

Copy of WeinreichJodyAl_20210701

BRIAN ALNUTT: Okay, so we're now doing an interview. It's July 1st, believe it or not. I'm Dr. Alnutt from Northampton Community College, and I have here Jody Weinreich?

JODY WEINREICH: Weinreich, yes.

BA: And Irv Weinreich.

JW: Yes.

BA: And we're just going to be talking a little bit about the history of the apparel workers in the Lehigh Valley, and they've very kindly agreed to work with me here, so I'll just begin. And we can just both get involved. So, we already have, you know, Irv and Jody. Where were you both born?

JW: I was born in Lebanon, Pennsylvania.

BA: Lebanon, Pennsylvania, where my in-laws live right now.

JW: Oh do they?

BA: I know that town very well, very well.

JW: (laughs) We go back quite a bit.

BA: Yeah, yeah, yeah. And Irv?

IRV WEINREICH: I always worked in Allentown.

BA: Always worked in Allentown.

JW: Where were you born?

IW: I was born in Ashland, Pennsylvania.

BA: Ashland, Pennsylvania, yup, yup.

IW: Yeah.

BA: Up in, I think it's Carbon County?

IW: Schuylkill.

BA: Schuylkill County, yeah.

IW: Pottsville's the --

BA: Oh yeah, I've been on the mine tour up there.

IW: Yeah, well I lived two blocks from there. [00:01:00]

JW: The Ashland -- the coal mine, yeah.

IW: Yeah, before I went to the orphanage.

BA: Okay, ended up in an orphanage in --

IW: Yeah.

JW: When I went, it was a children's home, Bethany Children's Home.

IW: Yeah, Womelsdorf.

BA: In Womelsdorf, which is not far from Reading, yeah, I know --

JW: Right.

IW: Halfway between Reading and Lebanon.

BA: Lebanon, yup. And I know Lebanon and been to Ashland one time. Do ever visit that area again? Do you ever go back, or --

JW: Oh yeah, we go to Ashland Pizza all the time for pizza and spaghetti and everything.

IW: Probably three times a month.

BA: Ashland.

JW: (laughs) We go for a ride every day.

BA: It's a very narrow town, as I recall. Ashland's one of those narrow --

IW: It's on a hill.

BA: -- it's on a hill, so it's right (laughs) in the valley there. And where'd you go to school, I'll just ask you first --

JW: Conrad Weiser High School in Robesonia.

BA: Okay, and graduate from there?

JW: Graduated in '67, 1967, yup.

BA: And Irv, you?

IW: I went first to sixth grade at Bethany Children's Home, and then went to Conrad Weiser, and I got my Army GED in Vietnam.

BA: In Vietnam, while serving in Vietnam. I should mention that [00:02:00] Irv's a Vietnam vet, you know.

JW: We were married six months when he was drafted.

BA: Is that right? That's --

IW: I was in the last draft.

BA: Yeah, my parents married a year before my dad was drafted, to go to Korea.

JW: See, so it was the same, yeah.

BA: Combat.

IW: A lot of friends, we had Korea in there a lot.

BA: Is that right, more to say about that war, but I'll talk after this is over. I'll just start with you first, Jody. What was your first job?

JW: My first job was South Manufacturing and I started there in 1967, and I worked there 17-and-a-half years, and we made girdles.

BA: Girdles, where was that located?

JW: That was located Seventh and Walnut. Then I moved over to behind McCrory's and Woolworths at Eighth and, I don't know that alley street, but Eighth and Hamilton near there. And then they moved down to [00:03:00] Jordan and Gordon, then they moved to Oklahoma, and they wanted us go with, and I

said, no. Because that was like a family, you know. That was my first job; that was my best job. I was young, and everybody else was in maybe their forties and fifties, and I was only eighteen, so I was the kid. (laughter)

BA: The kid there, I think I know where that is. I'm pretty sure I know where that one, their one location is, because --

JW: Well now they still have a place down in Bethlehem, it's a design studio.

BA: Oh, they still do, oh.

IW: Under the Hill to Hill Bridge.

JW: Under the Hill to Hill Bridge, but then everything gets shipped to Oklahoma, whatever, because they're in Blackwell, Oklahoma now.

BA: Do you recall when they moved, like, roughly?

JW: They moved -- well I was there 17-and-a-half years, so figure 1967, and add, say eighteen years.

BA: Nineteen-eighty, around that time.

JW: Yeah, around that time they moved to Oklahoma.

BA: Was it for any reason, they tell you why?

JW: I don't know why they actually moved; I don't know if they got a good deal or what, but the main office was in New

York, [00:04:00] and then they just, they had a plant, factory here in Allentown, and they had one in Bethlehem. So then they just closed up and moved, and then they brought people here to learn our job, and they weren't interested, you know, in learning from us. Then they wanted me and Ms. Dolores to go out there to Oklahoma and teach them. I said, are you kidding? They didn't want to learn here, do you think they're going to want it on their turf, to learn? They said, well, then they were going to pay for us to go out and live there, and I said no, Irv's jobs here. They knew all of us, you know, it was like a family. So a few of our people did go. Didn't last long, they were back. Father and son, and the wife, they moved out, and they came back.

BA: Now when you first got to work there, how'd they train you on making this?

JW: Well first off, I was in the sewing part. I was doing elastic things. Then he went in service, and it wasn't steady work, so they said, you know what, you might be better off working in our warehouse. So I went over and worked in a warehouse, and I did [00:05:00] quite well, because I was on piece work. Because when I went to

school, I took business, but they said to me, they did this aptitude test. They said you'd be better off working with your hands. So you know, so I went to work in, over at the warehouse. I folded the girdles and bras and I boxed them, and then I learned to stamp the boxes, you know with the style and everything on. I did basically well there.

BA: Okay, was that day shift work, was that --

JW: It was all day shift, all Monday through Friday, all piece work for me.

BA: All piece work.

JW: So, it was really, every time you made your rate, they'd cut it down. You make your rate, they'd cut it down, you know.

BA: Oh, I see how it works.

JW: And then they did some of the same work at the factory at Seventh and Linden -- at Seventh and Walnut was still there. So we were folding these certain bra-- girdles, and they were doing some, we were doing some, and they said to them, you know they're doing more over there than here, and they were telling me they were doing more up -- well then we got together, you know, and we realized neither one of

us -- I mean we were doing well and they were doing well,
you know.

BA: Yeah, they're just [00:06:00] stepping --

JW: Competition. (laughs)

BA: Yeah, basically trying to get everyone moving faster.

JW: But it was putting, and then the boss's son came to work
for us, and he was only 16. So he figured he was 16, I was
18, 19. So him and I, we'd have squirt guns, and we'd do
this. (laughs) He was back there making stuff, you know,
stamping the boxes. He'd get tired of working, he'd go
home, you know, Bruce -- but now Bruce is a big boss out in
Oklahoma. So (laughs).

BA: Oh, boss's son?

JW: Yeah.

BA: Was the boss local, or was he from New York?

JW: Well, they lived in New York, the boss. But then, no I
think Jim and them moved here. Stanley was a son-in-law,
he was a good guy. Then he, they lived here, Bruce lived
here. You know, they all eventually ended up living here,
yeah.

BA: Sure, okay, they relocated --

JW: But now of course, Bruce is in Oklahoma, and the parents probably died. I lost contact with Jim and Larry, and you know them. Stanley and his wife Sue ended up getting a divorce, so I guess Stanley was out, you know.

BA: Okay. Was that a union shop, by the way?

JW: That was union. All my shop -- well, [00:07:00] South Manufacturing was union, yes. I have it all written down, where I went next. (laughs)

BA: Let me switch over to Irv for a second. Where was your first job in --

IW: Hawk Flour Mills, Allentown, Pennsylvania, where they did actually make flour. Not in my day in 1965 when I started there, but we delivered flour and institutional foods.

BA: Okay, so you --

IW: And that, when I came home from Vietnam, I only worked there two weeks. I said this, I'm done lifting hundred-pound sacks. I started with the Allentown Housing Authority --

JW: Irv, go back a minute. What were your hours at Hawk Flour Mill?

IW: My hours were, normal day was start at seven and go to eleven at night.

BA: Wow, wow.

JW: Yes.

IW: I would come back after a run and go empty a boxcar. A Guy Randall Ackley went to Muhlenberg College, one summer him and I worked together. [00:08:00] He was a radio guy here in Allentown, WAB.

BA: Oh my gosh, yeah, I know Guy Ackley. He had an advertising business.

IW: Him and I had a great summer.

JW: He was killed down in Quaker -- Coopersburg or something, car accident.

BA: Yeah, I know what happened to him, he was hit on his motorcycle, actually up in my direction, yeah, that's what --

IW: I really never got to meet his wife, but he was married then, and I ran into him one time, and we were talking about the old days at Hawk.

BA: Seven to eleven, oh my gosh.

JW: Yeah, we'd go to work, and then I'd go to his brother-in-law's apartment and stay there, and he'd pick me up, we'd go home, we'd eat something, to bed, and get up same day, every day, same thing.

BA: Oh my gosh, that's, hundred-pound sacks, heavy lifting.
And they're doing it today in these warehouses, really,
it's the same thing.

IW: Yeah, but Jody was making better money than me at South
Manufacturing, because I was making \$90 a month.

JW: A week, a week.

BA: A week?

IW: No, a month.

JW: At Hawk? Oh, he only worked part time [00:09:00] at that
time.

IW: No, I was in Vietnam, and I got \$90 a month.

JW: When he was in Vietnam.

IW: And that's because I started getting raises. My rank went
up because guys were falling like crazy.

BA: Shucks, that's a sad way to --

IW: Yeah, I got to be a buck sergeant in 13 months, being
draft.

BA: That's a pretty good accomplishment.

IW: That was fast. Well, I was in a warzone.

BA: Yeah, oh boy, that's a lot of stories to tell about that.

IW: The blue lights were going in front of my face, the
tracers.

BA: Oh boy, yeah, I've heard about that, I've seen some --

IW: But Jody was making the money.

BA: Okay, after you left South, where'd you go after that?

JW: I went to the Garment Works, and that was non-union. So I only worked there maybe, I don't even know, I worked there like two years.

BA: Was that also in Allentown? Where were they --

JW: That was also in Allentown, yup.

BA: How'd they end up being non-union? Just, was a non-union shop?

JW: I don't think he ever went union. That was piece work too. That was making bras, so I was girdles, [00:10:00] bras, you know, so.

BA: Oh yeah, every time, I have three daughters by the way, grown daughters, yeah. And when they buy clothing pieces, whatever it is, I always remind them of the work that went into it, every clothing piece you buy, someone is working on it, yeah, exactly, right.

JW: Sat there and sewed it, yeah.

BA: Did you have any family work in the apparel business at all?

JW: No, no.

BA: Just yourself? Okay.

JW: Just me.

BA: How was the social life in the Garment --

JW: Oh it was good, because when South Manufacturing, we went to the Garment Works, two girls, two of us went the same place, you know. We got to be friends, got to meet a lot of nice people. And some of them, South Manufacturing, we stayed in contact with some of those people until they passed away. The one ended up down here at Cedarbrook, and she was good friends with Bruce, the boss's son. And, when he'd come in, he'd go visit her at Cedarbrook. So we were good friends for her for all that time, and then there was Jean Smith. She lived at the Episcopal House, [00:11:00] and I used to crochet towels. She could call me -- well I still do. But she'd call me every time she needed towels. You know, yeah, from the time we left, and then another lady that worked with me at Linden Apparel which is coming up next, we sell knives here for the auxiliary, rated knives, and they're really good knives. And she would always call me, and she'd even, after we left our jobs, come to our house and pick up knives.

BA: How about that?

JW: So we stayed in contact with quite a few people.

IW: (inaudible) Mary Beth.

JW: Oh Mary Beth, one girl I worked with my first job, she comes here for breakfast and we had breakfast, because her sister-in-law and her brother passed away, but they're members here. Mary Beth, from my first job, the one who went to Oklahoma, her and her father, and came back, we're still friends with her. And one other person that just passed away, we were friends with her from Linden -- from South, because when we got married, they got us big bowls, [00:12:00] and a cannister set. And this girl got married the month before us, and then she collected for me and that, so we were friends until, well she got a little goofy at the end, but we were friends forever, you know, and started retiree clubs here in Allentown, and yeah.

BA: That's a long, love long relationships. That's good, so sense of, a friendly place to work, or --

JW: Yeah, Linden was -- South was like a family. I mean, we were all great, you know. Like I said, I was the youngest, and they treated us good. As a matter of fact, the one lady who was our floor lady, Monica, she was an older lady, never married. She lived with her two sisters down in

Fourth Street, I guess. She got cancer, and at that time we could smoke in the bathroom. So I'd go in to smoke, you know, because I was that far ahead of my job, and I'd go and smoke. Monica would come in just to smell the smoke, because they made her quit. Now they knew there was no hope for this lady. [00:13:00] And then we collected for her, and she said the only one that can come to my house would be Jody, and of course she knew Irv. We could go to her house and give her the money, but she didn't want to see nobody else. Because I was like their daughter, really. I mean Gertie, and Frances. I remember all their names, because they were like my parents. Like, because we grew up in a children's home, we really didn't have parents. So I mean everybody was just like a family.

BA: Well it's like the close relationship, yeah.

JW: I mean we were there 17-and-a-half years, you know.

BA: Did you, did everyone stay a long time? Was it mostly --

JW: Yeah, mostly, we all, well most of these people that I talked about at the fact-- the warehouse, yes, they were there my whole time.

BA: The whole time, so that's not a high turnover (inaudible)

--

JW: No, Evelyn and Gertie and Frances and Marie

IW: That was union.

JW: Yeah, and Tommy, there was a lady named Tommy cause her parents wanted a boy, Tommy, she was a black lady, real nice, fantastic, and he got to know them all too because we had bowling leagues. At that time we had the needle trades bowling leagues. This Mary Beth [00:14:00] that still comes in here, she was on a bowling league too.

IW: It was all women.

JW: And then there was Helen [Finksel?] and Fred, they'd go with us when we bowl.

IW: And Frank and I would sit in the back, and --

JW: Tell jokes, yeah, yeah. But you know, it was like one big family, we had two teams, South Manufacturing. And then we'd have a banquet, and we'd all go to the Brass Rail, and everybody, you know.

BA: I was going to ask you about that, the company, did the company do some of these activities?

JW: Oh yeah, yeah the company had the bowling leagues; they sponsored us, oh yeah.

BA: Okay, (inaudible) those.

JW: South Manufacturing sponsored two, and then we had Marian's thing with all the different needle trades, there was Joanne's, and there was, all these different factories that sponsored the bowling leagues. And then we had one big banquet, and everybody came. But they sponsored that. We had the shirts that said South Manufacturing, they did.

BA: Not every company did that. I just interviewed a lady with the company that did nothing like that, so --

JW: Oh yeah, ours did, yup.

BA: Right out there, wow, bowling league, the Brass Rail, I remember the one on Hamilton Street.

JW: Well this is the one on -- [00:15:00] I think the one on Lehigh Street just closed too, I'm not sure.

IW: Lehigh Street closed.

JW: We used to go in the basement for --

BA: Yeah, I've been down there many times.

JW: Schneyers was the other bowling --

IW: Schneider's.

JW: When I was at South, we were on the fourth floor, and Schneider's was on the first floor, so there was a couple factories in the same building. Then we'd go over to

McCrorry's and Woolworths for lunch, because we could right out the door and right in their back door.

BA: Okay, interesting. Did most of the leagues -- first of all, mostly women, I take it, in there, (inaudible)?

JW: Yes mostly women, yeah. Except, there was like Bruce, and then, of course we had the warehouse part. I was in the warehouse, so we had shipping.

BA: Shipping.

JW: So we had the men back there.

BA: Men, okay.

JW: We had Leon; Leon was a cutter over at the sewing part. And then there was --

BA: Mary Beth's dad.

JW: That's Leon, then there was Dick, he was in charge of the cutting room, you know, and the different things and that, so we had them. It was funny, ours went out of business, and they only had the sewing part in Bethlehem. So we used to go [00:16:00] out on a Friday and Saturday night. So we'd go down to the Peacock in Freemansburg. And I've never got cut off drinking. All of a sudden, Danny, the bartender says, "Jody, you had enough." I had okay, so I said, "Hey, there's a Christmas party back there. Who's

back there?" He said "South Manufacturing." I said, "Oh my god, you're kidding me. I have to go back," I said, "I work with them." So I went back, and I'm sitting there talking to them. They said, "Give Jody a drink," so I got a drink, and then I went out and Danny said, "Jody, I cut you off." I said, "But they didn't back there," I said, "My friends wanted to buy me a drink." (laughs) He laughs, and he said, "Oh my god," because we got to know him, we'd go there every week, you know. It was so funny.

IW: And I knew (inaudible), but I didn't go back because she worked there.

JW: Yeah, so I was talking to all of them, and they've all worked in Bethlehem; they've worked from Allentown and went there, you know, but it was so funny, Danny said, "Jody."

BA: He got her out.

JW: Yeah. (laughter) See my real name is Brenda, really.

BA: Brenda, okay.

JW: But I got Jody at the home.

BA: Oh, okay, that's a fair enough thing. [00:17:00] Did most of the ladies have husbands that worked? Most of them has husbands that worked for --

JW: Yes, yeah most of them did, yeah.

BA: Was that like, industrial stuff, mostly, industrial jobs?

JW: I don't really know what a lot of the husbands did at that time. Gertie's husband I think worked for the city.

Evelyn, she just got remarried when she was there, because she was a widow at that time, and then she remarried somebody. And Tommy, Tommy came from down South, she moved up here.

BA: Okay, was it mostly local women, like from the area?

JW: Oh yeah, almost all local. I think they all grew up here except Tommy, Tommy grew up down south and moved up, but Evelyn, Gertie lived right over here on Maxwell Street, you know.

IW: Yeah, and Helen [Finkstel?] lived on 15.

JW: Helen [Finkstel?] lived 15th Street, yeah, so they were almost all local, yeah.

BA: Makes a different -- (inaudible) --

JW: And these people stayed. You know, South Manufacturing, they stayed. They've gone to work -- I worked there two years, it was almost the [00:18:00] same people there too. Where I worked, people didn't really move around; they stayed where they were, you know.

IW: Until something happened to the factory.

JW: Until they closed, yeah.

IW: Until they closed.

BA: What were the conditions like? Was it, like, comfortable, or was it like hot in the summer?

JW: Hot in the summer. Yeah, because they opened the windows. We didn't have air -- yeah, Manny don't turn the air on until later, yes.

IW: But we're not (inaudible) otherwise we'd (inaudible).

JW: Yeah, they didn't have air conditioning, you opened the windows, yeah, yeah.

BA: (inaudible) hot.

JW: Except my last job, that we had to do.

BA: At least it was fairly safe, I mean, you know, (inaudible) these people getting sewed up sometimes --

JW: No, I think some people sewed their finger, you know. But other than that, it was fairly safe, yeah.

BA: That's good. Where'd you go after that, after Garment Works, what's the next --

JW: Then I went to Linden Apparel.

BA: Linden Apparel.

JW: And that was in Allentown too, and I stayed there, and then they were going to go out of business; most of these places

went out of business, you know, so that's the reason I really moved on. I was there about maybe three years or so, and they were going to close, and they laid me off, you know, [00:19:00] because there wasn't enough work for me. I had problems with my knee, and I was on the floor at that time, I did floor work, and I had arthroscopic surgery on my knee. So I was out a little bit, and then I went back and they gave me a different job, picking orders. So, it was getting slow, so they laid me -- you had to call in every day, every day at three o'clock, call in. So then say, and I called in for like three weeks or something every day, no work, no work. Why do you make me call in every day, you know, that was sort of stupid. So I thought, you know what, I know they're going to go out of business because the mechanic left. So he had an inkling this place was going to close. So I left there and I went to Paris. So they called me and said Jody, we have work for you tomorrow. I said, no I'm not coming back. I got another job. And they said where'd you go? And I said, I went to Paris. They said, well you think that's any better than here? They're gonna close too. I said well, he said we're not closing, he said, we're going to stay open. And

I knew, you know. So I went to Paris, and [00:20:00] that was union too. The only non-union job I did was the Garment Works, that was the only one. But I worked at Paris, and I was there pretty long, and I worked on loading a conveyor belt, and we did hats and scarves and everything, they had a place in Walnutport, and it's here, gloves and everything. So I worked there a couple years, and then friends of mine, this Linda that I worked with at my first job, she called me, she said, Tama's hiring. She said --

BA: Tam Manufacturing, yeah.

JW: Yeah, she said, so that would be a good place to work, because we knew Paris was getting slow too, they closed. So I went to Tama, and that was my last job, and I was there maybe a couple years. Then we went on strike for 15 weeks. And we did the strike cookbook. And then they went back, then we had a bunch of scabs, it'll tell you in the front of the book -- yeah, I have recipes in there too, [00:21:00] but we all did a recipe book. But they had scabs go across our line. And then they brought people in in vans.

IW: From Philadelphia.

JW: From Philadelphia, they'd pick them up in the corners, they all crossed our picket line. Well we, you know, I think there were three shifts on the picket line, because we only worked like four hours at the picket line, we were there four hours. Right, and we just walked up and down, we kept bringing chairs. Now if you were there in the morning, you get donuts and hot chocolate or coffee, if you were there from lunch, they'd ask us what we wanted. Now we have pies on pizza and [caddy?]. They say, what do you want? Well, how about (inaudible) pies on, our pizza, our, we got Kentucky Fried Chicken. I mean, they paid all this. They paid our health insurance while we were on strike, plus some of the people were laid off, so they kept signing up for unemployment, not knowing if they were going to get it or not. So I got \$300 a week, plus they paid our unemployment, plus they gave us lunch. You know, and we only did four hours a day. [00:22:00]

BA: In the picket line, yeah.

JW: We did four hours in the morning, or four hours, (inaudible), and we went, and we only worked Monday through Friday, you know, four hours, but they were pretty good, they paid our whole thing.

BA: Was that UNITE by then, or was it still ILGWU?

JW: That, we had --

BA: The union that was involved, was that still ILG at that point it was --

JW: No, no, ILG left. I think when I was in Linden, it went to UNITE, yeah.

BA: Okay, so it was UNITE by then?

JW: Yeah, and then when Tama was Worker's United.

BA: Worker's United?

JW: And that's what we are now.

IW: Split from UNITE.

JW: Yeah, from UNITE here --

IW: They were all UNITE, and then they split.

BA: I see, okay, so it's two, okay.

IW: So technically right now, it's Worker's United/International Ladies Garment Workers Union.

JW: Slash, slash SEIU.

IW: Slash SEI-- well it's the card.

BA: Okay, right on the card here, I see, I got right here, okay.

JW: But when we split, Worker's United kept the Bank of New York, Amalgamated Bank. I mean we split everything, you know, so. [00:23:00] That's when they split.

BA: Right, now the Tama strike, was that successful in the end?

JW: Well, Tama strike, we went on strike June 15th, 2007, and we were on strike for 15 weeks. So we went out in the spring, because when we went to Wildwood, I had the best tan there was. (laughter) And we went out, and then in September I think, we went back, September, October, I'm not sure which, we went back, and we worked for a little bit. Ben -- they were slow so we were off. So I was laid off, so they called me, said Jody, you want to go for breakfast? And I said yeah, I'll go for breakfast. So we went over and we went for breakfast. When we went over, they had to get their paychecks, it was a Friday. They got their paychecks, we went over to Denny's for breakfast. So we're sitting there eating breakfast and this Ed calls us. He said, you know Tama's closing? What do you mean they're closing, we were just there for our checks, they didn't tell nobody. They didn't tell [00:24:00] nobody they were closing. We went right back. We said how come you didn't tell us you were closing, you're not telling nobody, and

even the people that came after us, they didn't tell. So they closed their doors, that was it.

BA: There is a law about see, a factory closing -- I forget the exact name, but there is a law, you're supposed to have --

JW: But they didn't give a severance pay or nothing, but then we all went to Career Link, and some of them were older than me, so they didn't have to get a job. Well I had to go for classes, so I said okay, I'll do classes. Then finally they said, you don't have to do classes, because you're almost retirement age too, so.

IW: Charlie Dent.

JW: Well, when we worked at Tama, we were doing military uniforms (inaudible).

IW: For the Air Force.

JW: For the Air Force, and Charlie Dent was one of the biggest ones who helped us get this job. So of course we do organizing and we do rallies and everything, so when we went to Charlie Dent, we said, Charlie, how come you didn't help us with this? He said, well I had nothing to do with it, because it was a guaranteed job. [00:25:00] Then also at Tama, we did Alfred Dunner pants. Now those are the expensive pants, so they had some of us, when we run the

picket line, go out to Penny's and Bosco's and everything and look at their labels, where they were made. So, they all went overseas, and you know.

BA: Oh, I see. Now personally I'll say I recall that situation, I recall that daily coverage. And I recall the owner, what was the owner's name, you remember? At Tama.

JW: Oh Mark Fogelman.

BA: That's right, because I recall him coming out and speaking to the press about this.

JW: Well we went to house and picketed, twice. (inaudible) we all walked there, well the cops came both times. We were just ready to leave, and the cops got there. They said, who's in charge?

IW: They called the cops.

JW: The one time that we said it was Andrea. So, and I mean we still Facebook with Andrea and everything too, from Linden yet. So, they said, well you don't have to leave. We were getting ready to leave at this time, until the cops came. Well then when he came, we couldn't leave. They said, just single-file, just, you know, don't block the highways, [00:26:00] right, because he lives off -- Walbert Avenue, is it, Irv?

IW: Yeah, yeah.

JW: Big, beautiful home. So we picketed him twice. So then the next time we were there again, they came again. Well now who's in charge, and I forget the lady's name, we couldn't leave then either, but they didn't chase us; we were allowed to picket, you know, because we were peaceful. And they called him the rag man. The neighbors came out and they said, oh, you're picketing the rag man. Yeah, that's what they called him, yeah. (laughter) But I heard he eventually opened up another factory someplace, but non-union. He wanted to bust the union, because Linden Apparel did the same thing after they closed, Bob, and then his wife, they opened another factory.

BA: Was it around here, or was it --

JW: It was around here someplace, but non-union.

BA: How about that?

JW: Legally, they weren't allowed to do it. I don't know if they put it in their son's name, they had two sons. Now one died quite young, but they maybe put in his name. Tony died, and I think there was Mike, [00:27:00] you know.

BA: Yeah, okay, so --

JW: Oh my god, they used to fight though, because [Zaida?] worked in the office, and they used to fight and carry on, the husband and wife in the office, just right in front of everybody, just, yeah.

BA: They were local too, they were local people?

JW: Yeah.

IW: Yeah, yeah.

BA: Did they have any better relations? Like, I was going to ask about them, the place before Tama was, you mentioned the name of it.

JW: Linden Apparel.

BA: Yeah, did they have --

JW: That's him that they used to fight and carry on and everything.

BA: Oh, in front of everyone.

JW: Yeah, he would do some of the stuff he did, and we knew better, he would have got nailed quite a bit from the union.

IW: He let the F-bomb fly many times.

JW: Yeah, yeah.

IW: Yeah, she'd come home and torment --

BA: Really, oh directly at the workers?

JW: Yeah, yes. Yes, yes, yes.

IW: (inaudible) but got away with it.

BA: Yeah, and the union wasn't able to confront him on that?

JW: Yeah, at that time I actually probably didn't know any better, you know. But then, when we got to Tama and all that, then things were [00:28:00] different, we knew, you know, they couldn't get away with it.

BA: Would Linden do functions for the workers like the other place, like banquets and things like that, they weren't --

JW: No, that ended with South Manufacturing. After that, none of them did any --

BA: No special functions or --

JW: No, no. But I was with the union, and I was a chair lady and secretary and all that. They used to do things. We used to go up to South Mountain Grove, and he could go too, you could take somebody with you.

BA: I went there.

JW: They had clam bakes, oh my god, really.

V: Chicken cacciatore, oh.

JW: Yeah, so the unions then --

BA: You got me thinking now, he's got me thinking about this now.

IW: Made clams and, oh.

BA: Oh yeah, I've been to South Mountain Grove, that's a nice facility up there.

JW: Yeah, they used to put on a big -- yeah, and even South Manufacturing, we used to have a Christmas party every year too.

IW: Yeah, yeah.

BA: Okay, I was going to ask, did you see younger ladies coming in, because I know a lot of high school, after high school, [00:29:00] some of the girls would go --

JW: I'd say, Paris, yeah. And Linden, there were a few young ones, not a whole lot.

IW: I don't know how they do down at Under Armour.

JW: I'm not sure how they do down there anyway.

IW: So we have that factory, it's a modern, modern --

JW: See we work with retirees now, we work with retirees in the Wilkes-Barre area.

IW: But she knows some of the people she worked with are working there.

JW: Yeah, some of them just retired from Under Armour.

BA: Okay, was that, is that the big one? There's one big one that makes the --

JW: That's the one that makes the uniforms.

BA: That's right, Major League Baseball, that's the big one.

IW: Yeah, baseball, yeah.

JW: Well, off the record, but this is, well you can even leave it on there, we got in good with all the business agents. We know them all because we go to the office and work out of there. So Nancy said, do we know anybody who they could give that, donate the baseball uniforms to?

IW: Nonprofit.

JW: We used to have vanity fair in Reading where they used to have a big tent sale. Well that went out of business, right? So now they don't know how to get rid of [00:30:00] all this stuff. Now a lot of this is made overseas; it's not made in a factory, but it's baseball uniforms, t-shirts and everything. I said, how about the Wilkes-Barre VA? So we got, they even delivered it to them. So okay, so then the next time they wanted to do it, we got into a hassle with them, and they didn't want to accept it, they had no storage. So I said okay, let's go out to the Allentown VA, so we got in with -- he's a hundred percent disabled. So we got in good with Tom Gonzalez out there.

BA: That's the one on Hamilton Street, yeah.

JW: Hamilton Street, okay, he'd take it. Well they had what they call standdown, and when we go to a hotel, we save the union all the shampoo and all that, a lot of us don't use it. So we had all that, we used to give it to the homeless Allentown school students. But then the veterans, they could use it too. So we had what called standdown, we had all that, we had the baseball uniforms, and a bunch of us, and our union people too, we went out there, and we handed it out. Anybody that came there, they could go through and take as many shirts as they [00:31:00] want, they could take shampoo.

IW: They loved it, oh they loved it.

BA: That's great.

JW: Yeah, somebody else donated shoes. Somebody donated a few pair of pants, but the major thing was the uniforms.

BA: Oh, they loved that.

IW: The uniforms, oh they were beautiful.

JW: That was before COVID.

IW: They're \$140 shirts.

JW: Yeah, some of them, yeah.

BA: Durable, yeah.

JW: So then they called us again, and ask us, and I said, okay, I'll call Tom Gonzalez, I'm done with the Wilkes-Barre VA. So he said yes, so we went and picked them up. We got ten boxes, so they got, I forget how many hundreds. Then they said there's more. Well, Bethany Children's Home. We go up at Bethany Children's Home, so I called, they only take new stuff, you know, for the children. So I said okay, so we took 12 boxes up there.

BA: Oh that's so fantastic.

JW: Then while I was there, there's Kathy that, she's in labor relations or whatever. She said, do you know anybody that can use youth t-shirts, children's? Well right up here is Roosevelt School, the poorest school in Allentown, and we did them for Christmas, our auxiliary gave \$100. We did [00:32:00] scarves and hats I crocheted, and we gave it to them. So I said, oh my god, Greg Potter, he's with United Way, he's with Capital Blue, Teen Works, everything, okay, rather than us be the third party here, I hooked them up, Greg Potter, and her. So last week, him and I, and I guess how many other people went up here, and we sorted uniforms that were donated, you know, because they wear uniforms here in Allentown, the shirts, and there was shorts and

pants and everything. We thought we were going there to do the baseball uniforms because they got 70 boxes.

IW: Seventy boxes with 15 shirts in each box.

JW: At least, at least, yes.

IW: At least, some were more.

BA: That's an awful lot.

JW: So we're going back again to eventually fold on them.

IW: We're going to go back, that's part of our --

BA: Oh my gosh.

JW: But at Christmas, they had so much gifts that they donated to another school too.

IW: Cleveland, the other one in Allentown.

JW: To Cleveland, but this is the poorest one, because even here, somebody said, I have loads of games, and they're in good shape. Do you know anybody that could use them rather than do our auction, we had auctions. I said, I'll [00:33:00] call Roosevelt School. Well they loved it.

BA: I'm sure they did.

JW: So we're involved in that too, you know.

BA: That's great, that's great. Well also, it's just, such a great community work. You know, it's community work, that's unbelievable --

IW: Well, we also, VFW, we put on Veteran's Day up there, and we help the kids, they're phenomenal.

BA: I bet they --

IW: These kids.

JW: What do they have violins, they have a violin band.

IW: Yeah, were they good. Oh my gosh.

JW: But then they also let their parents come and learn the violin too. Yeah, so okay, we'll get back on that.

BA: That's fantastic. That's just amazingly good work, yeah, to think about that kind of service, you know, that level, that amount, that's --

JW: And all this is with the retiree liaison that we do all this. But when I took the job as retiree liaison, I said to him, I'll take it, but he will be involved in everything I do. So, that's probably Manny, that's a quartermaster. Unless it's a man coming.

BA: I was going to say --

IW: No, it's the machine going on. [00:34:00]

BA: The machine was turning itself on. Any other questions I got, cause -- do you recall -- you said most of the ladies were local, you know, working there. I was going to ask if

they came from different areas, but those are mostly local ladies, right?

JW: No, they're mostly all local.

BA: Mostly local, yeah. All about the --

JW: Well now Tama, they come from little bit further around. But it's still in the area.

IW: We're heavily involved with the politicians. We had Susan Wild in here, with Bowzer from Sha Na Na.

JW: From Sha Na Na. (laughter)

IW: I introduced him, and he --

BA: How is he?

JW: Oh great.

IW: -- his thing is, Social Security Works.

JW: He works for them, Social Security Works, out of DC.

IW: Out of Washington DC.

BA: Yeah, I've he's just a good guy.

JW: He is a good guy, and he sang, and he rented a keyboard, and had that here, and oh my god, he was fantastic. We were here for about an hour, an hour-and-a-half, and Susan Wild's team paid for everything. We went up here, and we got (inaudible), and we had desserts, and we had sodas and [00:35:00] everything.

M: In the last six years, we probably were invited to at least 20 conventions for political. And one of the biggest ones is APRI, okay?

BA: Okay, which one is that, you might want to -- I'm not quite sure, I can read it but --

JW: A. Philip Randolph Institute.

IW: A. Philip Randolph.

BA: Oh sure, yeah, A. Philip Randolph, the (inaudible).

IW: Well we were invited to that twice we went. Danny Glover was there the first year, I got a picture with. But then I went up --

JW: We both got on it, yeah.

IW: We both got on it, and I says, Danny, how old are you?

JW: That was at the Mall of America.

IW: Yeah, at the Mall of America.

BA: Yeah, out in Minnesota, yeah.

IW: And we were invited out there through Workers United.

JW: They're mostly all black people, Philip Randolph. There was maybe ten white people, but we love them. I mean, we got so many great friends. I mean, Workers United Retirees had -- our president is from Chicago. The secretary's from Maryland. [00:36:00] And then we have Fred from New Jersey,

we had [Judy Lacker?] from Canada. I mean, they're from all over.

IW: Hawaii.

JW: Well Hawaii is the alliance, [Jeannie Tabashi?], she's Hawaiian.

BA: I was going to guess something else, because you mentioned A. Philip Randolph, were most the workers over the years, different ethnic groups, different --

JW: Oh yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, we had everything, yes.

BA: -- (inaudible) mix everybody, they all worked together.

JW: Well there's Tommy I talked about, she was black. I think we had -- of course we had Spanish. I think we had Chinese, yeah, yeah.

BA: Right, right, everybody just got along okay and worked together, yeah, yeah.

JW: Oh yeah, yeah.

BA: So it's a mix, Lehigh Valley's a mix of every ethnic group.

JW: Yes. I'd say most of them were white, but there was a mix, yeah.

IW: Well just to get a little off subject there, Jody and I was invited to Chinatown to stay there overnight for a whole weekend, because we know one of the ladies up there.

JW: Agnes.

IW: And Chinatown is big.

BA: This is in --

IW: I go through --

JW: New York.

BA: New York, that's a big one, yeah.

IW: Jody was interviewed for the [00:37:00] reelection of Barack Obama.

BA: How about that, oh yeah, 2012.

JW: I didn't make it; he did.

IW: I made it.

JW: He made it for the interview.

IW: Because I was a veteran. We went to New York, in Manhattan, and I screened for his reelection, but I never got to see it, because they put a commercial on.

JW: Yeah, that's when they do it then, you know, so you don't see it, but he was --

IW: When they bring all those screenings on.

BA: That was 2012.

JW: Yeah, they interviewed him, yup.

IW: And it all went well until they said I have to wear lipstick.

JW: He said no. They did the other makeup, but yeah.

BA: The TV makeup, yeah, that's -- well.

JW: But they screened him, yeah.

BA: I can understand that one, oh my gosh.

JW: So we did quite a bit.

IW: Yeah, we're heavily involved.

BA: Now you were involved with the Allentown Housing Authority, you said, for most of the time.

IW: Yes.

BA: Did you have any interaction with the Clothing Works at all, do go there sometimes, or have any --

IW: Steel, steelworkers, and then the rest were welfare and --

BA: Right, did you ever visit the clothing factories at all?

[00:38:00]

IW: All of them.

BA: You went to all of them. Any impressions you have? Do you have any thoughts about what you saw there?

IW: Where she worked was terrible.

BA: Okay, what are you --

IW: Her years --

JW: But they kept it pretty clean and everything. But the best --

IW: Yeah, they kept it clean, but I only say that because I'd gone down to Vanity Fair, Under Armour. That is air-conditioned, and computers, and --

JW: That was after we retired.

IW: Their break room was banks of microwaves and refrigerators.

BA: Wow.

JW: You can't just walk in there.

IW: You can't just walk in there, it's secure, you know.

BA: Yeah, keycard or something, that's right.

JW: But that is clean.

BA: You feel (inaudible).

JW: Now Tama was the only air-conditioning place I worked at. Paris was, but it didn't work half the time, but Tama was there. Now, Under Armour, that's --

BA: That's state of the art.

JW: State of the art.

BA: A new facility.

JW: Yes, beautiful.

IW: But we got, we were the very few that could get in on the DC property, they would put the Gates down for us.

JW: Yeah, yeah.

IW: -- so we [00:39:00] could drive in. That's when she spoke,
when --

JW: With Nancy Pelosi and Bernie San-- I spoke with Bernie
Sanders too.

BA: Is that right, Bernie Sanders?

IW: Yeah, Bernie was like us.

JW: Yeah, we met Bernie. We have pictures with Bernie, we have
pictures with Nancy, yeah.

BA: He's something, isn't he? He's dedicated to --

IW: He's good, he's good.

JW: (inaudible) I took pictures with him, we're floating around
with him at the --

BA: With the milk mittens, oh yeah, they were everywhere. They
had it placed on subway trains, they had him, you know, had
him skiing in a ski resort sitting by the skis, that was
(inaudible), yeah.

JW: And it's funny, we've seen it, and I took pictures when
they had it, and I never took a picture of Bernie.

BA: Oh shucks, yeah.

JW: (laughs)

IW: We're with Governor Wolf pretty often.

JW: Yeah, we have pictures with them.

IW: And we were up in Wilkes-Barre, we do a lot of work up in Wilkes-Barre, right at Center Square. And he's with us up there, and we're getting a picture, and I says to him, I says, Hey Augie said hello. He said, You tell Augie I said hello. One of the guys who grew up in the orphanage with us worked for him for 30 years.

JW: With the cabinet-making.

BA: Oh, the cabinet business, yes.

JW: Yup, in [New York?]. [00:40:00] And he lives here in Allentown, Billy Augustine.

IW: Yeah, he started taking a picture, and he says to me, he says Hey, he says, You know I have your picture in my office. I says, Who? Jody and Irv.

BA: Is that right?

JW: But we do a lot of stuff at the capital too. Jeannie McNeil here in Allentown, we're walking through the capital, and she said, hey, aren't you going to say hi? (laughs) And of course Pete Schweyer and Mike Schlossberg, and Eddie Day out of Wilkes-Barre. I mean, we know --

BA: I met some of those people. You ever met Fetterman, the lieutenant governor?

JW: Yeah.

IW: Yeah.

BA: He's about as tall as the ceiling.

JW: Oh, and Rick Bloomingdale. Yeah, we did NE PA Labor Day Council, all over the unions. The unions up there, the steelworkers, the carpenters and everything.

IW: We're on that board.

JW: We've been on the board for maybe ten years now. So Eddie Day, their politician up there, he's a sweet guy. He comes every year, and we invite the politicians because we're up on stage and we take pictures. The girl who was supposed to sing the national anthem didn't show up. Eddie Day is in a band.

IW: Has his own band.

JW: And he's a singer. [00:41:00] So the one guy said, Let Eddie sing! So from now on we don't -- we haven't had it now for two years because of the pandemic. But we still do stuff, we go up and have pizza parties with the veterans and everything with our money, that's with all our money raised, was for the veterans. So now we couldn't meet this year, but the president emailed us and said, how about I pull money out, we give it to them, and they have a pizza party without us? So, we gave them money, which was good.

They looked forward to it. And then we had canteen books, him and I, our auxiliary and a couple people gave canteen books out, we give them to him, so.

BA: Okay, all right. I don't have too many more questions; that's pretty thorough coverage of it. Now you mentioned something about, you know, you didn't shift jobs too often, but --

JW: No.

BA: -- other people you know, they could walk up the street, and --

JW: Most of our people stayed though.

BA: You said most of your people stayed.

JW: Yeah, most of where I worked, the people didn't come and go. Now, when I worked at Paris, they used to get real busy at a certain time of the year, because it was hats, winter hats, gloves and everything. They'd hire [00:42:00] a lot of temps. But our people didn't leave, they just needed more.

BA: More so they brought temps in.

JW: So they set up more things and that for them.

BA: Had busy seasons, and then they were just temporary workers. Was their pay level different, do you know? Was

it all piece work for the most part, or was everybody piece work?

JW: Now I was piece work when I used to gun tag, you know, you used to put the tickets on. And I did that at Tama too. And it was the pants, so you'd have to put a ticket on, and then you do it. Well, they'd have these hammers come in, and I, oh my god, I made the best money there. So then now and then, it would get too full, they'd have to get somebody to help. Well I went out for a knee operation. And I'd call in, you know, to see how everything was going and everything. The supervisor said, Jody, when you come back, you don't have to work like that, just so you come back, because when I do it, a lot of times I didn't need a helper. But it would line up like crazy. (laughs) It was good, but then they went out of business, and I really made good money there. Hi Manny. This is [00:43:00] Manny, our quartermaster. This is Brian from Northampton.

BA: Just wrapping up my interview here. I don't have --

MANNY: The air conditioner's off for you guys.

JW: We're just about done.

BA: Just about done.

M: Are you?

IW: Yeah, yeah.

BA: Yeah.

JW: So let your timer go on then.

BA: Yeah, I don't have too many more questions here. Do you have a kid, do you have any children?

JW: No, we never had any children. But we have a great niece that since she's a baby, she's our girl.

M: Sorry to -- I'm going to get going, I'm going to get going. I locked the door --

IW: Okay, we're going to stop up --

JW: Okay, we'll check it next time, Manny.

IW: I'll lock it.

JW: Have a good day.

M: I did lock upstairs.

IW: Oh, okay.

M: I'll see you.

JW: Okay, so long, Manny.

IW: Okay, Manny.

BA: Well anyway, thanks a lot for meeting with me today. I don't have too many more questions here. So, what I'm going to do is wrap this up basically. Do you have

anything else you want to tell me, things I forgot to bring up, anything else that's in your --

IW: All the jobs that I was on, I worked for Hawk Flour Mills for two weeks, and then I went to the Allentown Housing [00:44:00] Authority for 19 years. I started as a laborer, and the last seven years, I was the supervisor. So I was promoted with him, okay. A new executive director came in, we're all gone. So we had no protection, although Easton Housing Authority was union, so we got their benefit. And when we found that out, they said, oh why should we get it when they already get it? It would go by the area. And our head office was Philadelphia. So after that, after I was let go, I went to the county nursing home, Cedarbrook. I worked maintenance there, and in the second year, I was jumped up a step. I never told them what I actually did, and what my positions were because at that time you were overqualified.

BA: Oh, I see. [00:45:00]

IW: So you wouldn't get hired. Oh, you're overqualified.

JW: Well they didn't take you right away. They said the position was filled.

IW: So I stayed with that for 12 years, the best job I ever had in my life.

BA: Cedarbrook, yeah.

IW: Those people down there, I had Fountain Hill, my twin sister had the big Cedarbrook. She worked there 21 years. But these people, oh.

BA: Well I hear good things about Cedarbrook. I mean, I hear --

JW: We have people here that work -- he's a nurse, and her husband works there too. He's in air-conditioning. Now there's a lady that's in our auxiliary here, she worked there too, and her and her husband run the auxiliary down there, and they do a lot for them.

IW: Then I worked at, in Macungie at Brookfield Apartments for JB Reilly. You know who JB Reilly is?

BA: I do. The big developer, yeah, yes I do.

JW: (laughs) The cheapskate.

IW: He owns the bank building, at Seventh and Hamilton, not the bank, but [00:46:00] the bank building. And across, catty-corner, he owns that, that's all his.

BA: All the downtown development.

IW: Well, plus Saucon, and up at Pointe North, Emmaus, and then, I had them all --

JW: Now her son's involved too.

IW: -- as overtime calls.

BA: Ah, I see, okay, that's a big network of buildings, it is.

IW: And then I had my heart attack, and I had open-heart, and that stopped that. But the thing about him, I'm going to say it, I don't care if it is recorded.

JW: Yeah, you can --

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