Interview with Worker 2 on January 19, 1982 by Beverly Dickinson for the Connecticut Workers and Technology oral history project.

Dickinson: Can you tell me how long you have been with the company?

Worker 2: I have been there twenty-eight years.

Dickinson: And at your present job within the company?

Worker 2: I'm a tool setter right now. I have been a tool setter for about eight years.

Dickinson: Before that, what did you do?

Worker 2: Before that I had a lot of jobs. I was a gyro analyst for gyros - I worked on all different types. Before that, I was a bench assembler.

Dickinson: That's basically the three jobs you've done?

Worker 2: Right.

Dickinson: What were the circumstances for changing jobs within the company?

Worker 2: In the beginning, I worked for the gyros when they first started out. It was more money, so I was a regular bench operator. I got married and I got another job that paid more money. Then I kept looking around on the job postings, put my name down, got better jobs and learned them. I've done a lot of jobs since the beginning. They had three different type gyro divisions. I was on all of them - different projects. I volunteered for a lot of different work because I kind of got bored with one thing, doing it every day. I was tool setting
before I went to gyros, and then I went back into tool setting - it was more money. I enjoy doing different things.

Dickinson: Were there retraining programs?

Worker 2: Yes. My last job, the one I'm on now, the man that taught me how to tool set--to properly tool set took about seven or eight months to know the job real well. You just can't come off the street. Even if you went to a technical school, you couldn't just go into the shop and start tool setting on these special, qualified jobs, because they're like semi-skilled - maybe they're skilled - it's a little trade itself. If you go in there knowing a lot about machinery, you just can't pick it up like that. Even if you had read the instructions on different things, you work with very fine, delicate tolerances, so you have to be taught. The Monday foreman, now he's retired-- I've learned this and have no problem at all.

Dickinson: It wasn't terribly difficult to learn?

Worker 2: Well, no. They give you a certain period of time, like thirty days to learn the job. Jobs like this take more than thirty days but they see you progressing and they'll continue with you until you learn it. If you're there for four months and all of a sudden you're three-quarters through, they're not going to throw you out the door. They'll continue because they've invested their money into you also. Usually if you look at a job, you can tell whether you can do it. It would be foolish to take the job just for the
money and fall flat on your face and get thrown out. You get laid off because your other job is taken up. That's how I learned my tool setting - someone taught me how to do it.

Dickinson: Can you explain what tool setting is?

Worker 2: There are all kinds of tool settings. You can tool set on presses.

Dickinson: You are working with different kinds of machines, was that it?

Worker 2: Yes. I worked with hydraulically operated, electrical and mechanical machines. You have to set them at very close tolerances for the wheels on your watches, pinions and things like that for the movement of the watch. You have to use big layouts and a shadow graph - blow your work up to see if it's right. It's very delicate and everything has to be just so or it's not going to work right. It takes a lot of patience and close attention. You just can't let it slide for one day or everything falls apart. You have to keep these machines going constantly all the time. They have to be right up there for the next day. You have to look at them all the time. You have to be kind of conscientious. You just can't set it up and walk away. These machines have to be constantly watched. The job I'm doing now, it's interesting and it's good.

Dickinson: You do this particular task for several machines and someone else's riding machine?

Worker 2: I'm responsible for my setup and for the work that
goes through that machine all day long. We have an operator there and there are piecework(ers). Everything has to be just so because if you're not doing your job right, you're going to lose money because the machine will be down and you'll just be getting day rate instead of piecework. What happens is that we kind of work together. We're responsible for all our work and the next day it's inspected. If it's rejected the next day, that whole day is shot. Thousands of pieces went through that machine and they're no good. They'll talk to you and warn you a few times, which is normal for any job. If you can do it every day, naturally they're going to write you up and give you some kind of a reprimander or report - something like that. Eventually it would come to that. If that happens more than once, if something slips up, then you're not doing your job properly, so you've got to be on the ball.

Dickinson: How many machines are you responsible for?
Worker 2: With my old machines, I was responsible for eight to ten. The machines I have now are a much better machine. They hold their tolerances much better. I think I have about fifteen machines. They're not running all the time - I think I have about ten machines running. There's another tool setter that works too. We kind of work together, like today, he's doing my share the best he can. It all depends how the equipment is. If you have good equipment, you have an easier time with your machines and they'll
be much easier to work on (in comparison with) a machine that is not too expensive. If they invest a lot of money in the machines and they hold good, and everything stays good, they'll get good production. However, if they're going to get some cheap, old, foreign made machine, some kind of a machine (that cost) ten thousand dollars instead of thirty-four for a better machine, you're not going to get the production, the results out of it. It will be breaking down and things will be wearing out and they probably won't keep the close tolerances, you know a few tenths, thousandths, whatever you want--but we have pretty good machinery.

Dickinson: You have found they have put in the better machinery when they've changed so production is better?

Worker 2: Oh, yes. I've been there a long time. The machines that I worked on two years ago--and some are fairly new--they were putting out twenty thousand pieces a day. Now the new machines - they're not new, I just switched over to another type machine which was a better machine - and it's making fifty thousand pieces a day. You're putting out production and the machines are--how do I explain it--I was working harder on the cheaper type machine than I was doing on the more expensive machine. That is why they seem to have more machines too. I'm not saying it's easier to learn, I'm saying that if you have a better type machine, which they have, things are much easier for you and the operator on piecework can make more
money. On the old machines, they weren't on piece-work because they were breaking down. If you looked at a girl's work every hour, well, the old machines, maybe every half hour you had to look at it.

I see, it didn't hold the tolerances as well.

No, it didn't. They came a long ways as far as my tool setting in that respect. I have a much easier time now tool setting - that's what I like about it too. You go to work now...with the old machines, I used to go in there and go home and say, "I know it's not that well now. How will it be tomorrow?" There were days when everything went bad. Then they would come up to me, because I was the new one and the other guy was retired. In here I learned the machine better than the person who taught me the job because I really pulled it apart and investigated it. I was saying to myself, "I can't keep these tolerances like they want. Something's wrong with it." So the boss investigated on his own, I guess. He wrote to different places where they came from and they wrote back and told him the machines would guarantee a so-and-so tolerance and I was keeping a better tolerance than that. The machine was even doing better than it was supposed to do but the company wanted good work so they wouldn't have a lot of rejects. Well, it turned out that he decided to throw in these new machines and everything seemed to work out good. I said, "I don't think they're going to work right," just like that, because maybe I didn't care to go over
on those new machines. You know, it was something new and I had to learn it, but I went over there, I learned it and it was much better. I enjoy it now.

Dickinson: How do those new machines differ from the old? Is the technology very different? Was it some advanced new way of making the machine, or the way that it runs that is so much different?

Worker 2: The machines that I originally worked on were called indexing. They were like milling machines. The new type - I won't say new type, they were there - I just never had the experience to work on them - they were called hobby machines. It's a different process, you know, how everything spins and turns and cuts, but the milling is just the regular indexing, cut-indexing, cut and the hobbing kind of corrected itself. It spun around and it was more precision. It was a good move they made. It didn't take any jobs away, I don't think. We got more production. The jobs that I did were day work jobs. All the parts that I worked on, the girls that operated when I was a tool setter, were on the piecework side now, making more money and making more pieces though. Some girls are making a dollar more an hour on that job, taking a quick survey myself. I think they made a good move and everyone is kind of happy. The only thing I worry about now is if they're doing so much good and putting out more production, then they cut out another girl, maybe. If a girl is doing twenty-three thousand pieces a day, then all of a
sudden she's doing forty-three or fifty-three, you're taking away from two jobs.

Dickinson: That's right. If you don't have orders for that many parts, you don't need another person running them. These new machines that you are talking about are not computer controlled or anything like that, are they?

Worker 2: No, they're partly electronic, partly hydraulic and a little bit of mechanical on them. When we have trouble we have to call the electronics man to come out. They have to open up the panels and see what really went wrong. The machine won't start or stop or maybe it will smoke or something if that oil gets in there. That's their part of the job. Things like that we don't touch because that's their job. For the hydraulic part, the plumbers will come up. Although we could probably do it, that's their job and their classification. You're not supposed to go into anyone else's classification. If I start pulling off the panels to do electronic work, maybe I could, maybe I couldn't, but if I start doing their job and taking it away from them, eventually they may say we don't need you, so they come in and do their job. They probably get paid more an hour for electronics anyway.

Dickinson: Aside from being able to make a better rate on these new machines, do you have any idea of how the girls feel about it? Are they making more money and also is it easier?
Worker 2: They have to work harder because when you are on a piecework job, you have to stay right with that job. In a day rate job you can get up and walk around a little bit more. If they want ten thousand pieces a day, they figure out on your day rate. All right, you didn't make it, so you're getting five dollars an hour and you didn't make your ten thousand. They're going to come after you and say, "Look, you only put in seven thousand. Pick up a little bit." They're going to pay you the same five dollars an hour but if you're on an incentive job and you're making, say seven dollars an hour on incentive, and all of a sudden, you had a rough day and you didn't feel like doing this or that; you were slow and you took too many breaks, and come back, you find you have dropped down to four dollars and fifty cents an hour. That's what the incentive is about. The incentive girls work very, very hard. That's why, as a tool setter, I always catered to them. I don't know if I could stand there all day and work like them. They'll stand up all day and work the hardest, like in the press room and my room. The incentive girl works very hard. I'm not saying that the day rate girl or any other girl, operators and gyros don't work hardest, but you have to stand there all day and if you don't put the pieces in, you're not going to get the money at the end of the day, and they know that so they stay right there.

Dickinson: So there is more pressure.

Worker 2: Well, I would say that the girls that used to do day
rate, say, and then they converted to piecework on different machines, it was a ball field for them, they got kind of nervous, saying "I don't think I could do it" and this and that, because we were kind of a little spoiled, getting up and down and here and there. Now we have to sit there and we have to do it. They do pretty good.

**Dickinson:** Do they have a choice about being transferred to these machines? Was it something they wanted to do?

**Worker 2:** The boss said that these machines are going and that's what they're supposed to do and we're going to put them on these machines, these other type machines, and the girls had no choice. If they didn't want to do it, they'd probably lay them off or look for another job for them. They wouldn't be thrown out the door but if you refuse to do a job, what are you going to do? They have to let you go or put your name in for another freighting job some place else or a little bit better job or a job that you want to sit down at, anything. In our room, we have about three jobs that you can sit down at and do piecework. Some have two battery machines that they have to keep going and some have one battery machines. They do give the senior person the sitdown jobs, but they've been there long enough and I think they have earned it. When an opening is for a piece sitdown job, they'll take the higher girl and ask if she would like it. She may not want it and prefer to stay with what she has. They try to treat them pretty fair. Sometimes you run
into a little trouble with the management—but tool setters don't have anything to say to management, we just do the tool setting and that's it.

Dickinson: Do you know if the rate has changed over the last few years or even before that so it is harder for the girls to make the rate now on these machines?

Worker 2: 'No, the standards that were put on the machines, as far as I know, have been the same, and after negotiating, you get your raises with the union and that will be applied towards your base. Nothing has changed, however now, say if a machine is running a little bit too fast or things like that and you make another five dollars or ten dollars more a day, and you hand it in, doing it every day, then all of a sudden, maybe time study will catch on and say, "You've got to check these machines. They are making too much money." Something all of a sudden goes out of whack--Our piecework is open-end but if you're going to fill the job with--Some people say, "Well, gee, you may have one good operator or two good operators—they're crackerjacks so they'll go to town and make seven dollars an hour. The next worker will only make four fifty, five or six dollars an hour but they just can't change the rate of the job if they're going to make an improvement on the job." You may have a one battery machine, then all of a sudden they made a change. Maybe the work wasn't coming out that good and they had to slow the machine down. When they slowed the machine down they could make a two battery
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machine, so they had the girl do two machines and they'll time her on that. We've had that case. When the girl figures out the time, she's making less money with the two machines and sometimes you wonder if they did it on purpose, but who knows. Eventually, if the operator is honest and they have an honest timer on there, they'll get about the same rate they had before on the one battery machine. I've seen that and I can honestly and truly say our room is run pretty good as far as things like that go - piecework and the jobs aren't often changed. I don't know about other departments, but in our department, they just don't make changes like adding this or that, it upsets the people and they work too hard to have them start pulling things on them, so I can honestly and truly say that they don't do it in my department - it's pretty good there.

Dickinson: What about quality control?

Worker 2: As far as quality control, tool setters are responsible for their work. The next day, after it is cleaned, it goes to the inspectors. The qc looks at it to see if it's good or bad. Sometimes it's in the middle. They have standards for accepting the part. Sometimes the part could go or it could not go or it's mediocre or this or that. Sometimes you let it go for the time being to figure out a better way to do it. You know yourself how far you can go before it's rejected. We have standards and sometimes you have to let it go if the work is bad. They always inspect our work the
next day. In fact, the operator, at seven o'clock is starting on the day's work with the same machine. You didn't do anything different except maybe change your tooling. The inspector is looking at the work from the day before and she may come out and say, "You better check that machine, it's no good." It was checked already at seven o'clock. You're always checking it but no two days are the same. If you had a bad day's work on the machine, it may have gone bad in the afternoon at two o'clock before shutdown and so the good work got contaminated with that and maybe a half day's work will have to be rejected. Then the inspectors will come out and say, "Look, you better watch your machine." We don't put all our work haul in one big pile. We keep it all separated and at the end of the day--

Dickinson: Is it easier to pinpoint then?

Worker 2: We work from seven o'clock to three o'clock, so seven o'clock up to two o'clock, the work is good. Then they check the work in the two o'clock batch, well, at least they write up a couple thousand pieces instead of twenty thousand pieces, so that helps you there. Tube setters in our department are responsible for our work. We don't have any process rolling or any restrictions when we're around doing our work.

Dickinson: So the machine operators are not--

Worker 2: Oh, yes--Well, the operating machine, you should look at your machine. It's your machine, you should take care of it. You're supposed to clean it and make sure
there's enough oil on it and that it is running good. They're pretty conscientious. The only thing - the gauge of their work - they're responsible for that. Other than that, the tube setter is responsible for every little thing. The whole shape of that we're making, we're responsible for. It's on our shoulders. I don't mind because if you do your job right, you're not going to get into any trouble. Now and then, something slips by but there's no problem. I've noticed in other departments that they have roving inspectors and process inspectors going up and down the line and here and there, and still they have bad work. We don't have any of that. I don't know why. Maybe because we do it ourselves - we're responsible and have to keep our eye on it more.

Dickinson: If a certain amount of work was rejected, would that affect the operator's rate?

Worker 2: No. If she's an incentive operator and her work is rejected for the day, she's still going to get paid, but they're going to come up to her and say, you didn't watch your gauge, and this and that. So they told her to straighten out, and she does it a couple of days later - it happened again. They'll give you so many warnings and then they'll write you up. I saw one girl - they sent her home, I think. This is quite awhile back now. They sent her home for three days because all her work was being rejected and they were trying to accuse her of overloading the machine to get more work done, and more pieces, you know. By
doing that you'll destroy everything. You've just ruin the whole process. You take the work off and dump it in there, five or six times during the whole day, you contaminate the work and it's no good. So, they have to take action, but that very seldom happens.

Dickinson: You seem to take a great deal of pride in your job. Do there seem to be many different kinds of things you can do?

Worker 2: I'm not bored on that job. If I was bored, I think I would look for another job. Like in the beginning, when I told you I wanted to better myself, get a better paying job, I wasn't just looking for the money, I wanted to know what I was doing too. I wouldn't work in an electronics job because I didn't go to electronics school and learn something about electronics. I'd fall flat on my face and be out the door. I looked at the job and thought I liked it. It was kind of nerve-wracking in the beginning, but once you learned it, you were all set. That's myself working throughout the shop. I've done a lot of jobs in the shop throughout the years.

Dickinson: Is it your impression that the people who work on the machines have a sense of pride?

Worker 2: Oh, yes. In fact, when I was tool setting on these new machines, a lot of the girls came over and said, "Watch out for this, watch out for that." A lot of the girls know after awhile, a lot of little tricks. There are a lot of things that you learn on your own
that's not down on paper. The girls are very nice, they'll tell you this and that. If you're nice to them, they'll be nice to you. We all have to work together, and we seem to pretty well. I know that our department gets along real good and our boss doesn't come down on our backs. I'm happy-go-lucky and he's never really bothered us for anything. I'm not sticking up for him or anything like that. He has a job to do but he's not one to come out here and stare at you all day long. He doesn't do that. Other bosses do but he doesn't. He really doesn't bother us as long as you're doing your work.

Dickinson: I'm sure it eliminates a certain amount of stress that would be involved if you were watched constantly. It's very relaxing.

Worker 2: If he did that, I would tell him right away. I couldn't work like that with people over my shoulder. If he stood all day like this looking at an operator, she'd certainly say, "What are you looking at? I'm here to work, don't bother me." That's how people are today. I don't blame them because--some bosses are like that though. They make all kind of trouble. If some of the bosses were a little bit nicer, you would have more harmony and more work too. It all depends on how you approach a person, how you talk to them. You could get a person who won't say anything, really, if you wanted him to.

Dickinson: How can you contrast this job with a couple of other jobs you did as far as some of the things we mentioned?
Worker 2: Tool setting and when I was in gyros I did a lot of jobs - from the beginning to the end of the gyro. It was interesting. Tool setting, you're dirtier, you're working in oil. It's noisy. When you're in gyros, you're in a clean area with a white smock and a white hat and the work is very clean. You go home just as clean as when you went in, but when you're working in oil, you get oil on your face and everything. At the end of the day you have oil on your face and things like that. There is the noise pollution - you can't get rid of all the noise, so there are a lot of disadvantages when you're working in tool setting like that. It's awfully different than that type of work. I could do almost anything, I'm that type of person if I put my mind to it. In the beginning I got bored. I went from one job from one end of the shop to the other and I just kept doing what I thought I liked to do, and naturally the money was there too. I'm not going to go do a job I like if it wasn't paying any more money. If you have a family to raise, you have to think of that.

Dickinson: Was there significant change in the technology? Was there any significant automation in any of the other departments you worked in?

Worker 2: Well, no. As far as the technology - no, nothing in our department changed much. With gyros, gyros expanded. Gyros got bigger. When I worked in it, they had a couple of specifications - specs they call them - different models. I don't know what they are now, it's
been so long. When I worked there twenty-four years ago, you had three specs, now they have fifty-three specs - it's more complicated. They got bigger, they improved, and then they also have different type gyros throughout the plant.

Dickinson: So they've had to add jobs and certain skills.

Worker 2: Oh, yes. They had to start training, like people soldering. Solderers in gyros, for instance, had to be certified by the government. I took the soldering course and it was nice. I enjoyed soldering - little biddy wires under microscopes and things like that. To me, that was nice. I did that for a little bit. It was just one of the operations you could do on the bench. They send you to school and train you and you're certified. The government, I guess when you do their gyros, they want everyone who's certified, who knows how to solder, to tell from a co-solderer's line or from too much birdcaging. There are a lot of things on gyros, on wires that you have to watch out for. You could overheat them, not enough solder, the coloring, things like that, so you have to know what you're doing. That was enjoyable too. Gyros have come a long way. They have a lot of different type gyros up there. It's a big thing now. When I first went there, it was like the very beginning. I don't know how bad they got, but they have several different type gyros. I worked on almost all of them one time or another before I went back into the watch part in the shop, where they made parts for watches. It was always from one extreme
to the other. I enjoyed everything I did, but I want to do it right and I don't want any trouble. I haven't had any trouble with my years up there with anything.

Dickinson: So there hasn't been any significant automation.

Worker 2: As far as my department in automation. Yes, they had the same type of machines I'm working on now. They got a bunch of them and it's automated. It does the same thing the girls do. I meant to tell you that earlier. They do have automation.

Dickinson: So these are machines that don't need operators?

Worker 2: If you have ten machines, you need one operator and one tool setter. I don't know if all ten machines are going. I can't tell you exactly if there's one operator for six machines or eight machines or ten machines.

Dickinson: But it's certainly not one to one.

Worker 2: Oh, no. One to one or two to one, sometimes you've got two batteries. My own honest opinion is I think you'll get better production, less scrap when you have a girl on those machines. If you could take a girl, say, for instance, you've got an operator, a tool setter, so that would be four machines really. Each one would have two machine. If you've got a girl doing six or seven machines a day and all of a sudden a lot of the work is rejected and scrapped, you're going to get more percentage of scrap than with automated parts--rather than if you had a girl doing --working the machine herself manually. I think with
automation, you have much more scrap. In other departments, I've seen rows and rows of machines - like twenty machines with one operator, one tool setter, one inspector and they're doing it fine because automation came in, but I can't speak for that too much. It would be nice to have a girl on each press as you're going along, but I guess they couldn't afford that. Time marches on. I know on the automation in my department that on days, they have a girl and a man and their work isn't inspected either. Their work is inspected the next day, like mine, rather. I think, but I don't know for sure, that you get more scrap out of those machines than you get out of my machines - the fifteen machines that I'm in charge of - because you're there all the time. With automation, this can get jammed, that can get jammed, or if the parts aren't just right, they don't fit in right, they throw the work out. If this doesn't fit in right, you've contaminated your work with a couple of arbors and then the inspector gets it and rejects the whole thing and you figure, maybe it's better just to throw it all out and start all over again. You can't sort some of that work -- you can't see it with the naked eye, it's so fine. So automation is good to a certain extent but as far as our department, I'd rather see someone working on those machines.

**Dickinson:** There must have been quite a few jobs eliminated when they brought those machines in.

**Worker 2:** Our department was one of the biggest departments years
ago. Another thing, I think a lot of the other plants took over a lot of our jobs. It started in that department years ago and I used to tool set and operate, which I enjoyed a lot, but then that stopped. I was really young then, and I think I went over to another foreign plant. I had a couple of other jobs--I don't know how they do it. I think they may bid on different jobs. Different plants bid on different jobs and whoever gets the lower amount, they get the production. In our department, where we're at, other shops duplicate our work also, so what happens--say for instance, we want to strike. I think they could double up on another plant. Or, if they want to strike, we have to work overtime and try to put out more. I think a lot of our jobs went out of the country, one time or another. As far as automation--I remember these machines come in new...and we lost a lot of orders too. You know, the economy, I guess everything went down. Everything's got to go down if no one is buying and things are bad, so I think that was what the biggest part was. As far as their automation, we don't have that much automation. We have maybe those ten machines. We've got thirty machines on my side, maybe ten automated machines and they're not working constantly. They've maybe got six working. As far as the press room now, you've got rows and rows of machines. They used to have, I guess, a girl doing each of those machines. Or the kick presses, years and years ago now, everything is more
modern and easier for the operator and things like that. I think safer too. They have more gadgets and everything on there too. They're pretty safety conscious out there.

Dickinson: Do you think the new machines have helped that aspect? Is it safer now?

Worker 2: If you've got twenty machines running and one operator and one inspector, automation is putting out the work and if it jams, it's going to hit the tool, not your finger. I think there is a lot more scrap to automation. Maybe they could afford the scrap with automation because they don't have all those people sitting there doing those jobs. You have one person for ten or twenty machines or whatever it is. They should have twenty people, now they limit it to one. Maybe they couldn't afford it - I don't know how they function with that. Automation takes a lot of jobs away, which isn't good.

Dickinson: Do you think there is more stress involved for the one person who has to tend six or seven or eight machines than it would be for the person running the one machine or the two in your department? Is it so much easier on the new machine that that person tending all those isn't really doing more work?

Worker 2: That one person, she has a lot of work ahead of her if she's got ten or twenty machines to work on compared to the one girl on one machine. It's hard to tell you but I think it's much more work. You have to be on the ball, you have to watch if they jam up a
bit, and go back and forth. By the time you get from one end of the aisle--you look down there and see a couple of red lights, you've got to run down and unjam it and go back and forth. I think it's a lot of work for one person. For instance, if you had ten machines - operating ten machines, checking them out and making sure all the work flows down right and then all of a sudden, they gave you ten more machines - maybe you're right - it doesn't state how many machines to operate. If they want you to operate ten, they're going to have maybe five on this side, five on that side and then they bunched them up there and put another five in a row, and they say, "What's five more machines to do?" I think it's more of a strain on a person than say, if you were doing ten machines and now you've got fifteen or twenty. You're going up and down the aisle - this one's getting jammed and that one's getting jammed and you're getting jammed all over the place. What's going to happen? You're going to get scrap. Then they're going to come after you and say, "How come?" "Gee, you expect me to be down here when this one's jammed, and I've got to go back and forth all around the place and I can't do it." I think they're overloading them. Automation, it's their business to automate what they want, but don't take the operator and just run her to death up and down the aisle. I think if you had maybe two operators to one machine--you have to get into those departments to see how they really operate. Our
department is not run like that. We're partly automated, I meant to tell you that in the beginning, but our automation is still a little bit different than the pressroom where they're working on presses. It's still delicate work and you still have to pay a lot of attention to it. I don't think an operator can properly run ten machines without having a little bit of scrap. I don't know for sure if they do run ten. I don't think they do all the time. I think they run like six or eight or seven, something like that. Then if you have a tool setter and you work together and the tool setter sees something wrong, you'll stop, and if it's the operator's part--you kind of have to work together. You have a classification and say, well, I do this and that's it. So you watch the machine--something the girl did wrong with the machine. You're just not going to let it happen and get her into trouble. You say, "Look, we better fix this." You should work with one another. If you can't work, you shouldn't lead together. Some people are like that. You get a person who just doesn't care to be bothered with this one--everyone has to work together.

Dickinson: Essentially since you're both responsible for the work.

Worker 2: If the tool setter gives the inspector a setup for a job and if she says it's no good - "Go back and fix it. Make it a little bit better." If the thing is just about passing out, what is it going to do in an hour from now - it's going to be no good. So he says,
"Well, the setup was no good, change this and do this, whatever you have to do to make it better." I don't know if he will or maybe he'll just give another sample. So it rests for two hours or an hour and she checks it again and it's no good. All that work has been wasted. You have to work together. If the inspector says, "Look, that machine is no good, I want it fixed." Well, I run it and give her another piece and she says, "Well, it's alright now." Well, something had to be wrong for that first piece to come out bad. You know, you might get another piece, so what you do is you don't work against one another. You have to work together and if she says it's no good, do the best you can to get it going properly so you can get the work out and there isn't much scrap. I know they're hot there for scrap, right now I know they're hot for scrap. Maybe the boss is wrong or right, I don't know--

Dickinson: Did you have a problem recently? Was there too much scrap, do you think?

Worker 2: I think they always have a lot of scrap problems in different parts of the shop as far as parts are concerned. Like I say, I think you put out more scrap with automation. But maybe the scrap they're putting out now, they're not making any money. I don't know, but if the scrap is coming and you have twenty machines running and you have one girl on it or ten machines, whatever she's supposed to be operating, you're going to get some kind of scrap out
of it. Maybe if you had ten girls sitting down, putting piece for piece on there, you're not going to get any scrap out of it but then you're going to be paying them all kind of money - maybe it's not practical, maybe it's not worth it. I think with automation you have more scrap than with manual.

Dickinson: There seems to be a trade-off. The company has to decide which is going to make the more money.

Worker 2: You hate to see automation come in because that's progress and people are out of jobs. Sometimes, maybe, they'll get on to something else--that's all I can tell you on that.

Dickinson: So if someone was displaced by a new machine coming in, that they would have the opportunity to switch to--

Worker 2: We have job postings. There are job postings throughout the shop. If they got automation in, all of a sudden they still got laid off, so the lower seniority person goes out the door or gets laid off. They do have call lists and they go by seniority, and they'll call you back. If you're there six months or ninety days probationary and you just made it in there or say you're just eight months and you get laid off and there are people out on layoffs with twenty years because it's gotten slow throughout the shop, you have to wait your turn. The person with twenty years will be asked for a job. There may be some job that you don't like and they ask you if you want this job, and you say, "No, I'll wait for another or maybe I'll wait for my own job." Sometimes that happens too.
Sometimes the boss may say, "Well, maybe in thirty
days you'll be back again - or two months." Maybe
that person chooses to stay out two months, who knows?
I think automation did do away with a lot of jobs,
they had to do away with a lot of jobs. I'm not too
familiar with the pressroom in there but I've seen
rows and rows of machines - you don't have a person
on every machine, so they've done away with it.
(End of Side 1)
The officer, he usually takes care of it. We had in
our room one time, a fire extinguisher, and we didn't
have one. It was in the other room because they made
the other room smaller. There was a door there, and
if we had a fire, we had to go through another room,
another door, to get to the fire extinguisher. I
complained about that and they ordered one. It took
a little while to get one. They put it on the wall
first. If you complain about something, they'll
investigate it. I know in our area--a lot of people
are hot in the department - it's not a safety thing
but people are hot and they try to cool you off. It's
hard to take a big shop and just cool it right down.
I guess all shops are like that. As far as the safety
fire regulations, I've reported a lot of little
incidents - even a hole in the floor. Once I said to
the maintenance guy, "Look at the floor, there's some
kind of heel that will get into there." He said, "We'll
take care of it." Before I knew, they had a metal
plate over there with tape until it got cemented in.
There was a part where the floor was very rough. They had a cable for a light over there. It was a make shift thing and they corrected that. Usually up there they take care of violations. Then if you get hurt or something happens due to acid and things like that, they have things to wash your face out with and take you to the emergency room and things like that, so I can honestly and truly say that what I experienced and what I saw, that they do take care of the shop. They're painting it all the time and always doing things like that. They have all the fire sprinklers up. If you have a problem, you can bring it to them and they'll investigate it. Sometimes there are odors and fumes that are supposed to be drawn off. Maybe something happened to the vent on top and the fan stopped working, so they investigate it right away and fix it. Now that place has to be air conditioned because there are no windows. Sometimes it happens that the air conditioner breaks down on top of the building and you're sweating there. What are you going to do? If you want to go home, I guess you go home. Maybe they haven't got the party to fix it. They'll do it as fast as they can. They're pretty good at that. They have their fire drills periodically. I think they have a fire brigade up there. I think they get paid for it. The safety to me is pretty good. That's all I can tell you on safety.

Dickinson: Are there any other general observations, anything else you would like to add?
Worker 2: No, I can't think of any right now. I know if there's a problem that sometimes you bring it to your boss and he doesn't do nothing. Then you go to the union and the union takes care of it. Some people may run right to the union and say this and that, which maybe they should have said to their boss, or maybe the boss doesn't want to be bothered - I don't know, but there is a procedure you should follow. If you're in the department, you should go to your boss and say, "Look, that bare wire has been hanging there for a week now. Aren't you going to fix it?" Then if he doesn't fix it, you're going to go to the union. Then they'll go out there. Maybe, the boss himself, is lax on that, but I really don't think that happens. When you report something, they usually take care of it. Say, for instance, the fumes, maybe periodically they do come in the room or wherever it is, because I was involved in that one time. They come down to the machines and see what kind of fumes they are and let you know if they're harmful. Also safety shoes and things like that. They give them to the different departments that require them. Safety glasses are all over the place. A couple of times I went to a place there and I just had my regular glasses, the other I didn't have with me, and I was pulled out of there. You better put on the safety glasses or get out. If the safety officer sees you in the room without the safety glasses, he'll come and say to put them on.

(End of Interview)