

**Calvin Sturdivant, an African American, discusses his 40-year career as a
UAW production and skilled trades worker at the Fisher Body plant in Lansing, MI**

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5 Cheryl McQuaid: This is the Lansing Fisher Body historical team. We're at the UAW 602
6 Union Hall. It is January 13, 2006, approximately 10:20 a.m. We're
7 preparing to interview Calvin Sturdivant. First, we'll acknowledge the rest of
8 the people in the room.
9
10 Marilyn Coulter: Marilyn Coulter.
11
12 John Fedewa: John Fedewa.
13
14 Earl Nicholson: Earl Nicholson.
15
16 Jerri Smith: Jerri Smith.
17
18 Cheryl McQuaid: And Cheryl McQuaid. [0:29] Mr. Sturdivant, would you please state your
19 name and spell your last name for us?
20
21 Calvin Sturdivant: Calvin E. Sturdivant – S-T-U-R-D-I-V-A-N-T. [throat clearing]
22
23 Cheryl McQuaid: [0:42] What is your address?
24
25 Calvin Sturdivant: 1919 Tamarisk Drive, East Lansing, Michigan 48823.
26
27 Cheryl McQuaid: [0:54] And are you married?
28
29 Calvin Sturdivant: Yes, I am.
30
31 Cheryl McQuaid: [0:57] Do you have children?
32
33 Calvin Sturdivant: I have 4 grown children and 2 grandchildren.
34
35 Cheryl McQuaid: [1:02] Could you tell us a little bit about your educational background?
36
37 Calvin Sturdivant: [sigh] I finished high school. I went to LCC and MSU.
38
39 Cheryl McQuaid: [1:13] And where did you go to high school?
40
41 Calvin Sturdivant: St. Louis, Missouri, Vashon High School.
42
43 Cheryl McQuaid: [1:19] And do you have any military service?
44
45 Calvin Sturdivant: No, I don't.
46

1 Cheryl McQuaid: [1:23] And what is your national origin?
2
3 Calvin Sturdivant: My national origin? African American.
4
5 Cheryl McQuaid: Okay. [1:35] Could you tell us about working at Fisher Body, your
6 memories?
7
8 Calvin Sturdivant: Yes, I can tell you about working at Fisher Body. Um, [tsk] what
9 specifically, uh, do you want me to talk about? I started working there in
10 1949. I got hire in in 1949, November 8, 1949. I never will forget the date
11 because I wanted the job real bad. So [sigh] I was working on the night shift,
12 midnight shift, and the man that hired me, the personnel manager said,
13 "Well, Mr. Sturdivant" – uh, this was on a Tuesday. I never will forget it. It
14 was on a Tuesday. He said, "You can, uh, come in tomorrow night." I said,
15 "No, I'll start tonight."
16
17 So, uh, I started November 8, 1949. [throat clearing] My job was a, uh, pit
18 cleaner. Well [throat clearing] what's a pit cleaner? Well, they gave me a
19 little wagon with a little, um, uh, like dipper-like thing, metal. Like a little,
20 like a little dipper about 3 feet long. So I'd go to the end of the line and
21 clean out the bolts and the nuts, you know, anything that was in the line
22 because if we didn't clean that out, it would jam the line and the line would
23 break. So that was my job. I don't remember what the pay was per hour, but
24 I think it was like \$1.18, which was a lot of money for me. So I kept that job
25 for [sigh] about, oh, 8 or 10 years and then I started moving up, started
26 requesting to move up. Now, it wasn't easy. [Inaudible 3:53].
27
28 Cheryl McQuaid: Mr. Sturdivant, I'm sorry. I jumped the gun. [3:53] Why – you were, you
29 were born and raised in Missouri?
30
31 Female: Mm-hm.
32
33 Calvin Sturdivant: No, no, no. [throat clearing] No. No. No. Let's get this straight. Born and
34 raised in Arkansas.
35
36 Female: Mm-hm.
37
38 Cheryl McQuaid: Okay.
39
40 Calvin Sturdivant: I'm a Razorback.
41
42 [laughter]
43
44 Cheryl McQuaid: [4:12] When did you come to Michigan? Why did you come to Michigan?
45
46 Female: [Inaudible 4:16].

1
2 Calvin Sturdivant: Well, why did I? W-, I came to Michigan because I was told that the
3 opportunities were better for me because I lived in St. Louis at the time. I
4 finished high school in St. Louis. I did have a job. [phew] I had several jobs.
5 The last job I had in St. Louis, I was working at a shoe factory, and they had
6 a union there, so I knew a little about the unions and what the unions would
7 do for you. So I was living with my cousin, and they were moving to
8 Michigan, and they said, "Uh, you better come out and got with us because
9 you can get a job at Oldsmobile and Fisher Body and a lot of factories
10 there." So I, uh, thought I'd come, but I, I've always, always said if I had had
11 a good job at that time, a good paying job I would have stayed in St. Louis,
12 but I'm glad now that I didn't.
13
14 Cheryl McQuaid: Marilyn Coulter?
15
16 Marilyn Coulter: [5:18] Uh, Mr. Sturdivant, about how old were you when you came to
17 Michigan?
18
19 Calvin Sturdivant: I was [phew] 23.
20
21 Marilyn Coulter: Okay. So you came here and then you h-, you h-, got a job here and, um,
22 how long did it take you to get a job after you got here?
23
24 Calvin Sturdivant: Yeah. Well it, it took a while to get a meaningful job. It took a, it took a
25 while. When I first came to Michigan, [tsk] I worked as a dishwasher. I
26 worked at a Chinese place and finally I got a job at a place called the
27 Michigan Fertilizer. It's not here anymore. But they were paying good
28 money – 85-95 cents an hour.
29
30 Female: Mm-hm.
31
32 Calvin Sturdivant: So I worked for them off and on for 2 years, but [throat clearing] I had tried
33 to get a job at Fisher Body and Oldsmobile – [most it 6:14] was Fisher and
34 Olds, but it was mostly Fisher...
35
36 Female: Mm-hm.
37
38 Calvin Sturdivant: ...for 2 years. I came here the last part of 1947. I came here in, uh,
39 November of 1947, and I can always remember because the next week I
40 remember seeing deer on people's cars as they drove by. I lived on Main
41 Street. But I was always told, "Well, we're not hiring, uh, we'll keep your
42 application on file. We're not hiring." Um, I couldn't live off of that, so I had
43 to get me a job somewhere else. And like I said, I got this job at the
44 Michigan Fertilizer. It was a good job, paid well. The problem with that
45 was, uh, it was sort of seasonal.
46

1Female: Mm-hm.
2

3Calvin Sturdivant: Farmers would come get their fertilizer in the spring and in the fall and after
4that the [sigh] there was a slowdown and I would get laid off, and the
5second time I got laid off, I said I'm going back to Fisher.
6

7Female: Mm-hm.
8

9Calvin Sturdivant: And that was in September of 1949.
10

11Female: Mm-hm.
12

13Calvin Sturdivant: I came back out and they still had my application on file. The personnel guy
14was Mr., uh, Smith I believe. And I would come every day. And then he
15said to me, he says, "Mr. Sturdivant, you don't have to come every day. Uh,
16if anything comes up, uh, we'll call you. I didn't trust him.
17

18Female: Mm-hm.
19

20Calvin Sturdivant: They don't call me; they got a job open; they don't call me. No. No way. I
21wanta be there. So, um, finally after about 2 months, [tsk] um, I walked in
22and they said to me, "Well, Mr. Sturdivant, I think we got a job for you."
23

24Female: Hm.
25

26Calvin Sturdivant: And I was one happy guy. Yes, sir.
27

28Earl Nicholson: [throat clearing] Earl Nicholson. You said that, um, \$1.13 was a lot of
29money. [8:28] What exactly would \$1.13 buy you as, as an hourly wage that
30when you got paid at the end of the week what would \$1.13, what would
31that, what would that wage buy you?
32

33Calvin Sturdivant: First of all, I was a single man. I did not have a lot of expense. Um, \$1.13,
34when you figure it all up at the end of the week, I probably had, I don't
35know, \$40-\$45 whatever.
36

37Earl Nicholson: [8:58] Were you working, uh, 11-12 hours a day?
38

39Calvin Sturdivant: No, I was not. To begin with, I was only working 8 hours a day...
40

41Female: Mm-hm.
42

43Calvin Sturdivant: ...but because we were on the night shift like that, we got 10 percent on the
44night shift. And I'm trying to get to your question. What, what would \$1.13
45buy for me?
46

1Earl Nicholson: [9:23] [Inaudible 9:23] that, that, that paid for your, your rent. That paid for
2 your, your food?
3
4Calvin Sturdivant: It paid for my rent, my clothing, my food...
5
6Earl Nicholson: Mm-hm.
7
8Calvin Sturdivant: ...and, you know, the little, the little entertainment that I did and that was
9 just going to the movie shows and...
10
11Earl Nicholson: [9:35] So we're basic-, we're basically talking 9 hours a day over a 5-day
12 period?
13
14Calvin Sturdivant: Six hours. I mean 5, 5 – nah, 8 hours. I'm sorry.
15
16Earl Nicholson: Eight hours over a 5-day period.
17
18Calvin Sturdivant: Eight hours.
19
20Earl Nicholson: [9:45] So we're basically talking what \$45 a week?
21
22Calvin Sturdivant: Something like that. Yeah. Yes, sir. And that was a lot of money for me. Uh,
23 [tsk] I was raised up in a culture where money was very scarce. I was raised
24 up on a farm down in Arkansas as a sharecropper. My dad was a
25 sharecropper. And I had always thought and I'd always made up in my mind
26 – I remember when I was 10 years old, I says, "I'm not gonna stay down
27 here and be a farmer." I just wasn't gonna do it and, so, you know, I had, I, I
28 had this determination to get away and – for the job concern. I s-, was
29 saving my, my money because one day I wanted to buy a house.
30
31Female: Hm.
32
33Calvin Sturdivant: I never thought about a car. I just wanted a house, some, some clothing and
34 a house.
35
36Female: Mm-hm.
37
38Cheryl McQuaid: Marilyn Coulter.
39
40Marilyn Coulter: Mr. Sturdivant, um, so you stood and you waited for 2 years to get inside the
41 plant. [10:55] Once you got here, what were your thoughts when you came
42 inside?
43
44Calvin Sturdivant: I was glad to be employed. Um, [tsk] initially, uh, that was my main
45 concern, and then after a while, I started looking around, and the job I had,
46 as you probably read in my report I got here, the job that I had I could go

1 from one end of the plant to the other and I was being vigilant 'cause I
2 didn't see any black people, not very many, and I'm beginning to wonder,
3 "Now, where are all the black people?" Uh, they had them in certain areas.
4

5Marilyn Coulter: [11:41] What areas were those, Sir?
6

7Calvin Sturdivant: Wet deck was one and that was the, that was the job that the blacks had on
8 the line. And the wet deck means that those bodies would go by [throat
9 clearing] and they would go by in the water. [tsk] These guys would, would
10 wash off, you know, where they, where they weld, where it was welded.
11 They would wash that off and any place on, on the top, on the side where
12 they were welded. They would wash that off, sort of sand that down, you
13 know, and they did that for 8 hours, and I used to think, "I'm glad I didn't
14 get hired in that department" [laughter] So.
15

16Female: Mm-hm.
17

18Calvin Sturdivant: And, uh, wet deck [throat clearing], uh, sanitation, and like the job I got
19 hired on, booth cleaning and janitor was the, uh, jobs that black had. Oh,
20 now they, they, they had 1 to 2 more on the line, like I said spraying, uh,
21 that ol' heavy black material. These guys would be all taped up in coveralls
22 and with a hood on, you know, and spraying that old, heavy black stuff, you
23 know, and that's a job I didn't want either.
24

25 So I began to ask questions. "Well now, why don't you have some blacks
26 over here? Why aren't some blacks on the line? Why aren't some black
27 here? Why aren't some black here? Why don't you have some black women
28 in here?" I was bold. The quest-, answers I got was, "Well, uh, I don't know,
29 Cal. Uh, we, we really don't know, uh, and w-, well, you know, they can do
30 the job but we, we just don't know. We just haven't hired any yet." So I
31 began to think that, uh, well when I get some time in here, I'm gonna make
32 my move. But I'd go to these, uh, black employees, and I'd tell them – and
33 I'd talk to them and I'd say, "Man, why don't you try to move up? Why
34 don't you try to get a job in the skilled trades and w-, why don't you, why
35 don't you try to get on the line?" Because at that time, I thought being on the
36 line was better than what they were doing. I'm glad I didn't even work on
37 the line. [laughter] After a while, I'm glad I didn't get a job on the line. But
38 they were complacent. They were satisfied with where they were, [you see
39 14:14], and so then I thought well, I'm just gonna look out for myself.
40

41 Um, being as active as I was and I sorta had a sort of a, a negative outlook
42 a-, a-, a-, that is people looked at me in a negative way. You know, I didn't
43 bite my tongue and, uh, I just told 'em what was in my mind when things
44 came up, so that made it difficult for me. The first job that I, um, transfer-,
45 put in a transfer for and I got in the story here, it was in the material control
46 department – only 1 black and I don't know how he got in there, and he was

1 very exceptional, and his name was [Joyce 15:10] Jones. He was a – I knew
2 him very well because he was a deacon at the church that we attended and,
3 so, I used to talk with him all the time. You probably know him. You
4 probably remember him, don't you? Yeah. Anyway, he would tell me to
5 transfer, you know, put in a transfer and come over there and, actually, the
6 foreman, he was smiling. I thought he liked me, you know, and so I put in
7 for a transfer to go over there, but my foreman and I, we didn't have a good
8 relationship. We didn't have good rapport at all, so he knocked me, and, uh,
9 I, I didn't get that job. [tsk] He came and told me, "Well, they're not taking
10 anybody over there. They don't need anybody." Right. They don't need
11 anybody because I was going over there.
12
13 [laughter]
14
15 Marilyn Coulter: [16:03] So did you ever get into a department that you did want to get into?
16
17 Calvin Sturdivant: Yeah. It took a while. Uh, I never – I, I would put in for an application for
18 different jobs and always turned down. Finally, [sigh] I put in an application
19 for what they call a gas tester. They had these, uh, gas meters at these
20 booths, which I did not have the experience and nobody else had the
21 experience, you know, that, uh, was going for this job. [throat clearing]
22 Anyway, they p-, they, they, they posted a sign. They [stuttering] supposed
23 to post a sign with these job applications on 'em and, um, this one they
24 didn't. They kept it out of sight. As I say, if the foreman didn't want
25 somebody on there and it could be a white person too 'cause if he didn't like
26 him, um, he wasn't gonna get promoted. But anyway, I put in for this job.
27 They were going to seniority. I had more seniority than anybody that had
28 put in for this job. I had the seniority. When management looked and saw
29 ol' Cal's got his application in for this job and he's got more seniority,
30 whoa, they put on brakes. What they did was – this was in 1963. What they
31 did was they held that job open, and they went and got a guy off of the job
32 that had more seniority than I had...
33
34 Female: Mm-hm.
35
36 Calvin Sturdivant: ...and I guess I didn't have a leg to stand on, though it was done illegally
37 and we knew it, you know. Everybody knew it was done illegally, but that's
38 the way they did. They put that guy on the job, and after a while – he's
39 doing that job about a month but I think his conscious bothered him because
40 he know they used him, so he, he got off that job but – and then the guy that
41 had the job all the time went back on it. So I, I didn't get a chance to get it.
42 But what I did, I got mad. I went to my typewriter [tapping] and I'd, I'd type
43 out a letter to Walter Reuther...
44
45 Female: Hm.
46

1 Calvin Sturdivant: ...and I told him about my situation and the situation in general about
2 discrimination and prejudice and all, and I said it was so thick in Fisher
3 Body you could cut it with a knife. [sigh] Believe it or not, I got a letter back
4 from Mr. Reuther, and I wish today I had kept that letter. I don't know what
5 I've done with that, that letter, but I wish I had kept that letter. Anyway, he –
6 I, I got this letter back from Mr. Reuther that said, "Brother Sturdivant, we
7 are aware of the injustice and all that and what have you." He said, "we're
8 gonna – I am going to, uh, refer your letter to, um, the regional [tsk] agent,
9 Mr. Patterson in Flint." He said, "He will get in touch with you."

10
11 Well Mr. Patterson never got in touch with me actually until after everything
12 was over, but he did come in to Fisher Body. He came in to Fisher Body, but
13 nobody told me that he was coming. He come – he, he came in to Fisher
14 Body to investigate to see if there was any discrimination. The letter I got
15 from him was he found no discrimination. Naturally, he wasn't gonna find
16 any because management is gonna take him off to the side, you know, and
17 show him all the good parts and everything. Anyway, um, I never got that
18 job, and so [throat clearing] this is when I really got angry, so then I went to
19 my typewriter and I typed out a letter. I must be young and foolish at that –
20 at those times. [chuckle] I typed out a letter and I lambasted Fisher
21 management, and I particularly lambasted 1 guy, 1 man. His name was Lee
22 Reeves, and he was o-, he was the, uh, assistant engineer, I believe and, and
23 he was prejudiced, and I said in that letter he was so prejudiced until he
24 couldn't see off the end of his nose and I said some, uh, other stuff about
25 him. I came in that night.

26
27 I called the committeeman. I says, "You take this letter and you read it and
28 then I want you to take it to Labor Relation." He took it and he read it, and
29 his face turned red and, uh, he took it on to Labor Relation. I followed him
30 to see if he was going up there. He took it on to Labor Relation. And, uh, the
31 next night I came in, [sigh] I could see the different eyes looking at me, you
32 know, from management [inaudible 21:18]. They wouldn't say anything.
33 They wouldn't bother me. They'd just look, just curious looks, just looking
34 around, and an-, anyway, on that letter, I told them I wanted an answer [who
35 21:31] in about 3 days, my foreman came to me. He says, "Cal, [inaudible
36 21:37] go down Labor Relation." I said, "Why, Bob? Why do I have to go to
37 Labor Relation?" "I don't know. It's something about a letter you wrote."
38 Yeah. Okay. I'll go. I went on to Labor Relation, and the Labor Relation
39 man, named Hunter, I believe, he said, "Cal, uh, we got you down here. You
40 wrote a letter and, uh, you accused one of our, uh, executives of being
41 prejudiced, and, uh, he's hurt over the fact that you wrote this letter." I said,
42 "Yeah. I wrote a letter and I called him prejudiced," and [inaudible 22:16] in
43 the conversation, we got to talking.

44
45 Male: [Go 22:20].
46

1 Calvin Sturdivant: You see, I wrote this letter and, uh, lambasted, uh, one of the company
2 officials. His name was Lee [Reese 22:29] and he was a centen-, a system
3 engineer and he and, uh, my foreman were good friends, so he was, uh,
4 instrumental in keeping blacks and other people that they didn't want from
5 these jobs. So I wrote this letter accusing him of being prejudiced and some
6 other things I said to him about him on this letter, and, uh, and then I came
7 in to work that night and I called the committeeman and told him to read this
8 letter and take it to Labor Relation, so they could give it to Lee [Reese
9 23:07] and he did that and I followed him to see if he was gonna take it there
10 because I didn't know whether he was gonna take that letter there or not
11 because after he read that letter his face kinda turned red a little bit. So the
12 next night when I came in, um, I was the object of a lot of strange stares
13 and, and [inaudible] [treatment 23:33] and everything and I said, "Well, I'm
14 going on about my business and do my job, you know, and nobody's gonna
15 touch me."
16
17 And so it was the next night, I think, when I came in and the foreman said
18 we had to go down to Labor Relation about a letter that I had written and I
19 said, "Yeah, I did write a letter." And he pretended he didn't know anything
20 about it and which I knew he did. Those guys would get together and they'd
21 talk things over. I went down there. [throat clearing] The Labor Relation
22 guy started telling me about, uh, there was concern about a letter that I had
23 written to – about Lee [Reese 24:16], one of the company's, uh, uh,
24 executives, and he was hurt over it and, uh, I jumped angry and told him, I
25 says, "Uh, you got me down here to reprimand me about writing a letter. Get
26 me a committeeman down here because I..." you know, I wasn't gonna
27 change my mind. I wasn't going to, uh, [tsk] be afraid or anything like that.
28 But anyway, nothing happened. I didn't get the committeeman down there
29 and nothing happened. These empty promises that yeah, you'll have a
30 chance to get the job and, uh, I didn't believe them and, uh, it was true and I
31 didn't have a chance to get that job and, in fact, I knew I wasn't gonna get it.
32 After my attitude, I knew I wasn't gonna get that job. [chuckle] So where to
33 go here – from here?
34
35 Male: [Inaudible 25:13].
36
37 Marilyn Coulter: [25:13] So what happened to you after you – after that incident?
38
39 Calvin Sturdivant: Well after, after that [throat clearing] – that was in 1963. That was in [tsk]
40 oh, like the fall of 1963, late summer or fall of 1963. Um, I had alwrit-,
41 already written this letter to Walter Reuther. I had gotten a letter back from
42 him, and this was all before this...
43
44 Female: Mm-hm.
45

1 Calvin Sturdivant: All before this letter to Lee [Reese 25:47], I had written a letter to Walter
2 Reuther telling him about the prejudiced [and all 25:51]. [tsk] So all of this
3 is in conjunction with, uh, uh, me getting a job and [inaudible 26:01] get
4 promoted and trying to e-, eliminate prejudice and, and all. So it was after –
5 about a month after that. Then they – Fisher Body had its first black
6 foreman. That was [Inaudible] [Kelly 26:17]...
7
8 Female: Mm-hm.
9
10 Calvin Sturdivant: ...and he became a foreman over the – who else [inaudible 26:22].
11
12 Marilyn Coulter: Oh.
13
14 Calvin Sturdivant: But in 19, um – it was then that they started – I started seeing blacks going –
15 and women going to other departments and I don't take any credit for that
16 because I think Uncle Sam was looking over their shoulders, too, at the time
17 saying why don't you have some black people over here; why don't you
18 have some women over here, and why don't you have some Hispanics over
19 here, you know?
20
21 Marilyn Coulter: [27:02] Because this was after the [inaudible 27:03], yes?
22
23 Calvin Sturdivant: This was in 1963.
24
25 Marilyn Coulter: Okay.
26
27 Calvin Sturdivant: So we were right in the...
28
29 Marilyn Coulter: [27:07] Right in, in the middle of it?
30
31 Calvin Sturdivant: ...right in the middle of it. Uh, now the next job I put in for, I had some
32 problems too. This job was a semi-skill job, and this job was a, um, sealer
33 repair. Sealer repair was we had to work with spray guns and flow guns and
34 those big ol', pr-, big old, uh, pressure pump, uh, Johnstone pumps, the
35 pump sealer and hoses and things like that.
36
37 Marilyn Coulter: Mm-hm.
38
39 Calvin Sturdivant: That was our job. When I put in – I put in for that job [sigh] – the reason I
40 put in for it because they had another guy on there that had less seniority
41 than I had.
42
43 Marilyn Coulter: Mm-hm.
44
45 Calvin Sturdivant: So I put in for it and the committeeman, the unions go on 'em, and they had
46 to put me in there, but there were – they were trying to pull a slick trick.

1 They put me in there and then after a month they laid me off. I said, "Why
2 am I getting laid off?" "Well we got too many people in the department. We
3 got to eliminate somebody, and you were the last one in here."
4

5 Marilyn Coulter: [Inaudible 28:34].
6

7 Calvin Sturdivant: So okay. Alright. So I went on back out and the next day I came in and I
8 called the committeeman. The committeeman got right on it. The guy that
9 was in there and had less seniority than I had was a white guy. Those white
10 guys didn't like it. I'm gonna tell you the truth, folks. They didn't like it.
11 One guy said – well he was a committeeman too – I didn't hear it, but
12 somebody told me he said, "I just can't see taking a job from a white man
13 and giving it to a black man." He was a committeeman too. But anyway,
14 um, I got that job. It wasn't easy. The guys that I worked with, I had
15 problems with them, but I didn't back down and, you know, things rocked
16 on. Down the road after about 3 or 4 years, um, I began, began to get some,
17 uh, positive feedback from management...
18

19 Female: Hm.
20

21 Calvin Sturdivant: ...and they were saying things like, "That ol' Cal, he's ready to go to work
22 when you ask him to do something." Because the guy that I was working
23 with, he had 15 children and his excuse was, "Uh, I gotta take it easy. I, I, I
24 got 15 children to take care of. Uh, I'm a old man," and stuff like that and
25 the foremans didn't want to hear that. So then they would come and tell me
26 to do a job and I'd just go on and do it, you know, and, and I got, uh, [tsk]
27 some positive reviews and finally the, um, head engineer came to me and
28 said to me he that thought a lot of me. Now he'd been – he was one of the
29 ones 5 years ago or 2 or 3 years ago was trying to block me, one of them
30 was trying to block me, but the, uh, other foreman, my other foremans were
31 telling him, you know, the attitude was changing and maybe it was changing
32 a little bit. I, I won't deny that. Maybe I, maybe I wasn't so hostile anymore,
33 you know?
34

35 Female: Mm-hm.
36

37 Calvin Sturdivant: And so, and, uh, like I say, I got good reports and everything and, and the
38 next job I put in for was in skilled trades. I got that one without any
39 problem.
40

41 Marilyn Coulter: [31:23] And what trade was that, Sir?
42

43 Calvin Sturdivant: That was, uh, Jig & Fixture repair. I stayed on that job until I retired.
44

45 Marilyn Coulter: [31:31] And what y-...
46

1 Calvin Sturdivant: I was in there for about 20 years.
2
3 Marilyn Coulter: [31:34] What year did you retire?
4
5 Calvin Sturdivant: You had to ask that hard question – 1987. [laughter]
6
7 Marilyn Coulter: '87. Okay.
8
9 Calvin Sturdivant: 1987.
10
11 Marilyn Coulter: [31:44] So going into the skilled trades, was there anything in particular that
12 you had to do, any pres-, process that you had to learn to go into skilled
13 trades?
14
15 Calvin Sturdivant: Uh, I remember one thing. I remember thinking – I says, “Boy, I wished I
16 had learned more about geometry when I was in high school because of the
17 things that it taught, taught, taught me in geometry, I saw a lot of it in, in Jig
18 & Fixture repair. Uh, our job mostly was to – we worked closely with the
19 tool makers and actually they told me that Jig repair was a [tsk] – excuse the
20 expression – was a bastard, uh, uh, department or whatever...
21
22 Marilyn Coulter: Mm-hm.
23
24 Calvin Sturdivant: ...because it was a offshoot from the Jig – or offshoot from the toolmakers,
25 so we had to, uh, work with metal and stuff and pass stuff like that, you
26 know. What we did was, if you remember working in the plant – excuse me.
27
28 Marilyn Coulter: [Inaudible 32:49].
29
30 Calvin Sturdivant: If you remember working in the plant, they had these, uh, fixtures that, uh,
31 fit on the, uh, trunks and on the tops...
32
33 Marilyn Coulter: Mm-hm.
34
35 Calvin Sturdivant: ...[inaudible 32:59] put 'em on the [inaudible 32:59], you know.
36
37 Female: Mm-hm.
38
39 Calvin Sturdivant: [Inaudible 33:01], you know, [inaudible 33:04] the, uh...
40
41 Marilyn Coulter: Clamps.
42
43 Calvin Sturdivant: ...clamps and different things, you know.
44
45 Marilyn Coulter: Yeah.
46

1 Calvin Sturdivant: And we had to maintain, you know, we had to maintain those fixtures and
2 things like that and we had to work on the gates. At that time, they had these
3 gates that they put the, uh, metal in, you know?
4

5 Marilyn Coulter: Mm-hm.
6

7 Calvin Sturdivant: So we had to do a lot of shimmying, you know, to make sure that, uh,
8 everything is even.
9

10 Marilyn Coulter: Mm-hm. [33:29] So my question to you is this: Now what year was it that
11 you went into skilled trades?
12

13 Calvin Sturdivant: 1970.
14

15 Marilyn Coulter: 1970. So...
16

17 Calvin Sturdivant: So I was there 17 years. Yeah. Mm-hm.
18

19 Marilyn Coulter: [33:38] So if you went in in 1970 and there weren't – and I take it by 1970
20 the population had changed; the genders had changed?
21

22 Calvin Sturdivant: Yeah. I was the first black that was in Jig repair. I w-, uh, w-, uh – an
23 employee named Willie, um, Sanders was a, was a tool maker. He was the
24 first black in tool making. Now he had been in there a couple years before I
25 got in to Jig repair, but I was the first black in Jig repair.
26

27 Marilyn Coulter: [34:20] So my question to you is it was difficult before, what was it like
28 going into a trade that was initially predominately – what was that like for
29 you? For going into a trade that was pr-, predominantly, uh, governed by
30 white males?
31

32 Calvin Sturdivant: [tsk] Well [sigh] I was, um, concerned about getting along with people. I
33 was concerned about that, but I also knew a few guys that were already in
34 Jig & Fixture repair and they welcomed me. These guys welcomed me, the
35 ones that knew me, but now I did have – I, I worked with some that, uh, you
36 know, I felt like that I was gonna have to take a swing at 'em, like [inaudible
37 35:15], you know, take a swing at people [inaudible 35:17].
38
39 [laughter]
40

41 Marilyn Coulter: [What 35:19]...
42

43 Earl Nicholson: Earl Nicholson. [35:21] Uh, we're kinda dancing around this subject just a
44 little bit, but you say when, when you knew the guys that were in Jig repair,
45 are we talking about white guys or black guys?
46

1 Calvin Sturdivant: W-, white guys. There wasn't no, eh, eh, eh, there weren't any black guys.
2

3 Earl Nicholson: [35:32] So they, they had no problem accepting you?
4

5 Calvin Sturdivant: No. No. No. You see, I, I was known because I was probably one of the
6 tallest guys in there, you know, so I stood out.
7

8 Female: Mm-hm.
9

10 Calvin Sturdivant: And, uh, and people knew me and I didn't, I didn't know them because my
11 reputation probably was hey, don't fool with that guy, you know, he, he
12 doesn't back off.
13

14 Marilyn Coulter: So...
15

16 Earl Nicholson: [Inaudible 36:00].
17

18 Calvin Sturdivant: I think that was the reputation I had [inaudible 36:02].
19

20 Earl Nicholson: [36:02] So people respected you for your...
21

22 Calvin Sturdivant: I was a nice guy. I was a nice guy. I didn't bother anybody.
23

24 Marilyn Coulter: [36:07] So, Mr. Sturdivant, how tall are you?
25

26 Calvin Sturdivant: Uh, a little over 6'4", about 6'4-3/4".
27

28 Marilyn Coulter: So during your time working there, you had problems with promotions and
29 things with [coughing] your supervisors. [36:26] What about your
30 coworkers over the years? I mean obviously by the time to you got to Jig &
31 Fixture repair you had a good rapport with other people, but what about the
32 other people, other employees?
33

34 Calvin Sturdivant: I did not have, I did not have a good relationship w-, let's go back to, uh, Jig
35 – let's go back to, uh, Sealer repair. I did not have a good relationship with,
36 uh, the people that I worked with most of the time. Oh, oh, oh, let me
37 change that. Some of the time I did not have a good relationship with them. I
38 can't say most of the time because that wouldn't be fair. But, um, [tsk] I
39 remem-, remember this incident where this guy that I was working with. It
40 was the little guy I was talking about he said he had 15 children and he...
41

42 Marilyn Coulter: Mm-hm.
43

44 Calvin Sturdivant: ...and he had to take it easy when the foreman would come and tell him to
45 do a job, you know, he was tired and all of that and, um, so he and I was in a

1 dispute about something, and so we were going at it hot and heavy and
2 because he was a little guy...
3
4 Marilyn Coulter: Mm-hm.
5
6 Calvin Sturdivant: ...probably about maybe 5 feet, 5'2", something like that and didn't weigh
7 too much, and, uh, I don't know what he said. He didn't call me a name or
8 anything like that, but he said something and I had this gun in my hand. It
9 was my flow gun, [chuckle] not a pistol. [chuckle] Boom, I threw it on the,
10 on the table and hit the metal on the table. I said, "I'm tired [banging] of
11 you," and I started walking toward him, you know. [slapping] He ran out
12 and where we worked was just across the, the, uh, road from the
13 maintenance office and, uh, he ran and then he told, um, Clarence Davis and
14 Clarence Davis and I did not have a good rapport. I mean we really didn't
15 have it. He, he was the general foreman of the maintenance department.
16
17 And as soon as, uh, [inaudible 38:49] went in to start telling him that I ch-,
18 he told him I ran him out of there, I chased him out of there and, uh, [tsk] he
19 comes over and he jumps me. "Hey, Cal..." uh, uh, hm, – I can't think of his
20 name now. Um, Joe. "Joe said that you chased him out of here." I said, "No.
21 He lied." I says, "Uh, we were arguing, and I started walking toward him
22 and he ran out," so, uh, then he started telling, "Well you, you guys, you
23 can't be arguing, you, you gotta, you gotta work together, you, you know,
24 you can't have this and you can't, you can't do this and you can't do that,"
25 and I said, "Well, you know, uh, [tsk] I just think you taking his side. You
26 said that, uh – he's saying I chased him out of here, and you came over here
27 and you jumped me about it." I said, "Go over there and ask those, uh, those
28 plumbers out there." I said, "They saw it. Some of them saw it." So he went
29 out there, and he asked them, and I think 1 or 2 of 'em told him they didn't
30 see me chasing him, you know.
31
32 Marilyn Coulter: Mm-hm.
33
34 Calvin Sturdivant: So then he called Joe off to the side and he talked with them...
35
36 Marilyn Coulter: Mm-hm.
37
38 Calvin Sturdivant: ...and I'm thinking he didn't say anything to me. He didn't take me off to
39 the side and talk with me. He took that guy off to the side and talked...
40
41 Marilyn Coulter: Mm-hm.
42
43 Calvin Sturdivant: ...so I called the committeeman.
44
45 Marilyn Coulter: Mm-hm.
46

1 Calvin Sturdivant: The committeeman ripped him up and down...

2

3 Marilyn Coulter: Mm-hm.

4

5 [laughter]

6

7 Calvin Sturdivant: ...for doing that.

8

9 Marilyn Coulter: Mm-hm.

10

11 Calvin Sturdivant: So then he got the both of us together and talked.

12

13 Marilyn Coulter: Mm-hm.

14

15 Calvin Sturdivant: The foreman told me, "You, you, you don't have any business talking to 1
16 man like that. You know, if you're gonna talk to them, talk to both of them."
17 So.

18

19 Marilyn Coulter: Mm-hm. [Inaudible 40:51].

20

21 Female: This one?

22

23 Marilyn Coulter: Yeah.

24

25 [tapping]

26

27 Female: [Go 40:56].

28

29 Calvin Sturdivant: Oh, I was saying that, uh, that made me, that made me feel good that the
30 incident in which I, myself, and a, uh, [tsk] fellow coworker had a little spat,
31 more than a spat and he ran out of the [inaudible 41:17] where we were
32 working and ran over to the office and told the general foreman that I had
33 chased him out of there and, anyway, uh, he came over and he talked to me
34 and, uh, sorta in a harsh tone, you know, and, uh, I talked back and, uh, told
35 him that I had not chased him out of there, and, uh, he was taking his side of
36 it. I said, "Go over and ask those plumbers, those millwrights over there.
37 They, they saw it." So he went and asked them, and I think some of them
38 told him that, uh, no, I didn't chase him out of there. Then he took this guy
39 off – coworker off to the side and he talked with him about 10 minutes.
40 They were just talking.

41

42 So I, I called the committeeman and told him what had happened and that
43 [inaudible 42:10] foreman had called this guy off to the side and was talking
44 to him. I said, "He didn't, he didn't call me off and, and, and talk to me." So
45 the committeeman got right on him, uh, ripped him apart about that [and
46 said you don't 42:25], you just don't talk to 1, 1 guy like that when

1 something like this has, has happened, you talk ot both of them.” And then
2 he came and, uh, he talked to both of us like he was supposed to do in the
3 first place. Like I said, that made me feel good, that I knew I had, I had the
4 union backing me, backing me not in, not in a sense that, uh, uh, they were
5 on my side. They just was doing right, doing what was right. That’s, that’s,
6 that’s what it was. And just about, about all of the incidents where I had to
7 call a committeeman, I was convinced that they, you know, wanted to do
8 right and wanted to protect my rights.
9

10Earl Nicholson: [43:23] So what, what was – Earl Nicholson – what was the end result of all
11 that?
12

13Calvin Sturdivant: The end result was that was we got along pretty good for a while and, uh, it
14 was after this incident that I told you that management started looking at me
15 with a positive eye, you know, that, uh, uh, I wasn’t such a bad guy
16 anymore...
17

18Female: Mm-hm.
19

20Calvin Sturdivant: ...and they when they’d have a job – now this, this, this is what would upset
21 my coworker because he more seniority in that department than I had and
22 they came and handed me the papers to go do a job. Well he did not like that
23 and that’s what they was, that’s what they were doing. That’s what they
24 started doing, you know.
25

26Earl Nicholson: Mm-hm. [44:26] So was – were they – when they were to come up to hand
27 you, what was, what was his, what was his quality of work compared to
28 yours? Was – were you guys operating on the same level?
29

30Calvin Sturdivant: Yeah. We did the same thing, but he had more experience in there because
31 he had been in for 20 years and I had, uh, I stayed in it for 6 years, so this
32 was like probably my th-, fourth year in there.
33

34Earl Nicholson: [44:49] So you guys were operating on the same level basically?
35

36Calvin Sturdivant: Yeah. Yeah.
37

38Earl Nicholson: Okay.
39

40Calvin Sturdivant: Yeah. Um, [tsk] uh, something else I was gonna say and forgot it just that
41 quick. Ugh.
42

43Earl Nicholson: [44:59] So, uh, I’d like to say when, when did you start to notice, I guess the
44 word I would use is change, real change...
45

46Calvin Sturdivant: S-...

1
2Earl Nicholson: ...in the factory in terms of racism and sexism? Uh, when, when did you
3 start to see it where, where, where it – where you started seeing more
4 African Americans, more Hispanic Americans, more women, when d-, when
5 – could you put a date on that?
6
7Calvin Sturdivant: Well actually to tell you the truth, it was, uh, I was [throat clearing] more
8 concerned with the African American aspect of it and, you know, I wanted
9 everybody to be treated fair, but I know we were treated worse than
10 anybody else in there. Uh, I think it was about [throat clearing] – now 1963
11 was the first, uh, time they had a black foreman. About 4 months [sigh] – we
12 were early, early in '64, early in '64, then they started having blacks on the
13 line in, uh, on production, and, uh, oh...
14
15Earl Nicholson: [46:13] Could you tell me [inaudible 46:13]?
16
17Calvin Sturdivant: I can't remember. I can't remember this guy's name, um, Jack, um, [tapping]
18 – I can't remember his name, but he was the second black I remember.
19
20Earl Nicholson: Mm-hm.
21
22Calvin Sturdivant: Now I can't, I can't nail down those, uh, the times...
23
24Earl Nicholson: Mm-hm.
25
26Calvin Sturdivant: ...the dates and all...
27
28Earl Nicholson: Right.
29
30Calvin Sturdivant: ...and I, I'm, I'm just speculating here, you know, because...
31
32Earl Nicholson: Right. I mean, you know, uh, I mean, uh, in, in, in general terms, when was
33 the first time that you started noticing a lot of women?
34
35Calvin Sturdivant: Uh, it was the mid-60s.
36
37Earl Nicholson: [46:45] In the late 60s?
38
39Calvin Sturdivant: When I said mid-60s, I'm talking, oh, about '66, '67.
40
41Earl Nicholson: [46:51] '66, '67?
42
43Calvin Sturdivant: Yeah.
44
45Earl Nicholson: Okay. [Inaudible 46:54].
46

1 Calvin Sturdivant: When I started noticing that they started putting women...
2
3 Earl Nicholson: Mm-hm.
4
5 Calvin Sturdivant: ...in the trades and...
6
7 Earl Nicholson: [Inaudible 47:01].
8
9 Calvin Sturdivant: ...they began to be foremans.
10
11 Earl Nicholson: [47:03] And, uh, was there, was there [inaudible 47:04]?
12
13 Calvin Sturdivant: The, the, the – I can remember this: I remember they – I can remember the
14 first black woman that they hired in Fisher Body. Her name was Velma
15 Dukes. That was in 1953. She was the first black woman they hired and
16 because she was a neighbor of mine ‘cause lived right across the street from
17 me, and she was the very first one [inaudible 47:31], but she didn’t stay
18 there too long because the job that she got was – it was just too much for
19 her. She was a big girl, a big lady and, uh, had to get in the back of those
20 trunks, you know, [inaudible 47:41] wires and things, had to do that for 8
21 hours, whew. She couldn't take that. She worked about 2 or 3 months and
22 she quit.
23
24 Earl Nicholson: Okay. [47:53] So, b-, so it was, um, when women were coming in to the
25 factory, did you notice a general change in attitude of all of the male
26 employees in general?
27
28 Calvin Sturdivant: Well I guess I can't say that, uh, I did. Um...
29
30 Earl Nicholson: [48:14] Were men still crude to women at that time or [stuttering] were men,
31 were they respectful to the women or...?
32
33 Calvin Sturdivant: Let me tell you this, um, and this was a white girl, a white lady, they put her
34 on the [sigh] – you know, for a long time they d-, did not have women in the
35 body shop.
36
37 Female: Mm-hm.
38
39 Calvin Sturdivant: Let me change that. Yeah. For a long time they did not, did not have women
40 in the body shop, and, uh, so they hired this young, young lady, and she was
41 kind of heavy and, uh, she was [inaudible 49:02] one time [or 49:04] once or
42 twice, uh, she put in the wrong details, and when you do that, um, it's a
43 deadhead. They had to run a deadhead. In other words, if you put – they
44 were running 88 to 98s then, and if you put, uh, material in it that belong on
45 a – 88 materials in it that belongs on a – or 88 – if you put 98...
46

1Earl Nicholson: Parts.
2

3Calvin Sturdivant: ...parts that belong on, uh, for an 88, that's gonna mess up or vice versa.
4

5Earl Nicholson: Right.
6

7Calvin Sturdivant: Well she did that once or twice and, uh – now this was in the '70s because I
8 didn't get in Jig r-, I was in Jig repair then. This was in the '70s. So and she
9 had this foreman named, uh – if I called the name, you would know it, but I
10 can't think of his name now [tapping] [inaudible 50:05]. Anyway, I, I think
11 he was prejudiced against women.
12

13Earl Nicholson: Mm-hm.
14

15Calvin Sturdivant: So, uh, she messed up this one particular night and I felt so sorry for her,
16 you know, but I, I could just feel her pain. I knew what she was going
17 through. And I wanted to go and talk to her, but I didn't know how. I didn't,
18 I didn't have the courage and I didn't know how. I knew that, um, she was
19 downcast and, um, boy, if I just could have gone to her and just patted her
20 on the shoulder or something and told her, you know, you know, keep her
21 chin up and everything and that might would have helped, but I knew what
22 she was going through, and, uh, they fired her that night.
23

24Female: Hm.
25

26Earl Nicholson: [51:00] So you felt frustrated because you couldn't, you couldn't approach
27 her [inaudible 51:02].
28

29Calvin Sturdivant: Yeah. I, I wasn't able to do that. Yeah. I wasn't able to go to her and, and,
30 and try to console her. [throat clearing] Excuse me. [throat clearing]
31

32Earl Nicholson: [51:12] So, um, so, uh, from, from what you know now from all the sexual
33 harassment classes that you'd been through before you retired, can you
34 recall any instances of sexual harassment that you exper-, that, that you
35 witnessed? I'm talking crude comments, men putting their hands on women?
36

37Calvin Sturdivant: Yeah. I remember one incident where this foreman was really upset and this
38 lady was always complaining and she was white and, of course, he was
39 white, but she was always complaining about something, you know, so I
40 think he was real-, this foreman was really upset this night, and, uh, she told
41 – asked him [inaudible 52:09] what am I gonna do with this material and he
42 told her and he said words that he said. I mean you know what I mean what
43 he said to her and she went on and reported him and he was fired that night.
44

45Earl Nicholson: Wow!
46

1 Calvin Sturdivant: Yeah. He was fired that night.
2
3 Earl Nicholson: [52:29] You can't tell us what, uh, what he said?
4
5 Female: It was bad.
6
7 Calvin Sturdivant: No. No, I can't tell you what he said.
8
9 [laughter]
10
11 Like you know what you can do with it, you know?
12
13 Female: Mm-hm.
14
15 Earl Nicholson: Mm-hm.
16
17 Calvin Sturdivant: So. So he was fired that night. I was trying to think of an incident where,
18 um, one black lady [sigh] – a lotta, a lotta stuff has escaped my mind now.
19 Uh, I know a black lady that got to be a foreman, but I don't think, you
20 know, uh, nothing bad happened to her except they just put a lot of pressure
21 on her – because I, I know the lady very well.
22
23 Female: [53:17] Sandy Coleman?
24
25 Calvin Sturdivant: You might even know her. You might know, you might – do you...
26
27 Marilyn Coulter: [53:17] Sandy Coleman?
28
29 Calvin Sturdivant: No. No. [53:20] Do you know, uh, Thomas? What's her name? [whispering]
30 Uh, [Othressa 53:29].
31
32 Marilyn Coulter: [Theresa 43:30] Thomas [inaudible 53:30].
33
34 Calvin Sturdivant: [Othessa 53:32] Thomas.
35
36 Marilyn Coulter: [53:33] She was a supervisor there?
37
38 Calvin Sturdivant: Yeah. She was a supervisor at one time and probably lasted about 6 months.
39
40 Marilyn Coulter: Oh. 'Cause was gonna say I know the only ones I knew were Sandy
41 Coleman...
42
43 Calvin Sturdivant: No.
44
45 Marilyn Coulter: ...and [Joann Pfifer 43:42] in the body shop.
46

1 Calvin Sturdivant: [Joann Pfifer 53:44]. [53:46] Don't I remember her?
2

3 Marilyn Coulter: She was Chris [Pfifer's 53:47] wife. Chris was a supervisor up in trim. A
4 black complected female in the body shop.
5

6 Calvin Sturdivant: Yeah. I remember her. She worked down in the body shop.
7

8 Marilyn Coulter: Mm-hm.
9

10 Calvin Sturdivant: Oh, yeah. I, I've done some work with her too. Yeah. Um, [throat clearing]
11 no, offhand I just can't remember anything that, um, insulting that hap-,
12 happened to black women. It might have happened but, you know, I
13 [inaudible 54:14] except I know that my, my sister was fired because she hit
14 her foreman. [Inaudible 54:26] let's not talk about that.
15

16 Earl Nicholson: [chuckle] So, okay, one...
17

18 Calvin Sturdivant: [Let's not talk about that 54:29].
19

20 Earl Nicholson: ...one other question on, on, uh, this subject for me: [54:33] When's the first
21 time, uh, that you remember seeing a Mexican?
22

23 Calvin Sturdivant: When I was first hired in Fisher Body.
24

25 Earl Nicholson: [54:40] They had – they were hiring Mexicans then?
26

27 Calvin Sturdivant: They had Mexicans on...
28

29 Earl Nicholson: I shouldn't say Mexicans. I should say Latinos.
30

31 Calvin Sturdivant: [54:46] What's the difference?
32

33 Earl Nicholson: Latinos cover all [inaudible 54:50]...
34

35 Calvin Sturdivant: Oh, cover all.
36

37 Earl Nicholson: ...all, uh...
38

39 Calvin Sturdivant: [54:51] Well what about Hispanics? Doesn't that cover all of 'em?
40

41 Earl Nicholson: Yes, that, that does too.
42

43 Calvin Sturdivant: Yeah. Okay. Yeah. Well when I, uh, got hired at Fisher Body in 1949, there
44 were, uh, 2, I think 2 or 3 Hispanics [on the] [inaudible 55:09], but they had
45 Hispanics up on the line, production line. They all were together. Now if

1 you want to call that segregation or something I do not know, but they all
2 were in, in, in one area.
3
4Earl Nicholson: [55:28] Were they Spanish...
5
6Calvin Sturdivant: [Inaudible 55:29].
7
8Earl Nicholson: [55:29] Were they Spanish speaking or English speaking?
9
10Calvin Sturdivant: [Inaudible 55:31] they, they spoke both, you know.
11
12Earl Nicholson: [Inaudible 55:34].
13
14Calvin Sturdivant: They spoke English and, and Spanish, you know. They speak English when
15 they talk to us and they speak Spanish when the talk to themselves.
16
17Earl Nicholson: Okay. [Inaudible 55:41].
18
19Female: Mm-hm.
20
21Earl Nicholson: Alright. Now I'd like to, to, to kinda get off of that a little bit unless
22 [inaudible 55:46] any-, anybody else want to [inaudible 55:47] that. [55:50] I
23 wanta, I wanta go back to, uh, like what when I had questioned and ask you
24 before we were recording, um, that you – about – where did you learn to
25 type?
26
27Calvin Sturdivant: I typed at home at 1919 Tamarisk Drive, so I didn't take it in school.
28
29Earl Nicholson: Okay.
30
31Calvin Sturdivant: I just learned to type and, uh, my daughter helped me and my wife helped
32 me some and, uh, a little typing that I, I, you know, it's m-, mostly self-
33 taught.
34
35Earl Nicholson: Okay.
36
37Calvin Sturdivant: Uh, now when I was in the LCC, I had to b-, you know, type on the
38 computer, but I had already had a head start in typing at home, you know.
39
40Earl Nicholson: I'd like to ask, ask you about the school you attended. [56:30] Now, now
41 like, eh, eh, would you consider the, the school that you attended and the
42 training that you got in 0 through 12 that, that was an empowering
43 experience for you?
44
45Calvin Sturdivant: Mm-hm. But if you want to go all the way back to my grade school days...
46

1Earl Nicholson: Just briefly.
2

3Calvin Sturdivant: ...and, and this has a lot to do with what we're talking about, you know, uh,
4 uh, positive things and, you know, and overcoming racism and things. We
5 had a teacher that taught us, who had lived in New Jersey, and, uh, she
6 always told us that "Hey, you can be anything you wanta be and all you
7 gotta do is study." She insisted that we study. She said, "You got a brain just
8 like anybody else. You study." And she was the one that taught us and told
9 us about, uh, uh, uh, Marian Anderson and Sojourner Truth and Booker T.
10 Washington and all of those people like that, you know. We were in a high
11 school, the same thing. I went to high school in, uh, St. Louis, [throat
12 clearing] St. Louis, and the principal often told us that, uh, we just had to
13 study...
14

15Earl Nicholson: So...

16

17Calvin Sturdivant: ...which [inaudible 57:50] we just couldn't come to high school and just
18 and, and just slide through because we couldn't do that in society.
19

20Earl Nicholson: [57:57] So that when you graduated from high school, you believed that you
21 had all the tools to be successful?
22

23Calvin Sturdivant: I believe I had some of the tools that, uh – I had enough of the tools at that
24 time to, um, help me get a good start in life.
25

26Earl Nicholson: Alright. [You've gotten 58:12]...

27

28Calvin Sturdivant: Now, I – when I finished high school, I did not want to go to college. I had,
29 had no thoughts of going to college because I was raised up a poor boy
30 down there in the South and sometimes I didn't have shoes and clothes and
31 stuff, so I wanted me some clothing and, like I said, and get me a house after
32 a while. I didn't even think about a car. I didn't want a car.
33

34Earl Nicholson: Well then, you know what, that's another question I want to ask you.
35 [58:37] When did you get your first car?
36

37Calvin Sturdivant: 1955. Pontiac. At that time, th-, at Fisher Body they were making 3 types of
38 automobiles – Oldsmobile, Chevrolet, Pontiac. They were making the 88, 98
39 and were making [tsk] Pontiac and Chevy convertibles I believe.
40

41Marilyn Coulter: Uh, Marilyn Coulter. I wanted to go right back to your education [for 1
42 minute 59:09]. [59:11] So, um, now do you have a college degree?
43

44Calvin Sturdivant: No, I don't have a college degree.
45

1 Marilyn Coulter: [59:15] But you just – now did you attend any other college other than
2 LCC?
3
4 Calvin Sturdivant: MSU.
5
6 Marilyn Coulter: MSU.
7
8 Calvin Sturdivant: One term.
9
10 Marilyn Coulter: Excuse me. [59:24] And did you do this while you were working or...?
11
12 Calvin Sturdivant: After I retired.
13
14 Marilyn Coulter: After you retired [you] [inaudible 59:31].
15
16 Calvin Sturdivant: After I retired from Fisher Body, the thought hit me, “Well, Cal, what are
17 you gonna do with your life now? You’re gonna retire. You’ve been
18 working with Fisher Body for 38 years.” And one day, it was in, uh, I
19 believe it was in May of 1987 and I retired in ’87, the last part of ’87.
20
21 Marilyn Coulter: Hm.
22
23 Calvin Sturdivant: I picked up this newspaper. It was a Detroit newspaper, and the big, glaring
24 headline that had Joe Lewis was celebrating his 50th anniversary when he
25 knocked out Jimmy Braddock to become champion and that hit me because
26 as a kid I remember listening to that fight down in Arkansas and then I
27 started thinking, “Ooh, that that would be something good to write about.” I
28 said, “That was a long time ago,” and I said, “Maybe I got some good
29 stories I can write about, so maybe I, I can start going to school.” And, uh, I
30 didn’t want to go to school. When I told my wife about my thoughts and
31 everything, she said, “Yeah, you, you oughta, you, you [inaudible 1:00:54]
32 enroll in school. So I enrolled in, uh, LCC writing class and, uh, the next
33 day after I retired, I was sitting home and I was watching “The Price is
34 Right,” and it’s noontime and I’m supposed to be in class at noontime. “The
35 Price is Right” goes off at noon. [slapping] [Oh, I jumped up 1:01:23]. I had
36 forgotten about I’m supposed to be in school.
37
38 I jumped up, grabbed my books and everything, and I took off down in my
39 car, you know, and I got down to LCC [inaudible 1:01:37] and I’m
40 embarrassed. I got to go in one of these rooms and all these people are
41 gonna be looking at me – old, tall, gray-headed man walking in there late.
42 My hair wasn’t as gray then, you know. [laughter] So I opened the door and
43 walked in. I wouldn’t look at anybody, you know, because I was so
44 embarrassed. I went over and I took my seat and, um, I don’t know what the
45 subject matter was that day, but I remember the professor and, uh, [tsk] he
46 was a substitute for that day, and he said, “Does everybody have a, a s-, a...

1
2Male: [1:02:26] A syllabus?
3
4Calvin Sturdivant: ...syllabus?" [laughter]
5
6Female: Mm-hm.
7
8Calvin Sturdivant: You got it. A syllabus. I didn't know what a syllabus was. What are you
9 talking about? Syllabus? So he could see the expression on my face, that,
10 uh, I didn't know what a syllabus was, but anyway he sent the girl down to
11 the office and there was somebody else that didn't have one and she got 2.
12 But anyway, to make a long story short, uh, a couple more terms I was in his
13 class, and, uh, he was complimenting me to the rest of the students how well
14 I was writing and, uh, and he just, you know, just pointed me out and
15 [inaudible 1:03:09] patted me on the shoulder and then he said, "I knew him
16 when he first walked into a class one day. He didn't know what a syllabus
17 was."
18
19 [laughter]
20
21Marilyn Coulter: [1:03:20] So can you tell me, y-, how old were you when you retired?
22
23Calvin Sturdivant: I was 63.
24
25Marilyn Coulter: [1:03:26] So you went back to college...
26
27Calvin Sturdivant: Yes.
28
29Marilyn Coulter: ...at 63 after working?
30
31Calvin Sturdivant: I sure did.
32
33Marilyn Coulter: Excellent.
34
35Calvin Sturdivant: I went to college.
36
37Marilyn Coulter: Excellent.
38
39Earl Nicholson: [1:03:31] And, so, it sounds to me like you're enjoying retirement?
40
41Calvin Sturdivant: I certainly am.
42
43Marilyn Coulter: [1:03:37] Um, Mr., um, Sturdivant...
44
45Female: Say your name.
46

1 Marilyn Coulter: Marilyn Coulter. [1:03:42] Can you tell me, um, you had some union
2 activity when you had your grievances, did you have any other activities
3 with the union during your 38 years of, um, employment? Did you – were
4 you active in the union at all?
5

6 Calvin Sturdivant: I [sigh] was not, you know, as far as, you know, being a committeeman or
7 anything like that. Uh...
8

9 Marilyn Coulter: [1:04:10] Did you attend any of the meetings?
10

11 Calvin Sturdivant: Yes. I attended some. I attended some and some I should have attended that
12 I didn't, because at those times they were giving away, um, uh, prizes for
13 people that, uh, [inaudible 1:04:28] that came. I mean [inaudible 1:04:29]
14 and I remember twice I wasn't there and I lost out on \$100.
15
16 [laughter]
17

18 Marilyn Coulter: [1:04:38] So, well then, back into the plant, do you remember, um – I know
19 you remembered some of the, uh, products that they built and some of the
20 areas. What, what were some of the other environmental-type things that
21 you remember? Just, you know, just during the transition because, uh,
22 between 1946 and 1987, when you retired, the different types of products,
23 the way management styles might have changed, what were some of the
24 things you noticed as far as the environment, the environmental changes at
25 Fisher Body over the years?
26

27 Calvin Sturdivant: Well [sigh] when I, uh, started working there in 1949, as I said, they were
28 making the Oldsmobile and the Pontiac and Chevy, and they dropped those
29 2 names after a while and just were making Oldsmobiles. Um, the changes I
30 noticed was they were getting more, um, automatic stuff in there, and, uh,
31 and they started that in [throat clearing] – excuse me. They started that in the
32 late '50s and '60s, you know. Um, more and more they were putting, uh,
33 machines in there that were taking jobs of the, of the workers, but you didn't
34 feel it that much then because it was only few and far between. [1:06:08]
35 Um, [tsk] you know – you remember when they used to have, uh, the
36 employees could write – turn in suggestions? You remember that? And I
37 don't know when they ever stopped that.
38

39 Marilyn Coulter: They haven't.
40

41 Calvin Sturdivant: [1:06:19] They haven't stopped that?
42

43 Marilyn Coulter: No.
44

1 Calvin Sturdivant: Well I used to be very good about turning in suggestions and, uh, they were
2 very good about [tsk] rejecting mine, and I w-, I won some and mostly all
3 was \$25 range, you know.
4

5 Marilyn Coulter: Mm-hm.
6

7 Calvin Sturdivant: But I can recall this one time that [tsk] I turned in a suggestion. Uh,
8 management had – they had put, put an area [throat clearing] and it had to
9 do with my job and they put some, um, you know, they put some – after I
10 suggested it, they eliminated some spray guns and, and put up a, a line
11 where, uh, um, they had pumps on the end, you know, and, uh, had spray
12 tanks. Anyway, um, [tsk] I thought this suggestion was worth about \$75. So
13 [sigh] they accepted the suggestion and [then they] [inaudible 1:07:31] and,
14 uh, and then they sent me a ch-, a bond for \$25, and I took it back to 'em and
15 told 'em I wasn't gonna take it and told 'em that it was worth more than that,
16 and I told 'em I just wasn't gonna take it; they can take it and, you know,
17 keep it if they wanted to.
18

19 S-, so that went on for 3 or 4 months more. They'd call me and wanted me
20 to take it, and I wouldn't take it. I told 'em naw, my suggestion is worth
21 more than s-, \$25, at least \$75. So, um, finally I was telling my wife about it
22 and she said, "Well, you oughta just go on and take it and so they can close
23 the books on it." So I did. I took it and, and, uh, the next 3 suggestions that I
24 wrote, they weren't worth anything. You know that they paid me \$25 for
25 each one of those. They was making up for what they knew they were
26 supposed to give me more than they did [inaudible 1:08:46].
27

28 Marilyn Coulter: Ooh.
29

30 Earl Nicholson: Interesting.
31

32 Marilyn Coulter: Very. [1:08:53] So, um, what did you notice – did you notice anything
33 different over the years through – about supervisory techniques?
34

35 Calvin Sturdivant: [1:09:08] In what manner are you speaking?
36

37 Marilyn Coulter: [1:09:11] Well did the, um, the way that managers treated their employees,
38 did they cont-, was it continuous? Was it better? Um, w-, were there any
39 changes? Maybe there was none. That's just... From when you first
40 [inaudible 1:09:27].
41

42 Calvin Sturdivant: Uh, yes. Yes, indeed. Um, I think through the years management got a little
43 more polite...
44

45 Marilyn Coulter: Mm-hm.
46

1 Calvin Sturdivant: ...and, um, in dealing with employees, but what I have always, what I
2 always noticed and maybe you noticed it too [tsk] that when there was a
3 problem, uh, management had with, with a employee, such [as me 1:09:56]
4 – they had a problem with me – management was not gonna come – the
5 foreman was not gonna come by himself; he was always gonna have
6 somebody with 'em...
7

8 Female: Yeah.
9

10 Calvin Sturdivant: ...and, uh, but, um, [tsk] yeah, I think, you know, through the years, uh,
11 management got a little more civil, absolutely got a little more civil toward,
12 uh...
13

14 Female: Mm-hm.
15

16 Calvin Sturdivant: ...people and, and, uh, [tsk] maybe vice versa.
17

18 Earl Nicholson: Uh, Earl Nicholson here and I know it's getting late in the day and you're,
19 you're probably ready to go, so I just, I just have 1 more, 1 more, uh, area of
20 interest and that would be strikes.
21

22 Female: [Inaudible 1:10:37].
23

24 Earl Nicholson: [1:10:38] Specifically, where you involved in a strike?
25

26 Calvin Sturdivant: Yes, sir. I certainly was and I remember this long strike we had in 1970. We
27 were on strike for 2 months. We went out on the 14th of September 1970,
28 and the guys were saying, "I'll see you after Christmas." [chuckle] Because
29 General Motors was [inaudible 1:11:06] uh, uh, tough times that year and
30 production wasn't too good.
31

32 Marilyn Coulter: [1:11:12] Do you remember what you were striking over?
33

34 Calvin Sturdivant: I – the – they were over, um – no, specifically, no I don't remember.
35

36 Marilyn Coulter: Yeah.
37

38 Calvin Sturdivant: Specifically I don't remember but it had something to do with the cost of
39 living. The cost of living was one of those things, and, uh, pay increase, I
40 think, was the other one.
41

42 Marilyn Coulter: Okay.
43

44 Calvin Sturdivant: But cost of living was that bugaboo.
45

1 Marilyn Coulter: [1:11:38] So how did you feel about a strike? How, how did that work for
2 you?
3

4 Calvin Sturdivant: [Inaudible 1:11:40]. I, uh, I didn't want to strike. To tell you the truth, I had
5 just moved into East Lansing. I hadn't just moved. I had been there about 2
6 years. And, uh, [inaudible 1:12:01] were – and taxes and stuff were pretty
7 high, you know. Well my wife was working. But anyway, uh, [tsk] my job
8 was – I wouldn't call it a job – the group that I was with...
9

10 Earl Nicholson: [Inaudible 1:12:22].

11

12 Marilyn Coulter: [1:12:23] Your picket duty?

13

14 Calvin Sturdivant: Picket duty. We'd picket out in front of the plant...

15

16 Female: Mm-hm. Mm-hm.

17

18 Calvin Sturdivant: ..and, uh, it was like from 8 to 12 I believe. So the guys got together and
19 made me captain. They said, "Look at ol' Cal. We're gonna make ol' big Cal
20 – he, he's gonna be our captain." So I was captain of the guard or the gate,
21 so anybody that had to come down to the plant had to see me first, had to
22 talk with me. So I can recall this, uh, young white female, you know, she,
23 she came down, you know, and she, um, had long hair, you know, and it was
24 kinda cool that day. As she was walking, her hair was just flapping on her
25 shoulder, and she says, "I got to go down," and, uh, "to the office."
26

27 I says, um, [tsk] "Lady, you can't go down there unless you have a pass." I
28 says, "Where you get the pass, you go over to the Union Hall and get one."
29 So she started, um, [arguing 1:13:35] and I don't know what all she said and
30 I don't know what all went on that day, but, um, I don't know what, uh,
31 everything that was said that day and she, she started calling us thugs. "Uh,
32 you thugs. You just want to, uh, uh, uh – why don't you rough 'em up, rough
33 me up and get, get your names in the paper!" So one guy says, "Look, lady,"
34 he said, "we don't have any women wrestlers here, but ol' big Cal, he'll take
35 care of you." And she looked around and she looked up at me. [slapping]
36 She took off. She went over there and got that pass. [laughter]
37

38 Earl Nicholson: Earl Nicolson. [1:14:11] Was she, uh, was she, uh, m-, was she with
39 management or was she was a union member?
40

41 Calvin Sturdivant: I don't know who she was. We all thought she might have been a plant.

42

43 Female: Mm-hm.

44

45 Earl Nicholson: Wow.

46

1 Calvin Sturdivant: Because, eh, eh, eh, they did – they – sometimes they'd put up people to do
2 that, you know, see if you was gonna rough 'em up or, you know, mess with
3 'em or anything like that. Management would do things like that.
4

5 Marilyn Coulter: [1:14:31] Um, do you – maybe you remember. Um, on the day that –
6 Marilyn Coulter – when you went on strike, were you working that day?
7 Were you at work when the strike started?
8

9 Calvin Sturdivant: I worked at night. We worked at night and we were told by our
10 committeeman not to, uh, for lack of a better word, manhandle, uh, um,
11 misuse anything, you know...
12

13 Marilyn Coulter: Mm-hm.
14

15 Calvin Sturdivant: ...leave everything just like you found it so they won't have any excuse to
16 say you messed up or you destroyed something, you know.
17

18 Marilyn Coulter: Mm-hm.
19

20 Calvin Sturdivant: We were told to whatever we was working with, just put it in place and just
21 l-, leave everything, you know, and like it should be, and that's what we did.
22

23 Marilyn Coulter: Mm-hm. [1:15:11] So you just left [inaudible] 1:15:12)?
24

25 Calvin Sturdivant: 'Cause we knew – we felt that that was gonna be a long one.
26

27 Marilyn Coulter: Mm-hm.
28

29 Calvin Sturdivant: So it lasted until – I remember it lasted until, um, m-, not Memorial Day.
30 What's that other day? S-, uh, [tsk]...
31

32 Marilyn Coulter: [1:15:25] Labor Day?
33

34 Calvin Sturdivant: ...Armistice Day. [1:15:26] We used to call it Armistice Day, but it's, uh,
35 um, what do they call it now?
36

37 Earl Nicholson: [1:15:32] Armistice Day?
38

39 Calvin Sturdivant: Armistice Day, when – they don't call that now, but that...
40

41 Earl Nicholson: It's VE Day [inaudible] 1:15:36].
42

43 Calvin Sturdivant: Yeah. It's Veteran's Day. That's....
44

45 Earl Nicholson: Yeah.
46

1 Calvin Sturdivant: Yeah. Veteran's Day. Right. It lasted until then.
2

3 Marilyn Coulter: [1:15:43] So were you the only member of your family that worked in
4 Fisher Body?
5

6 Calvin Sturdivant: Oh, no. No. I had, uh [sigh] – my brother worked there and 2 sisters worked
7 there and a son that worked there, but he doesn't work there anymore. He
8 hasn't worked there since '97, his own fault. I don't want to get into that.
9

10 Marilyn Coulter: Mm-hm. Right. [1:16:07] Um, so as we come to a close here, I was gonna
11 ask you do you remember what you might consider your happiest moment at
12 Fisher Body?
13

14 Calvin Sturdivant: Well, well I guess the happiest moment was when, when I got hired. That,
15 that would be the happiest. Um, next to that was – one other one was when I
16 was told I was gonna be promoted to the, uh, skilled trades department...
17

18 Marilyn Coulter: Hm.
19

20 Calvin Sturdivant: ...and I knew I was going in there before I got there, before I went in. I
21 knew it.
22

23 Marilyn Coulter: [1:17:01] And how did you know it?
24

25 Calvin Sturdivant: [sigh] Word had circulated that, um, that I was going in there...
26

27 Marilyn Coulter: Oh.
28

29 Calvin Sturdivant: ...and some of my coworkers knew I was going in there. I tried to play it
30 coy, you know, tried not to be too surprised, you know, but I knew I was
31 going in there.
32

33 Marilyn Coulter: Mm-hm.
34

35 Calvin Sturdivant: And, uh, actually there was a guy, [an old 1:17:24] guy in the office, and I
36 don't remember his name. He says, "Oh, Cal," he says, "uh, they oughta
37 take you in there." He says, "You've been on here a long time," you know,
38 and so that, that was a help too. But I wanta tell you about another thing.
39 Um, [tsk] when I was trying to get into skilled trades, uh, I went to the
40 superintendent of, uh, Jig & Fixture repair and I can't remember his name
41 now. I had talked to him and this was like in, uh, '69 in the fall of the year,
42 but I went to him and I talked to him about getting, you know, promoted
43 into Jig & Fixture repair. He says, "Oh, Cal," he says, "uh, uh, we'd be
44 willing to take you over there." He says, "You can do the job, but I can't see
45 you gettin' over there in about 2 years because we got the guys that, uh, well
46 we haven't got anybody that's, you know, that's gonna be retiring or

1 anything like that.” And I don’t know why he said that unless he just didn’t
2 know because they had 2 guys right then was ready to come out, so like I
3 said, this was in, this was in, uh, the fall of 1969...
4
5 Marilyn Coulter: Mm-hm.
6
7 Calvin Sturdivant: ...and the first part of, uh, ’70. In, uh, November of 1970 is when I went
8 in...
9
10 Marilyn Coulter: [Inaudible 1:19:04].
11
12 Calvin Sturdivant: ...went in that department. But before I – I just want to back up. I wanta go
13 back to [tsk] when I was trying to get in there. So I went in the office and I
14 had to talk to these people, you know, in the union and had to write out a
15 little resume, you know, about, uh...
16
17 Marilyn Coulter: Mm-hm.
18
19 Calvin Sturdivant: ...why you wanta get in there and what, uh, what, uh, how do you think that
20 you can...
21
22 Marilyn Coulter: [1:19:28] Qualify?
23
24 Calvin Sturdivant: ...um, qualify and be a benefit and, you know...
25
26 Marilyn Coulter: Mm-hm.
27
28 Calvin Sturdivant: ...and all that kinda stuff, and I remember writing out something, you know,
29 and they accepted it and I went over and I talked with a guy named Jerry,
30 Jerry [Brooks 1:19:41]. [1:19:41] Do you remember Jerry [Brooks 1:19:42]?
31
32 Male: Oh, yeah.
33
34 Calvin Sturdivant: [1:19:44] Do you remember him? So Jerry and I – yeah, I, I knew Jerry
35 when, um, he was a foreman out there over in – [1:19:52] do you remember
36 the cushion room?
37
38 Male: Mm-hm.
39
40 Calvin Sturdivant: He used to be a foreman over in the cushion room [and he and I 1:19:56]
41 used to talk all the time, but now he was in the office and someone said he
42 got there only because his uncle was [tsk] [inaudible 1:20:05] important job.
43 [throat clearing] I was talking to him, and I said, “Jerry, um...” – the race i-
44 issue came up. Uh and he was one of the ones that was sayin’ they didn’t
45 discriminate and I said, “Jerry,” I says – I’m looking around in his office and
46 I don’t see a black face in here. [chuckle] He said to me, he says, “Uh, Cal,

1 what you'd have us to do, fire all the whites and hire the blacks." I say,
2 "Yeah, that'd be a good beginning, Jerry." I got up and walked out.
3
4 [laughter]
5
6 Yeah.
7
8Female: Oh.
9
10Calvin Sturdivant: [tsk] So [sigh] I figured well – I said, "Maybe I shouldn't have said that."
11 I'm trying to get in another department. I shouldn't have said that, but that
12 was – that didn't have any bearing.
13
14Marilyn Coulter: Mm-hm. And that was good.
15
16Calvin Sturdivant: Yeah.
17
18Marilyn Coulter: Now I w-, now, um, Fisher Body was always called the capital of quality.
19 [1:21:17] What do you think that, that went with?
20
21Calvin Sturdivant: [tsk] Well I don't want to knock the place where I worked.
22
23Marilyn Coulter: Mm-hm.
24
25Calvin Sturdivant: It was a good place to work.
26
27Marilyn Coulter: Mm-hm.
28
29Calvin Sturdivant: I made a, a good living there, but I had always thought seeing those jobs
30 going together and everything and the material they used on 'em and some
31 of the people that were working on 'em, I had always thought that the
32 quality was not number 1. I had always thought that. Now maybe this should
33 not be on, on the record but, but, um, [tsk] I thought that.
34
35Female: [Mm-hm 1:21:53].
36
37Calvin Sturdivant: But now, uh, [tsk] in the latter years, I think the quality has improved
38 tremendously because I will not buy a-, any other product but General
39 Motors product.
40
41Female: That's wonderful.
42
43Calvin Sturdivant: And if they were still making the Oldsmobile, I would buy an Oldsmobile,
44 and I hated to see 'em get rid of the Oldsmobile. They, they just shoulda
45 kept it, you know.
46

1 Marilyn Coulter: [1:22:18] Did...
2
3 Male: [Inaudible 1:22:18].
4
5 Marilyn Coulter: [1:22:18] When, when you were working here, did you live in close
6 proximity to the plant?
7
8 Calvin Sturdivant: The first, first, uh, maybe the first 20 years, yeah, I lived walking distance
9 'cause I lived on [Huron 1:22:32] Street 'cause I could walk to work.
10
11 Marilyn Coulter: [1:22:34] How did, how did the community feel about Fisher Body?
12
13 Calvin Sturdivant: That I don't know. Um...
14
15 Marilyn Coulter: [1:22:43] [Inaudible 1:22:43] in your community?
16
17 Calvin Sturdivant: Well [sigh] off the cuff, I would say they felt good, good, good about Fisher
18 Body because in my community when I lived on, uh, [tsk] [West Side
19 1:23:00], you had several people that was employed at G-, or at Fisher
20 Body, several families.
21
22 Marilyn Coulter: Mm-hm.
23
24 Calvin Sturdivant: So...
25
26 Marilyn Coulter: Okay. Uh...
27
28 Calvin Sturdivant: So and then, you know, just from that alone, I would say that they – that was
29 a – they had very positive views about Fisher Body. It was a good place to
30 work, a good place to make a living and people tried to get their, uh,
31 relatives in there, their sons and daughters or brother and sisters, what have
32 you.
33
34 Marilyn Coulter: Mm-hm. Um, last question. You worked there. You worked there for 38
35 years. You've retired now. Now General Motors is retiring Lansing Fisher
36 Body. Sc-, the building is now closed. [1:23:44] How do you feel about
37 that?
38
39 Calvin Sturdivant: Sad. I feel very bad about that. Uh, sad is not the word I want to use. I just, I
40 just feel that, uh, you know, it's a big letdown even though I'm not working
41 there, but I'm thinking about the people that work there, and I worked there
42 for 38 years, so it, it, it's, it's, uh, one of those dark spots [sigh] in your life,
43 you know, and, uh, I really don't know what happened. I really don't know
44 [sigh] and I don't think anybody knows but GM...
45
46 Marilyn Coulter: B-, mm-hm.

1
2 Calvin Sturdivant: ...what really, what really, uh...
3
4 Female: [Inaudible 1:24:33].
5
6 Female: [Inaudible 1:24:34].
7
8 Calvin Sturdivant: ...building this plant out in Delta, [tsk] but will that, um, will, will that
9 encompass all the people that's being laid off from Fisher Body, from
10 Oldsmobile, and now you got, uh, the, uh, Craft Center where they made the
11 SSR and they got this other plant across the way, so we got a lotta, uh, GM
12 employees that don't have a job...
13
14 Female: Hm.
15
16 Calvin Sturdivant: ...and, and what I really think that all of those people are not going to be
17 able to get jobs at, at this new plant because GM and these other [factors
18 1:25:20] are building these plants where they don't need as much help
19 anymore, so the, the, you know, the emphasis is on automation so, you
20 know, and I just, I just feel, I just f-, I just felt so bad when, when Fisher
21 Body closed.
22
23 Female: Hm.
24
25 Calvin Sturdivant: I don't [sigh] – I just wish that, um, they could have kept it open [or
26 1:25:46] made something, you know.
27
28 Female: Mm-hm.
29
30 Male: Thanks, Cal.
31
32 Cheryl McQuaid: Thank you.
33
34 Calvin Sturdivant: You're quite welcome.
35
36 Marilyn Coulter: We want to thank you for your time.
37
38 Calvin Sturdivant: You're welcome.
39
40 Female: Thank you.
41
42 Calvin Sturdivant: You're welcome. I hope I've said something intelligent.
43
44 Female: [You did 1:25:59].
45
46 Female: [Inaudible 1:26:00].

1
2 [throat clearing]
3
4Male: [Yeah 1:26:02].
5
6
7/lo