly plant. They weren't too careful about screening people or who they hired. Since the 1990s they are very careful, around here anyhow, around Lordstown. They do screen these people very carefully, and I believe they give them a drug test also. The union, that's one of the faults I think of all unions. They always resist drug testing, and they shouldn't do that. They do it even in baseball with steroids or in sports. The unions do that, and they shouldn't do that. If you have nothing to hide, you shouldn't worry about taking a drug test. That would help quite a bit. I don't think that would stop it completely because there's ways they get around it.

S: If there's an accident at the plant, do they drug test in a case like that?

C: I don't know about now. They never did.

S: Okay. To see if drugs were involved in the accident?

C: As far as I know they never did before.

S: Okay.

C: But when there is an accident because of AIDS, especially if there's blood around the job, they would shut it down and have people clean up the area before they start the line back up and start producing parts. As far as drug testing if there was an accident involved, I don't recall. As being a committeeman in the union I don't recall that ever happening. I don't believe it ever happened, but the union is a far cry from what it used to be ever since Reagan broke the airline controllers. When he became president and he broke the airline controllers' union that was the fall of all the unions across the country. They no longer have that clout that they once had.

S: Yes, their membership is way down.

C: Yes.

S: Over the years.

C: They're down to about thirteen percent. In 1970 they were close to thirty-five percent. So they're down about thirteen percent today.

S: So more than one third of all workers?

C: Right.

S: Now they're down to just a fraction of that.

C: Well, greediness, eliminating jobs for more wages, that created the outsourcing.

S: And politics.

C: Right. Politics.

S: Through the years have you been a GM driver? Do you drive GM products? What have you driven say since 1970?

C: Mostly all my life always GM. I've had a couple of other cars prior to working at GM. I had a Ford, and I had the car that Chrysler took over, bought out.

S: The American Motors Car?

C: They were a real small company. I can't even think of the name of that.

S: AMC, American Eagle, or American—What's it called—American Motors?

C: American Motors, right.

S: American Motors.

C: I had one of their cars. I had one of Ford's, but all the other cars were all GM cars. I presently still buy GM cars. They didn't start making good products; GM didn't make good products until 1975. They would force the workers in the fabricating plant to weld rusty parts together. Even if you would go ahead and protest they would fire you. You had to do what they said. They had a bad product up until 1975. Then they started getting good metals from the steel mills coated with zinc and galvanized, and they had copper nuts and so forth. That was the start of making a better product, plus competing with the foreign companies. The foreign companies like Toyota, they make a better car. They still make a better product than we do, but that makes us compete with them and make a much better car than we did before. Maybe eventually we'll be just as good if not better. In California, in Fremont, California, the plant they had over there that was a joint venture with Toyota and GM, they made a GM Prism, and they made a Tracker. The quality and the way that that car was made was made much better than the car in Tokyo, in Japan. It was made better over here in California by GM workers. If they give the GM workers the right tools to work with and let them do their job to the best of their ability, they'll perform just as good if not better than these other countries, if they're given the chance. The problem that they had with the product here, with GM products or even Ford and Chrysler, was because of management. They would tell you to do things that you knew were wrong, were wrong to do. They would tell you that you would have to do it. In our case we had to weld those parts, the inner part, the outer part, the nuts and bolts. We had to weld them together, and we knew the quality wasn't good. They would tell us to go ahead and do it, but starting in 1975 when the competition was greater then GM started to wake up, and Ford and Chrysler, and started to make a much better product. It is pretty close. It's pretty close to the Japanese product right now. We're

getting there. We're getting there. In some cases we're even. Some cars like the Buick product are about even with the Japanese products. Saturn's real good, Cadillac. Certain cars that we make are right up there, but not all of our cars.

S: Why in this day and age, the year 2004, why aren't we better than Japanese or German cars? You said management. Why is management not raising the bar?

C: All they care about is production, putting out a lot, making a lot of cars per hour, the fabricating plant producing a lot of parts. That's changed a lot. Right now in the fabricating plant, it's a just in time system. It's tied in with the assembly plant. That's changed a lot. The reason why is because management's not taking the time, not taking the time to make a good quality part, not letting the workers do their job to the best of their ability. They would give them a hard time. They're much better at it now. They're much better. Saturn is right up there. The Buick company is right up there and Cadillac. Chevrolet has a way to go, Pontiac.

S: You're not saying that they're better than the other products. They're as good as in the best-case scenario.

C: As good, not better because they're more careful, give more attention to the parts and how they assemble the car. Before that all they cared about was how many cars they could get out. When there was no competition they knew they could get any price they wanted even for a piece of junk.

S: But management has a choice, and right now they're choosing to do what they're doing.

C: Oh, yes. They're forced to do the right thing today because of the competition. Without competition, the union talks about they don't like this free trade, the Free Trade Agreement, but without competition things would not be any good. They wouldn't be as good. The product wouldn't be as good as what they are today.

S: There's no incentive.

C: There's no incentive, no competition. When they made the Vega, when they made the Vega there in Lordstown, they made it with rusty parts. In six months the car was completely rusted. A new car would be completely rusted.

S: That's terrible.

C: They know if they want to survive, but they're too much into productivity now where they use a lot less manpower. They pay the people that work there a lot of wages, but it would still, I think it would help in my opinion to make GM, Ford, and Chrysler a lot better in my opinion if they would have more people, less wages, where they could do a better job, where you have less people trying to do too many things and actually doing more work than years ago, than in 1970 and even before that. Today they're actually

doing more work, more jobs. Even skilled trades, they have to help the other skill trades. If you're in tool and die you have to help the electrician. They have to help the other trades. They would specialize before. That would be one way to make a better product too, to include more people, have more people working out there where they could take the time to make a better product instead of having people rushing and doing more than one job, doing too many jobs.

S: Yes.

C: To make a car.

S: Specialized.

C: Right.

S: Interesting. How do you feel about the future of not only the Lordstown plant but of the Mahoning Valley, this whole region?

C: The Mahoning Valley has always been corrupt. They always had the mafia, the godfather. They always had that element here that controlled politics, hiring as far as in the schools and in the county, policeman, firemen, schoolteachers, janitors, and any public job. They had complete control up until Lenny Stollo was taken down, the godfather of Mahoning county. Plus a lot of judges and policeman were arrested. That helped, but they need to do a lot more. They also need to work on the mentality of how people think around Mahoning County. Most of the people in Mahoning County, I would say ninety percent or more, are real good people, hard working people. For some reason they look up to this mob figure. They think that's the way you have to operate, how you have to play politics. Until they solve that problem and people start thinking differently and start electing people, public officials, that aren't corrupt they won't be okay. Right now we're going to have a hard time until they change their attitude. They did make a start. They arrested a lot of people, a lot of corrupt people. Traficant for example, our ex-congressman that's in prison, if he would run today, he would get elected. They have to change their mentality and start electing people that are going to work for the people of Mahoning County, not for corruption or for a certain select group. That would be the only way that they would start back on the right track.

S: And how about the future of Lordstown?

C: Lordstown, I think that's deceiving when you hear people. Like for example yesterday evening they said they had a Canadian company come in here and talk about outsourcing. They're coming in here. They're looking for a place in Lordstown for seventy employees to make parts, which is agreed I guess with GM and with the union, to make parts for that new Cobalt car. Anyhow they're talking seventy jobs. In 1970 they had probably close to six thousand people at the assembly plant. They had over three thousand, maybe four thousand, people at the van plant that they just built at that time. At the fabricating plant where I worked they had thirty-three hundred, okay? So they had



twelve or thirteen thousand people, okay? It's deceiving. The state's doing a lot to keep a few jobs here, but right now with this new car, the new Cobalt, they'll have around three thousand people at the assembly plant, maybe eight hundred, eight hundred to one thousand at the fabricating plant, say four thousand people. That's a far cry from twelve or thirteen thousand. I think it's deceiving. I think they need to do a lot more. There are a lot of low paying jobs in Mahoning County. At Delphi Electric they don't have the jobs that they once had in the Warren area, around Austintown and Hubbard where they had different plants located for Delphi electric. They don't have the people. Their manpower is way down also. When they talk about we're getting seventy jobs or fifty jobs here, they have to do a lot more. Like you said and like we talked about, you have to have straight shooters in politics, people that are honest and sincere people. Your unions have to. They have to be more broad-minded, more open minded.

C: What were we talking about there? I forgot now.

S: We were talking about the future of the area and Lordstown. Speaking of that, they're gearing up for this new car called the Cobalt. What do you know about it? How do you feel about this new car? Would you go out and buy one?

C: I don't see much about it, just what I read about it. It looks like a very nice car. It looks like they spent a lot of time in trying to make it right for the first time. If I was looking for a smaller car, I would probably buy it. I would buy it. I think nowadays they make a car the first time very good. A lot of times you're better off if you wait I think, if you wait a year or two until they get the bugs out of these new cars. They do take more time, and they're a lot better at making it right the first time now.

S: Do you have any regrets at all about your time at Lordstown?

C: As far as a good living, I have no regrets about that. I have regrets about the people, some of people I had to work with. I had a lot of good friends. I have no regrets about that. Some of the ways that they discriminated with that affirmative action against white males, some of the working conditions, working with certain chemicals that caused flu like symptoms, no. I don't appreciate a lot of things like that. If I had to do it over again I would probably concentrate more on education and do what I wanted to do in the first place. I was going to be a teacher like you. I had three and a half years of college credits. I was very close.

S: Oh, you were that far away?

C: Right. I would probably have done something like that. I'll tell you this. They do have a tuition program out there, and I've taken some classes. As part of our contract they pay for so many classes a year. They don't pay for a full semester of classes, but they pay for maybe a couple of classes a year. We have some people that ended up being attorneys. There's one person that worked with me in production; he's an attorney today. We had people that are teachers. We had people that are accountants. In fact, you had people that worked out there that had degrees, that came out there because they made

more money. They worked out there, and that was the reason why they worked there. As far as some of the working conditions, like I said, the benefits were great. The money was great. The working conditions weren't always that great. Working with some of those people wasn't always that great. I know there's no heaven on earth, but I think there was more that we had to deal with out there than we should have. The supervisors, GM, wouldn't do anything about some of the problem people they had out there. They would expect you to take care of yourself. They wouldn't do anything unless they were forced to, unless people would get into a fight or something like that. Then they would go ahead and get themselves involved. It's too late then because then people would have time off. People would get so many days off for getting into an argument. I have just as many regrets about a lot of things out there too. I was well respected by the union and by management. Management, when I was involved in the union, they always believed in my honesty. They knew I would be telling the truth about things. I had a good working relationship with them, but it's a rough atmosphere. It's like being in the Marine Corps or the Special Forces. It's a real rough atmosphere. I believe today they're going backwards where people have to work harder. I think the young people are so appreciative of having a job that they'll do anything because they know they're making twenty-five dollars an hour in production. A janitor probably makes close to that, probably makes twenty-three or twenty-four dollars an hour at GM, and a machine cleaner, some of the lowest paying jobs. Those people would do anything, those young people. The older people don't think that way. People like myself, they think about providing more jobs, having more jobs for the people, so more people could come in there and share. That was the principle of the union years ago. When the union was originated the principle was to create jobs and not to lose any jobs. We've gone backwards. I'm not saying that we shouldn't have lost some jobs. We should have because of automation, the improvements, and the robotics that they have out there. They could have lost a lot less jobs if they weren't so greedy. I have a lot of happy feelings about Lordstown. I have also a lot of bad feelings about working at Lordstown. Those are the reasons why.

S: What are you doing now in retirement? How do you fill your days?

C: I take care of fifteen acres. We have a hundred blueberry bushes. I put a large garden in, maybe an acre garden in there. I give most of the vegetables away. We work out every other day at the Salem Community Center. We work out there. There always seems to be something to do around the house. We were always active. In fact, I think I'm more active now than when I was working.

S: Do you have a lot of family? I'm sorry. Go ahead.

C: Yes, there's a lot of family. I have three children. Barbara has three children. She has five grandchildren. I have five grandchildren. We spend a lot of time with them. We travel somewhat. Barbara's grandson, they're expecting. We're going to be great grandparents. We're not that old yet. I'm sixty-seven, so we're not that old. We spend time with family, but there are things when you're retired that you see, and you do, and you go ahead and correct it around the house. You fix it. You're more active about

doing things around the house and outside of the house. When you're working you don't tend to look at a lot of things. You ignore a lot of things. A lot of things are left undone. When you're retired you do find more things to do. You pay attention to more things that are around the house and outside and with family. We're always doing something. I think we're more busy now than when I was working.

S: Those are all good things. Can you think of peak time in your life, most memorable peak experience, just a high point in your life whether it's Lordstown or something else, something you've done or accomplished?

C: I would say when I was in high school. I was five foot seven inches, one hundred and thirty-five pounds, in my senior year I was 150 pounds. No one ever expected me to play football. I was playing halfback and was real fast. I would run the hundred-yard dash in about ten seconds.

S: Wow.

C: I was a good baseball player, a good basketball player, but anyhow mostly football and track. I played football. I played junior high one year and three years of varsity football, and I made All Steel Valley my junior year and senior year. That was a real high point in my life at that time that I was able to succeed in sports where other people didn't think I could because of my size. I'm a lot bigger now than what I was in high school. I'm probably at least forty-five pounds heavier now, but at that time I was very good. I was very good in football and track. I would say that would be my high point. I really enjoyed that.

S: You were probably quick as a cat. What was your nickname?

C: I don't believe I had a nickname.

S: [Laughter].

C: No.

S: Okay.

C: I'd think they'd call me "Pat the Cat" or something like that.

S: There you go. Is there anything else that you'd like to add to the interview about your family, about education, Lordstown, anything at all, politics, anything at all that you want to share?

C: Well, like with education I was telling you about football because of where I grew up in Campbell, Ohio. It's pronounced "Campbell," but we pronounce it "Camel." The natives pronounce it "Camel." We had a coach there, John Knapic. He's in the Ohio State Hall of Fame. Anyhow his philosophy was to win at all costs. He didn't care about

education. Everybody that played ball for him knew that. In my case, I was studying. Most of us that were playing football, we would study for a short while. Then we got complacent. We got lazy. We knew we didn't have to, that we were going to pass anyhow. I've seen him go up to teachers and grab them by the shirt and tell them, "If you don't pass them, you know I'm going to kick your butt." You knew you were going to pass. That was bad. That was terrible because you didn't concentrate on your education, and at the time very few kids would receive football scholarships because of that, because they didn't have good grades in high school, and not because they were dumb but because they never applied themselves. They never had to apply themselves, and I was one of them. When I went to college, I tried to overcome that. I decided not to play football. I did play freshman ball for Ohio U and transferred to Youngstown State. It was Youngstown College at the time. Dyke Beede, the football coach, and there was Dean Smith. There was a guy named Jones that I believe owned the college at the time. They didn't like the idea that I didn't want to play football anymore. Even at that if you were going to school—In my case I was going to be a teacher—there were all high school teachers that were teaching at Youngstown College at the time. They didn't have a masters or a doctorate degree. After you graduated from Youngstown College, the people that I went to school with that became teachers had to go to Ohio U or Kent State or somewhere or somewhere like that to complete their college degree in education or whatever they were taking. That was a downside there. I wanted to concentrate on studies. I told them I didn't want to play because I needed to devote my time to studying. I started receiving all kinds of incompletes, okay? There were people coming to my house that were even copying the work that I had, that I was doing for these certain classes that I was attending. They were passing, and they would give me an incomplete and tell me, "Well, you had too long of a report" or some excuse. There was always some excuse, and they wouldn't even give me a grade in a lot of cases. They gave me a hard time in that respect. They discriminated against me because I wanted to study and didn't want to play football. At the time it was also in basketball when Roselli was coach there. I know they want to build a statue at Youngstown State right now in honor of him being a great coach, and he was a great coach, but a lot of these kids in football, basketball, or whatever they played at Youngstown College was for two years. They couldn't carry them any further because they didn't have the grades. They carried these players for two years. They didn't have the grades. After that very few people in the 1950s and the 1960s that played in sports at Youngstown College went further than two years. The ones that did, they had to go somewhere else to complete their degree because they didn't have qualified teachers at Youngstown College. They were very qualified in accounting, anything related with the steel mills, accounting and engineering. There were very qualified, excellent teachers in those two courses, but when it came to everything else, no. When it didn't consider the steel mills they didn't have qualified teachers. Now it's a great institution. It's a state university. It's come a long way, and they're okay. They're okay ever since Governor Rhodes. He's the one that made them a state university when he was governor. That was one thing he did that was good. Now that's what I was going to say before too as far as the unions. They need to be more open-minded. They did at one time support Lionel Williams, a Republican. They supported him. They backed him. He got in I believe more than one time, I believe two terms. Sometimes they do, but I think that they need to do that more often. They need to

go with people that are going to do the most for people in the area instead of completely one sided and not always getting a good candidate.

S: Instead of just looking for a D behind their name.

C: Right. Right.

S: If you had to give some advice to future generations what would you tell someone? What's some advice for good quality of living or just any advice at all for younger people?

C: If I had to give advice I would tell them to do the best you can in school. Study. Don't do like I did. Like I said my parents came from Italy, and they didn't know any better. They just went along with the group. I would concentrate on studying. Do the best you can in school from grade school all the way through high school. Whether you go to vocational school or college, just do your best. Stay away from drugs and alcohol, and don't smoke. I know teenagers are going to get into their mischief, and they're going to do things. They're going to try things. They like to experiment. I did too. Maybe I would have done something with drugs if it was available. I don't know. Maybe I would have smoked marijuana. I don't know. It wasn't there, so I can't really say. I think the adult population has to be more sincere about those conditions, about teaching their children to study. I believe you have to have more qualified teachers. I think you have to pay the teachers more to get better qualified teachers. You might have to change the school year around where maybe school's all year long or longer hours or four days a week and longer hours. You have to do things differently and instead of having this where the teachers have tenure. I think if they're not doing their job whether they're in the union or not, they shouldn't be teaching. I don't care where you're working, whether you're a teacher. I don't care whether you work for GM. If you're not qualified, you shouldn't be there. You should be doing something that you're qualified in doing. We're protecting too many people at the expense of our children. To do a better job you have to really care, you have to really be concerned about that. I believe you have to stop the flow of drugs from coming into this country. We have to be more serious about that. I think a lot of that is because of corrupt judges, politicians. I believe that they're letting a lot of this stuff come right in. The United States spends a lot of money on drug enforcement. They take a lot of money out of our taxes for drugs, to prevent drugs from coming into this country. I think they've really got to get serious about it, and I think they need to educate the younger people and older people, really educate them and teach them, and say, "This is what's going to happen if you do this." We have to be more serious, but I think as a teenager, as a person starting in grade school, I really think that the parents have to teach the children that this is your only chance. You really have to do the best you can. I talked to some sisters over here in North Jackson at the shrine out there in North Jackson. They're from Lebanon. They have an elder care out there, and I had my mother out there in elder care. They have excellent elder care, but the sisters are all from Lebanon. They were saying that they start the children there at three years old. She was comparing. She was saying that in her opinion the educational system in the United States can't compare with Lebanon. We're way behind when it comes to other

countries when it comes from kindergarten to the twelfth grade. I think that our colleges and universities are probably the best in the world, but from kindergarten to twelfth grade we're way behind. There's too much attention. The unions are. In some respects they're too powerful, especially with teachers when they could receive tenure after so many years of teaching service, and you can't do anything with them whether they do a bad job. You can't do anything with them. Something has to be done about that or anyone that works anywhere. If they can't do their job, they either learn how to do their job or go find a job they can do. Maybe it sounds tough. I didn't always like something like that to happen to me. I would always like to be taken care of, but if you really want to have something good and you want to really succeed, you have to have the best people working at these different jobs. You really have to take a really serious look at politics and put in good, honest people. The unions need to be more compassionate and sharing. They need to also understand the company. They have to understand the company, their position, what they can afford to pay. They need to understand what they could do, what's the best thing that they could do to help their workers and to have more people working under the union. They can't just think about themselves. The union leaders cannot just think about themselves, or anybody in a position of authority can't just think about themselves or a certain group of people. You've got to look out for the country as a whole.

S: And tomorrow, not just today.

C: Right.

S: Interesting. Well, Sir, I thank you for your time, your attention. It's been my pleasure and privilege to come here and get to meet you.

C: Okay.

S: And talk to you. I appreciate it. Thank you very much.

C: I appreciate you coming over the house.

S: My pleasure.

C: You're going to give me a copy of the tape, right?

S: Yes, Sir. I certainly will.

I HAVE READ AND EDITED THE INTERVIEW AND, BY MY SIGNATURE,  
INDICATE THAT IT IS APPROVED.

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SIGNATURE

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DATE