

Ironworkers Documentation Project: AMERICA WORKS
AUDIO LOG FORM

Interviewer's recording no(s): AWP00169_SR01 AND AWP00170_01

Contact: Everett J. Erstad

Interviewer: Jim Leary

Interview:

Date: Wednesday, July 13, 2011

Place: Living room of Erstad home

Other people present: Everett's wife for part of the time

Background noise: minimal, Mrs. Erstad chuckles at one point and prompts her husband regarding accident stories

Equipment used: (audio recorder brand and model; microphone(s), brand(s), model(s))
Marantz professional PMD 661 digital recorder; Audio Technica C87 condenser microphone

Recording medium used: Kingsport 2 gigabyte SD[Secure Digital]memory card 362.4 megabytes, uncompressed WAV format)

Recording engineer: Leary

Summary description of audio interview contents:

Now retired, Erstad talks about his experiences as an ironworker.

Audio Interview Contents: Everett Erstad

Time

Topic

0:02 Announcement, initial question—when and where born, how you got into ironworkers trade?

0:28 I was born in Madison General Hospital on the west side of Madison in 1941. And I grew up on the east side of Madison, 2941 Milwaukee Street. And it's always been, our whole family's been in the construction trade. I had two uncles, a cousin, and my father. And you find that nepotism was pretty prominent in a lot of trades in the Madison area. And I had an uncle that was a cement finisher in the Vogel, and I got a cousin that was a laborer in the summer. He went to college. So I had an uncle, after the Second World War was over, he got into the trade and stayed at our house. And the discussion at a lot of our suppertime was talking about upcoming jobs and

who's doing what, where, and where they're traveling to get the work done--and carrying on from there. And I always took an interest in it, and when I got out of high school I was kind of rambling around. And the shop in the main company, it was a sub-contractor, Kupfer Ironworks, they were located just about four blocks from the house. So when we'd go down to the park you could hear, over the tracks, all that banging and clanging and stuff. And that's where my father worked. And I took my mother's suggestion, why don't you go over there and see if you can get a summertime job, something to start out with, see what they're doing. And I went in there and, first thing you know, they seen who I was and they pushed me right in the office. Next thing: "A big strapping kid like you," he says, "I think we put you out in the field. You don't want to work in the shop." The shop scale was a lot less, 'cause all they did was fabricate there and stuff. So they signed me up for an apprenticeship program, and it wasn't long before I was out working on different projects.

2:36 The one I started out with was, let's see here, in the summer it was down in Hartford [WI], putting new schools in. School building was going great guns at that time. We worked the summer there. And then in the winter, it was on top on the 9th floor on Oscar Mayer's on the east side of Madison, tying re-rods. Some apartment buildings, we'd put a slab in, tie re-rods and stuff like that. I was into reinforcing rods more so than structural starting out. I think they wanted to beef me up you might say. Then we progressed from there. After the apprenticeship was over with and I stayed with Kupfer for 13 years. Then when I got laid off from there, I went with Helga Steel. It's a metal building contractor, they call them. They work on pre-designed buildings. I worked for them for 8 years. They're no longer around but they have some sons in excavating down in the Janesville area. He had a twin engine Golden Eagle 8-seater Cessna. He travels around the country. We would go up to northern Minnesota in Rush City. We had a project up there for Fox. What they do was, the outfit with all the snow mobilers and stuff like that. It's a fair sized metal building job up there. And then we went there to Indiana. We were down there about 10-11 months. We spent a week out in Local 10, I think in Kansas City or Independence. From there I worked with a lot of the local contractors. JP Cullen, Findorff, a lot of different things we were picking up around here. Then I got a phone call from a company that splintered from Helga Steel. It was Debco out of Janesville. They said, "How would you like to spend a winter down in North Carolina?" And that sounded pretty good. I said, well, "How are expenses?" "Well, all your expenses are paid. Motel is paid." And they guaranteed you Rockford scale, which was like \$7 more an hour than around here. I'd spend a winter down there. It's hard to get a guarantee forty [hours a week] the construction trade. That's the reason some people think we're getting rich but it's really not the case. LAUGHTER It used to be, when my father was in the trade, it was a seasonal thing. It was 9-10 months out of the year and then things would quiet down. Because they didn't have any way of pouring the concrete and stuff until they get the additives now and the chemical changes and stuff. Now it's a year round thing, weather permitting, which it makes it kind of tough. Yeah, that's... Then I went from there and worked for Findorff, off and on.

6:15 I had a chance to get in with Klein-Dickert Glass putting curtain wall up. I worked for them, off and on, and when they got slack I went to work with the glazers, 50-50. They needed a certified welder and I was certified. They got a lot of embedded plates and concrete. I would go up and weld bolts on it and stuff so they could drill holes in it, fasten the curtain wall and then

help them put the glass in place. [So this is for these, for the First Wisconsin buildings, the ones with glass exterior?] Yeah. I've got a picture of it. One of the things with that one... It was taken out of the paper. GETS PICTURE Here it is. That's the Mullins Building on the north side of the square. Where they had that fire? That's right around the corner. See that? You know where the Strand Theatre used to be? [Yes.] That's it. I'm on the end there...it's pretty hard to make it out. I saw that in the paper and I said, "Hey, that's me!" LAUGHTER [Cool.] I was working down on different, smaller projects for Klein-Dickert...and then would go off with Findorff or the local contractors. If we hit...

7:50 If I back track a little bit, I remember when things got slack here and we were on strike, I went down to Byron, Illinois, and worked on that nuclear plant on the second shift doing cad welding. That was an experience and a half to work on a big plant like that. That thing is near 300 feet or better. And it's a dome-shaped facility. Then we had to go inside and tie the re-rods for their inside there. The mat was two layers and they were about 5 foot, 4 or 5 feet thick. You didn't want to slip and fall and straddle it because that would raise your voice quite a bit. LAUGHS But that was an experience and a half working there. An old timer was there with me and he brought a camper down and we stayed at Lake Louise. It's about maybe ten miles north of there. That was pretty nice. Otherwise it would have been an 80-90 mile hour drive.

8:55 That's the trouble with the trades. The fact that the work isn't always local. You've got to go where the work is. I spent some time in Milwaukee when work slacked here. I remember hooked up with, I think the conversation was with Nick Rochon. This was back in the 60s when we were on strike. Nick was still an apprentice. Then we hooked up and went to Milwaukee, working on the interstate bridges back then. That was a lot of fun. A different experience, different people you know. A larger local, but they needed the bodies. You might say that, you're working on bridges like over the Milwaukee River and different places there. As far as the eye could see, that's what you had to get done. You're tying, it's like you're bent over, tying shoe laces all day long. You carry a reel of wire. I think it's about 750 feet. When you make a tie, it's about 4 inches, 5 inches or so. Then they would want you to carry a bag with you. The only break you had was to walk back and get some more wire. But they wanted you to carry a bag with you and have two or three rolls with you so when you straighten up, they'd slap another roll so you get right back down there tying again. You get used to it but then again, you don't. It wears on you the older you get. It's not an easy job. [Like picking cotton.] Yeah. A lot of guys don't do it but it pays the bills, you might say. A lot of people say, well, you're an ironworker. It's all structural. That's only a fraction of what's actually going on. I think there's 7 different union books in it. Reinforcing, actually right now in the local... I talked with the business agent yesterday. Reinforcing has more work than there is in construction and all the other stuff. I know when I was at the convention back in 1996, they had to include--they said the ironworkers, structural and ornamental, they never included reinforcing. So they added that in to our sign, to put reinforcing in there because it's as important as the rest of it, if not more.

11:45 Working down in Milwaukee, there were several different projects. I worked on the new federal building, supervised putting the tubes between the two towers in the new federal building down town. I think they were 16 inches tall and it's like 7 inches wide. They were about 15-20 feet long. We had to tailor make them to round columns and they had embedded plates. We had

to weld them up. They put scaffolds out for us and we welded them. Then the tower crane to swing the piece out and hook it up. We weld them up. At times, we'd work out at Jones Island, which is a sewage plant out there. They added on that...they're doing that... It's on going all the time, one thing or its something else out there. Then I went on the north end of town and put up a warehouse over there... I and three other guys. When work got slack and then they brought in another supervisor. And they said, "Well, as long as you've made supervisor and you're in another local, we'll see you. You're going back." Boom. LAUGHTER They were protecting their own work because its their local. It's only fair. We do the same thing here. It's a territorial thing, you know. It's like a cat fighting over a mouse.

13:15 [Let me back up to make sure I get your uncle's name and your dad's name.] Milford Grove was my uncle and he was in the Army Air Force. He came home and got right into the ironworkers because things were starting to break. [He's your mother's...] Right. And my father was Sydney Erstad. He was a steelworker, machinist. Just as... He worked for Gisholt Machine Company, which is on East Washington Avenue. Then he went down... Things were picking up and he went down to Fairbanks and Morris in Beloit. What he was doing... They were machining parts for the submarines for the Second World War. Then what happened, he had an opportunity to go over to Hawaii in about 1942-43 to be part of this... They had to upgrade their submarines because their engines weren't functioning proper. They were having a lot of problems with them so they'd send them over there. He was over there for 3-4 years, something like that. Then he come back and got into the ironworks. From there on in, he had over 50 years in. I got about six different copies of that, toward the tail end of that. Looking through the trunks and different things, I found a bunch of copies. It's quite interesting. [Pearl Harbor Banner, newspaper clipping.] Yeah,

15:20 [Do you know when and where your dad was born and...] Up in Windsor-Deforest. He grew up on a farm there. His grandparents come from Norway on my father's side. I think it was one generation off from my mother, and its kind of a long story in that respect. My grandfather on my mother's side...he was born in Oklahoma. What happened there is... I don't know if he was part of the Oklahoma rush for land down back then. It was 1870s-1880s. Anyway, his father, they found him in a spring...he had died. But he had an injury in the Civil War. He was over at the spring for some reason or another and they found him the next day. So his mother was from Darlington, Wisconsin, which is just west of here. She decided to get on the train and take little Johnny, which was my grandfather's name, and move back up to Darlington. It was such a long period in Darlington, waiting for their relatives to pick them up that she caught pneumonia. Back then there wasn't much...going on there. Anyway, so she died. So he was adopted. Come to find out that his name was changed from Paterson to Grove. And then the Grove, the people that adopted him, that was their name I guess. They sent him a couple of years to the university in advanced agriculture. He got into farming and that was his thing, doing the farming stuff. Part of the history of that is that they found out later that the land they owned down there, it was all oil wells. So my two uncles and a cousin went down to pursue it and they found a relative, this Bennett guy... GIGGLE They looked into it and he was a pastor at a local church. "Oh yeah, they used to own such and such land here and stuff... Oh yeah, they lost the right to it because the fact that they burned down the courthouse." I hear it the second, third, fourth hand, it's hard to say...but that's history for you. That's where they come from. My

uncle...at the WWII, I had five uncles in the service. Two of them got into the trades, along with my father.

18:25 [What was it like, growing up on the east side? Can you talk about it as a working class...?] Oh yeah, all working class. We spent our time at the local ball park, close to... Kupfer Iron Works, which is across the tracks... We'd play for business...and compete at different parks. See who was the better guy in their age group. We'd compete back and forth. We'd go swimming in the summer and fishing down at the local creek. Starkweather Creek was close by and you'd catch little bullheads and carp. That was about all that was edible, the bullheads. The carp would just steal your bait. Then we'd go down to the lake and fish down there, and go swimming and stuff. That was... I had a paper route at 11 or 12. I followed through with that, my brother and I. We both had two routes that joined each other. We had to stop that after a year. He was sixteen, caught cancer and died within a matter of three months. It was a tumor of the arm and it just passed through him before they could cut off his arm. He was 16 and I was 14. Boy, talk about something that's hard to deal with... So I quit the paper route and I became a part time...average... Dykeman's Restaurant up town on the square. I cut up stuff and cleaned pots and pans. Yeah. Cut up vegetables and different things. We'd cry with this other guy, cutting up the onions and all the business like that. That didn't pay very well. Then I finished school and got into the ironworks business.

20:25 At the time, we started out at 2/3rds scale. Then you work your way up. As you get 1000 hours in, you get an increase in wages and stuff. A lot of the friends I knew back then, the jobs that they had were pretty much mediocre compared to what I had. I had a pretty good deal going, really, at the time, because wages were just increasing. I remember... We used to go out to fight for wages and stuff and it would be a nickel, a dime, 15 cents. You think about it, it barely kept up with the cost of living. There was a lot of argument and carrying on. It was quite interesting to be part of that business. There would be a lot of scuffling and stuff and people would want to go on strike. Some wouldn't because they'd lose their wages and didn't want to go out of town to work for another local. Their time to go on strike is different than ours. Their contract is different, different timing. It worked out a lot. If they had a lot of work, they would absorb as many people as they could...to help us out. Then we'd work the other way around which was pretty nice. There'd be some scuffling and there'd be some fights. A guy would be hitting down at the bar afterwards and everyone would want to argue this and carry on.

21:55 [So what year was it that you started? 1959?] 1959, July. The same time as Tinker Nelson. We went in and both got our pins and stuff and watch for our 50 year business at the same time. [Some people have talked about just starting out. I think Gus Peplinski didn't really have a formal apprenticeship. He just got the permit and then started out.] When you start out, if you're in an apprenticeship program, like I say, you start with 2/3rds scale and you work your way up. Well if they got a whole pile of work and not overload us with apprentices, because they're locked into them, what they'll do is put on a lot of permit guys. If a permit guy gets so many hours in, he has a right to go for a union book. Ok? But there was a little agitation there because of the fact that I was working at 2/3rds scale and he was making full scale. We're working right along side one another and I know a lot more than what this man does. So there was some agitation there in that respect. But I know he was going to be temporary help. So he

was there six months, eight months, and some cases longer. But the thing was I was making less money and doing the same thing he was, which was a little agitating. Because he just come off the street and then he started throwing his weight around a little bit. LAUGHS [Did you get special training as an apprentice?] Oh yeah. You had to go to school once a week and spend the whole day there. I don't know what it is now. You had to get so many hours in. That would be for the 9 months school year, from September through June. You'd get the summer off and then the following year you do that, for three years, until you had your... And then you had to try to get certified. One of the courses they give you is how to get you certified. It would be a welding course. You'd have a teacher looking over your shoulder all the time. Have a written test and stuff like this. We had blueprint reading, knot tying that we created ourselves because they didn't have any of that there at MATC, uptown, that's where it was at the time. They had it in the upper half of Central High School in the downtown area. Now it's way out on the east side. It's just the 9 months. Once you got your hours in and stuff, then you had to go sit down and have a test.

24:52 We changed that test quite a bit. I was on the examining committee for several years. Each time you get elected to something it's a three year stretch. I was on the executive board for three years. I forget how many times I was on the examining board, maybe six years. Then I was a trustee. They signed the bills and coordinate all the election stuff. They count the ballots and everything like that. Then I played sargeant of arms. That was a three year deal where you stand by the door and guard the door. Anybody gets pesky, you got to grab them and throw them out. But that never happens. It happened before I got there though. They used to get pretty loud mouth in there. People get to drinking, right after work, and the meeting wouldn't be until 8 and it's on a Friday night. You're already getting warmed up. If there's a strike or you didn't get enough money on your contract...when you send the guys out to represent the local. "You didn't get enough, you SOB." Oh geez... It could be a real picnic sometimes. Then you'd laugh about it for a week afterwards. Yeah.

26:19 Companies... Kupfer was a pretty prominent company to work for. It was a good thing I got in with them. It was a subcontractor. Basically they got all the raw steel... They had a franchise for Bethlehem or Inland. They'd get the raw parts of the metal in and shape it all up, cut it and whatever is needed in the shop. Then they'd ship it out to the projects or we'd work on it and put it together for them. The good thing is...they did a lot of their own work because in fact, a lot of it didn't fit so we had to go out there. We'd always complain about it but then the main guy in the office said, "Well, if everything didn't fit perfect, there would be no use to having ironworkers around." LAUGHS Then again, I got into with Helga Steel, now that was what they called A pre-engineered building. They had all this stuff...cut and everything like this. They did it all in their shop. And what they said was, "Well, you want 100,000 square foot, 200,000 square foot..." Everything is pre-designed so they just...well, take 2, 3, or 4 of that length and 2, 3, or 4 of that length and they just slapped it together. All that stuff is pre-made. And then it's all metal building of course. Insulation and stuff. It was a different experience.

When you started out working, some people talked about the old time ironworkers being a different breed. Could you talk maybe about some characters and old hands that made an impression on you?] Oh yeah. Their language wasn't, you might say, real kosher. LAUGHS I have to chuckle sometimes about how you had to get their attention. This guy would let out a

bunch of those foul mouth words. Construction workers are known for it. I'd look at him and I'd say, "You certainly have a way with words." LAUGHS The guy, he'd look at you dumbfounded like... Well, who is getting the last laugh on this one. It was funny. And the guy said, "I hope you guys all took a bath because it seems as though I gotta kiss your ass to get the work out of you here today." LAUGHTER [He was a pusher...] Yeah, pusher, grumbler or screamer... It's... I forget all the... There were others and more of that business. Guys a'grumbling... Let's see..

29:20 You'd get together at picnics and things and see a lot of the guys and hear stories, a lot of different ones. It was quite amusing bunch of guys, characters... They all loved their beer, whisky or whatever. Sometimes they'd have it on the job, you might say. Like when we worked on a project... Nick Rochon and I worked out of Milwaukee on one of the bridges. They sent us out on the north end of town. Silver Springs I think is out there somewhere... On an overpass. We were tying rods and he said, "Well, this is Ole Olson's job... The guy is coming back with coffee now. Take your break underneath the bridge." So Nick and I went underneath the bridge. And we're thinking, "Why the hell do we gotta go underneath there?" Here he comes around the corner, he's got a six pack of 16 ounce Schlitz. We're drinking...and we looked around... We were drinking Schlitz first thing in the morning. You'd never see that in Madison. They'd throw us off the job. It was funny. And other one...a few weeks later, we were working on one of those long bridges. They had ordered the concrete for the following morning and they weren't getting done. So what do they do? Okay...everybody, take a break now. They come out with 3-4 cases of beer and set them out by the edge of the job. Drink what you can and let's get back at it. Guys would drink 2-3 of them down. They were sweating. I mean, you sweat it all out before you know it. Then we're right back up there and finish up so they can pour concrete first thing in the morning. Yeah, it was funny.

31:00 [Who were some of the characters here in Madison, in Local 383, some of the old timers?] PAUSE I'm trying to think of somebody who... PAUSE I'm thinking more... I can't... [It doesn't come to you right away...] No, no... It'll come to me.

31:40 [Can you talk about...when you're starting out...did anyone send you on a fool's errand or play a trick on you? Send you for a tool that doesn't exist?] Yeah, yeah. When I was an apprentice, starting out, you know, they says, "Why don't you go into the truck and find a bolt stretcher?" And that was a common thing. A bolt stretcher. I forget some of the other ones. They'd play it on everyone. It goes down the chain, of course. Sometimes the guys are warned ahead of time. "I can't find it... What the hell is a bolt stretcher? LAUGHS [Why do you think people do that?] They're testing you. They're looking over you and they're just laughing. They're getting their kicks. He's just a greenhorn. We got to kind of put him on the spot. Whatever. Some of these guys get a little pumped up right away. "I'm an ironworker." Some of the guys have a pretty big head on them. But it's funny. Bolt stretcher is one I can remember right off. There was other ones too. One tends to forget over the years. [That's true. You've got to have something that jogs your memory. Pranks...did someone do something to someone's tool belt or their...?] Yeah, well, you had a wrench laying there and a guy would heat it up with a cutting torch. He knows you're on break or went to the can or something like that. And you reach over and pick it up... "Geez...what in the hell...?" It would get your interest up right

away. They had these big carts with oxygen and settling in them and they had big caster wheels. They'd haul 'em from place to place. I know I played a trick on a guy once. He went to coffee and I turned the tanks off. That's a common trick. But then I took the thing and wheeled it over on the hose so none of the stuff would go through. So he turned the tanks on...and looked around... "You son of a gun..." And he forgot to turn... I had him buffaloed...peeking around, looking at him, ya know... CHUCKLES Yeah... [So you tipped the other guys...?] Oh yeah, you gotta tell everybody. "Look at the fool!" LAUGHTER [When someone does that to ya, are you going to do something... Do they get you back?] Oh yeah, most of the time...and then some. LAUGHS That's a...Interesting characters, my dad would talk about it at length. I forget a lot of that stuff that he told me but it was funny. Guys would get themselves into predicaments.

35:15 [Nicknames... Did you ever have one or...?] Eeegor. She [my wife] got such a kick out of it, I have a plate, a personal [license] plate with Eeegor on it. I got tagged with that... I was working down in Indiana. Eeegor. LAUGHS [What meaning does that have, do you think?] I have no idea. Someone came up with it and bam, there it is. And then there are E's. Eeegor. You mention that to someone and they say, yeah, that's him over there. Like Tinker Nelson. Big Red is another guy. [That's Bill Kerwin?] Yup. Big Red. Yup. He's a motormouth, that guy, he's a talker. We had gotten together with another friend of ours that worked together, Charlie Gorey. I worked with him for 8-10 years. He lives up in Madison. He's retired from the ironworkers and he went into maintenance work at the city library. I don't think his knees or feet were working the best. And you see a lot of guys who get into their mid-40s and early 50s and look for something a little easier. It can be stressful. It's harder to get out of the hall sometimes too [i.e. to get a job]. They want these young guys, they want these runners. I was fortunate enough to hang in there. I got lucky enough to get in with a company like Klein-Dickert where you don't have to get around, snake around 8-9 floors in structural. You work on platforms. Like you see in this picture here. That's where most of your work is being done. It's a lot nicer. The aluminum was a lot lighter than iron too. It's not like the rebars that were solid. I was working down in Byron. The vertical bars were #18s, that's an 1/8th inch for every point. Then the horizontals were #14s, so you had to use double wire all the time to tie 'em up. But then the vertical, the #18s, were all cadwelded. But we worked on a project on Madison Meriter Hospital on the parking ramp. That was G-locked. I don't know if you've heard about G-locks before. It's #14s and they were butted together. You smack a sleeve around it and it would be 2/3rds around. You slip a sleeve on there, they had a little bin on it, a little return. When you slip that sleeve on it, it would slip into place. But to get it to go, you had to take a five pound beater and just beat it down in there. It would lock it in. That was the first time I had an experience with that.

38:20 There's another thing I can think of. I was working up at that particular parking ramp. They were blasting the footings for that. It's built on a limestone quarry, Madison General or Meriter Hospital. It's all limestone under there. They drag a mat that's 12 inch by 12 inch cable. They drag it over the top. Then they throw a bunch of oversized rocks that they dug out of another whole on top of that. When they got that all drilled and all the wires into it ahead of time for us, they drop their dynamite in there. Then they tell the hospital so they're not operating or something. Then they popped the thing. When they pop it, one of the rocks... They didn't have

enough rocks on it and one of the rocks flew out in the middle of South Park Street. LAUGHS The thing was about this big – it would have taken out a wind shield! GIGGLE I can't... And these guys got it a little short, you know? GEEZ... Little things like that happen from time to time. Its funny. Nobody got hurt. You think about it though.

39:45 [Some of these things that happen on the job are amazing. Could you tell me more about Bill and Nick at the Kohl Center?] Well, it wasn't at the Kohl Center, it was on Langdon Street. It was on a sorority house if I remember right. What they had done... There was a tower crane on there. And Bill Kerwin was sitting on the center part, my understanding, and Nick Rochon was out toward the end by the counter weight. When they picked it up, they evidently had the cables ahead of the counter weight. When they picked it up, the end of the boom buckled. Nick disappeared over the edge. And Big Red was flying out there like a flying rod, you know? And Nick said, "You MF's are trying to kill me!" LAUGHTER [Did you ever have an accident or a close call?] Well, she's chuckling [Ev's wife]. That's a dead give away, isn't it? Yeah, I put her on the edge of the seat a few times. I was working on Stoughton high school and I had a 4 and a half ton beam roll over on my ankle. She's giggling again. Quit it. We had a three year old son and she was like 7-8 months along. It was a busy time for us. I'm walking around, about 6-8 weeks off...on crutches. I think when you're off, during that time, it's \$62 or \$70 week. That's it. That's your compensation. Sometimes in the union hall and the following union meeting, they would pass the hat and you might get 80 bucks or something like that. Which is nice, the guys come through for you. That's one situation. That was my left ankle. Okay. Now the next one. I took a dive... I was working on a nursing home in Stoughton. Stoughton is a bad place for me to be in. LAUGHS [Even for a Norwegians eh?] Yeah. I took a dive off the wall. Someone pilfered my ladder. They come down...and everyone disappeared for coffee. So I went looking for it. I didn't realize this, one joist wasn't welded. It just skipped... I took a dive and landed on the corner of a black wall with my arm right here. Broke my arm. Knocked the wind out of me and I'm laying there on a pile, not able to get my wind. A person walking down the side walk took it all in and he come over...and I couldn't say anything. And he says, "What can I do?" I said... "The guys are all up in the trailer having coffee. Get them down here." So they hauled me off of there. That worked out because then the following Saturday, I think we took off for California for 3 weeks. I was collecting the \$70/week and we had already planned the trip with my parents. So we went on a three week-er. I'm limping around on crutches. I bruised my hip. I had crutches for about a week until my hip felt better. That was... The other one that I had...to retire on. I was 59. This happened in October of 2000. I was working with Klein-Dickert on the new pharmacy building. We were going to jump one of these rigs. What you've got to do is... I'm going down the ladder a little ways so we can tie a rope at the end of it so we can drag it over, being led by the cable, being dragged over and landed on the roof. [This is the scaffolding for the curtain wall...] Curtain wall. Right. So I took one step down the ladder and for some reason, those big heavy duty aluminum ladders. Another contractor had it out there and I checked it. It was wired off. Everything was proper. I knew it was a heavy duty. You could see the beefier ones. I took the second step down and right down toward the base, it snapped. Down I come. About three floors and landed on concrete. I landed feet first, broke the right ankle. Then I did a slam on the right side, broke my collar bone. Knocked the wind out of me again, of course. And two ribs in my back and my left arm. That was my demise right there. I laid in the hospital because when my agent stopped, I had a blood clot problems. My calves and

my legs were cramping up and all kinds of different things going on. I just couldn't manage it. They sent me to the warm water pool... I spent three and a half months in a wheel chair. Then I was on crutches. Then I got one of those walkers. I still got the walker, it's kind of neat. I came out of it pretty much. A little limp here and there, some aches and pains of course. Its...that was it. I'm done. Just a few months later I was 60 years old. Enough was enough. WIFE: It took months to recover. Eeegor: They sent me to the warm water pool over in Harbor [Athletics] in Middleton and I kind of enjoyed that. I'd go from...right now, I go over there and with the aches and stuff. You see a lot of people in the same condition, the same age. It's a tough trade. I know a lot of people that fall and you don't see them again. That's it. They're gone. Either that, they get so crippled up, and they're a lot younger than I am. I'm surprised... There are a lot of guys that get the hell out after 40 years, 45 years or something like that. They get that wound and they're not able to get around as well. Yeah, it's a tough trade, there's no getting around it.

46:48 [Could you say something about the weather conditions under which you worked?] Working on American Family. OSHA says every third floor has to be decked solid so people can't fall over three floors because people can survive when they fall three floors. Four floors, five, six, nine floors, it's not like years ago. It'd be 9 floors and so what, 10-20 floors, but every third floor... So they decked it in the middle of winter. So here comes this big snow storm. 12-14-18 inches snow. Then the sun comes out and thaws, freezes, thaws, freezes, thaws. Comes down all the other floors. Solid ice. And this happens from time to time and we've got to go... Me and my partner have to put cables on and different things. Clean this stuff off so you can put the decking down in between the other floors. It gets a little hairy at times. I've seen situations where... When they were working on Madison General then, now it's Meriter... We'd clean off the iron the best we could but what are you going to do if you get a rain storm and stuff, and it freezes on. Different things like that. I went on my keister more than once. Luckily it was only a floor, sliding around, trying to get a day's work in. You'd bang... You go ahead of yourself and bang in the iron so you can work. It can get pretty hairy at times. Especially iron. That's why I kind of like working on the re-rods in the winter because you're down in the hole, where you're out of the wind. Or you're in a more level plain. Your work is right in front of you. It's not as slippery or stuff like this. And there's times where you just can't work. The guys... You got to just clean it up. It can be too damn hazardous for people would be out on it. But they don't ever want to shut it down anymore. These guys are... "No, we've got a job to do here. Things got to be done."

49:04 [When your dad was working, you said it was 9 months. So was it winter when they shut down?] I don't think they could pour the concrete back then. You didn't have the additives in the concrete. The stuff they put in it. So there were time periods where he'd be off and take unemployment. Either that or get the heck out of the area and go further south or make a few phone calls. A lot of times you could check the union hall and they'll call... They'll call the union halls to see if there was any work or what kind of work it is. They'll say, well, we'll need a couple structural guys here. They're talking high flyers too. Either that or rebars or something like that. Guys would get their names in and drive on down. Pack a suitcase and there you're gone for a few months. That's the trouble with this type of work. You have to go where the work is. You're gone sometimes a week or two. A project that we worked on down in North Carolina. I had to be gone a couple of weeks at a time. It was a pretty good deal. It was warmer

down there than it was up here in the winter. I left her alone. She had to take care of the driveway. She either hired someone or managed it, stuff like that. But it's still stressful.

50:35 [You talked before about how re-enforcing had to be added to structural... Was there a status differentiation between one or another of those? Little rivalries?] Oh yeah. There's competition there. A lot of guys that work structural, they won't work rods. "I don't do that. I'm better than that." They see the rods are grunt work you might say. It's the laborers compared to a brick layer. You know? "You can bring my material up and everything like this but... Don't bother me with all these incidentals. I'm a structural man." Yeah, there's an arrogance there, there always has been. I enjoyed all of it. It didn't bother me one way or another. It pays the same. Some locals it isn't. Some locals are mixed. Those that aren't mixed, there's structural... Like Local 1. You've got your ornamental. But I think they're mixed now, whereas the scale is probably the same in some cases. I don't know. I got that book here that tells you all the scales on it. New York is the place to be if you like high rises though.

51:58 [With some of these different parts of the trade, are there little terms or nicknames used if you're tying re-bars versus connecting?] You mean a Rodney Re-bar. [What's that?] You call a guy Rodney Re-bar. LAUGHS Yeah, here comes Rodney. LAUGHS [Rod buster?] Yeah, rod buster is pretty common. [What does that mean?] Pretty much typical what you call them. Well, he's a rod buster. That's his forte. That's what he does. Yeah, he's an old rod buster. [I think Ryan Roth, when I asked him if he was a rod buster... And he said "We're rod busters and sod busters."] Yeah...

53:00 [You used the term high flyer. Is that...?] Some of these guys are high flyers. I mean... these guys who loved to get up on the structural and get around pretty good. There's no getting around there. Yeah, well, he's a high roller. Just like a high roller. LAUGHS [A gambling man.] Yeah, you're gambling up there, I tell ya. You're being influenced by other material coming in, and cables and weather and wind. But you know, like I was talking to the guys yesterday in the hall. He said, "You know, they don't even permit these guys to walk around iron any more. They've got cables stretched across so you have something to hang on to." You never seen that years ago. They'd send the material up and a keg of bolts and there you go. Sit on the iron over there, reach over there and grab your stuff. I've got pictures of a lot of that business. It got hairy. And the thing is, you've always got to be looking above you. A lot of guys, they drop materials and stuff on you. You hear things clanging down from several floors, you kind of want to climb right into your hard hat, you know? [Did you ever get hit?] Oh yeah, I got stuff ricocheted off my shoulder and stuff. One time I had a 3 quarter ratchet come down and hit me in the back. Put a big gouge in my back. Stuff falling on you all the time. It's just...

54:44 And these people... years ago. A lot of guys never wore hard hats, a lot of them. A friend of mine that I've worked with – it was before the time of hard hats. He was working at Royster's on the east side. It was a big fertilizer plant. He said, yeah, they had some iron come up. He didn't have it hooked right. You might say it shit out of the device they had it in. He had an old army fatigue hat with the brim up. He said the thing came down, knocked the brim down on my hat. That's how close it came. LAUGHTER He never forgot that. It was like.... Whoa... Some cases, the hard hats don't really get it either.

55:42 [Is there anything distinctive about the ironworkers hard hat?] There was a variety of... There are saucer hats. Now they're pretty much standard with the... They have it around tight and they have the brim in the front. I got a couple of them out in the garage. My dad used to wear the type what they called the saucer hat. [I'd like to photograph some] I have more of this stuff. I eat this up. It's great that someone does that. There's a lot of history and a lot of people...to see and do things like this. It gives you a great feeling to see this. [I sure am enjoying this.]

BREAK

56:50 [Could you tell me a little bit about how you got your tools for the trade.] There were places that were recommended. You'd go up to a particular wholesaler because they were a different type of tool, the spud wrenches and stuff. You'd go to this facility... I forget. It's been so many years. You never see anybody else carrying that type of stuff. Yeah. They recommend... [This was in Madison?] Oh yes, the east side of Madison on Williamson Street. This one place had everything you needed. Some of the basic...like crescent wrenches and stuff like that. It's no big deal. Big beaters you get at Farm and Fleet or these other facilities and stuff. Welding hoods and stuff. There's a safety facility, South Safety Equipment, and stuff where I used to get gloves and different things. Just any kind of safety equipment you wanted. But a lot of contractors supply some of this. But your belts and different things like that. Sometimes you'd have to go to a shoe shop. And they would make...in their advertisement, they'd say, "Hardest making" and stuff for horses and different things. You would go and tell them what you wanted, what type of belt and stuff and they'd lay it all out for you. Get the slings and different things over your shoulders if that's what you wanted. I had one for re-rods and when you're tying walls. You're going up the wall and you have a hook that you... And you had a little wide belt in the back that you slip on over your other belt. The original belt would be that thick but you'd have a canvas thing about this wide that you would snap behind that because you'd be resting back into it. You might be 30 feet up on a reinforced wall, and you'd be tying there, hanging all day. Stepping in... You go up and snap on...go on up...keep going...stuff like this, all the way up.

59:10 [Were they custom belt makers...] Pretty much. They had them out there if you look around. Try them on and different things. But they had to be somewhat of a heavy duty belt, safety belt and stuff. They got more and more fussy over the years. Some of the belts were not of quality until people started getting hurt. Then they started looking into it and some contractors supply what you needed. But you're pretty much on your own in that respect. [This shoe maker, do you remember who that was and where?] No. It's been too many years ago. It was over on the northeast side. It was recommended by a friend of ours and he went in there. He had harness making, shoe repair, and stuff. I'll look into it and sure enough, he had what I wanted. He had some of it pre-made already. Other people had come in there and asked for that same style of stuff. Some guys did it for themselves. Some were pretty good at it. [Do you know someone who would do it now?] No. But I know they had done it, talked about it and stuff. [This would have been early 60s or something like that?] Actually middle, early 60s. 61, 62, 63, somewhere in there. It was pretty much standard just to have a belt on. But when you have a belt on, you'd have two spuds on one side of course. Then you'd have a beater. They made a harness with a little snap for it. You can just drop a beater in. The hard part of the beater would be up and the

handle would be sticking down. It had a 12 inch crescent which is proper. Then you have a tape measure. You have a bolt bag and tool. A lot of companies what you to have two bolt bags. And then they want you to fill both of them up. You might... These are ¾ inch bolts and you're talking 35-40-45 pounds on you. Then you're expected to go up a column. You're carrying your bronze body and all that stuff, although they don't do that much any more. I could manage three floors and that was about it. [You could climb...] Vertical. Three floors. [Could you tell me your technique for doing that?] It all depends on the shape of the columns, the configuration of the column. In some cases, you would put your feet ahead of you, if it was deep. You grab on with your hands... And back and forth, up...all the way up. If it was a different configuration, a shorter one, you would grab on the back side of both flanges, and then you'd put your knees crossed and work your way on up. It would be an interesting experience. And then when you slide down, you have to watch out. When they built columns sometimes, it would go straight up and then it would step in because it's less weight. Then it would go up to another level. Okay. When you slide down, the inside of your knees would hit these little out-croppings. It would make tears come to your eyes. GIGGLE But... You... But once you get up on the level, you are there for a couple of hours so you had plenty of chance to rest and stuff. Then you'd go to the next level, hooking up the iron. A lot of times they would snap a bag on the hook and bring it up to you. Then you wouldn't have to go all the way down for bolts or anything like that. They would bring material up to you, once you got on the level that you were working, depending on how big a floor it is. How much iron is there. A lot of times you spend half a day on one level. Then you only have to climb one floor to the next level and go from there. And between time, you get to sit and wait for the next piece to come up. Smoke a cigarette or whatever. Tell them to hurry up or whatever.

01:03:30 [Did you ever have a rope...or did you use your notch to haul stuff up levels?] No usually the stuff is way too big. You can manage... [Just a bag of bolts or something.] Yeah, something like that. They'd pull some up. On a lot of the iron they'd send up... The ground guy would have a rope around one end, a tag line, so he could steer the iron to the proper end to that particular person. And then the rig would swing the iron to the other guy. He would just cut the rope loose. Or he would keep it on there in case he needed some material, like more bolts or something in the bag that you have down on the ground. Follow through that way.

01:04:20 If I can make a comment. It's funny kind of. This one guy. He was one of the best connectors I had ever seen. But he was a feisty SOB. His name was Norm Lenzer. Pat [his wife], she's met him... He was a hard drinking, carrying on kind of guy. Anyway, they were working at Oscar Mayer's, putting an addition on the hog kill. They had brought the iron up, with a tag line on one end, the steered around to where he could...hook it up. They couldn't make that thing fit worth a damn. The first thing he did was a mistake... He pulled the rope off and let it drop to the ground, which is probably 6-7 floors. Anyways, my dad was pushing the job. He was down on the ground. Norm, not thinking, "God damnit, I need a beater. Son of a bitch, it ain't gonna work." He says, "Well, you know you had a hand line up there and you dumb son of a bitch, if you would have hung on to it, you would have had a beater coming up to you." Just like that, Lenzer was down on the ground, skimming all the way down, looking for my old man. The old man disappeared. GIGGLES He wasn't going to hang around after laying into him like that because he was going to knock him on his ass. Anyways... He tells me about it

about 3-4 weeks later. “Ya know, the old man just disappeared. I don’t know where the hell he went.” And he just laughs about it. This is a constant thing. Especially with this guy. He was a character. [Well, tell me more about him.] He isn’t in the best of shape. The last thing I heard about him, I think he lives up in DeForest. He quit probably in his 50s. He went into bridge inspecting for the state. Then he got hurt so he couldn’t do that any more. He’s probably around 73-75. But he’s got the things in his nose and he has to carry around oxygen because he was a heavy smoker. He was a heavy drinker...heavy on everything. I think he was on his third wife. LAUGHTER [Good connector though.] Oh yeah. I tell ya what. I can show you a picture of a project we were on. If you can get up 9 floors and stand broadside on a 4 inch beam and yell down to the ground crew and say “Where the hell is all the iron?” Bitch about something up there. You’re standing on something that’s 4 inches wide. It takes... In references to that, it takes balls the size of grapefruits. LAUGHS Here’s one picture... Here’s another one. That iron wasn’t that big. [Wow..yeah...four inches?] Yeah, that top stuff is pretty narrow. These guys... That’s what you wanted to see right there. [Oh, okay. Ev shows a rodbuster decal which Leary photographs]. Here, do you want it? Go ahead. [Way cool.]

01:08:24 [You did re-bar for a long time. Was there kind of an art to that?] Oh yeah. There is a lot to it. There are a lot of different ties. A saddle tie, criss-cross tie. Snap tie. Vertical tie. Yeah, there’s a whole book on it. We drug these guys through an apprenticeship program when I was on the board. We would have to test these guys to make sure they know it and then you ended up giving it a rock and then spin it. Then tighten it up because you don’t want nothing loose. The larger the rods, you have to use double wire. I was pretty good at it. It is an art. You can really buzz through it. Get a lot of that stuff done in a hurry. Some people kind of drag along, and they won’t be around very long. The supervisor would have to get rid of that SOB. But I kind of liked it myself, especially on the wire. It’s too damn cold sitting up there 8-9-10 floors up. That’s enough of that business. And the work is more consistent, if you’re not afraid if you have to bend over all day long on some of them slabs, but some of it is vertical. A lot of the jobs where you’ve got to make up the columns in between the floors. You’re on the ground and what they do is set up two saw horses. You’ve got 4, 6, 8, 20 barbed columns maybe 20 feet long. You get up all these little circular parts in to separate the rods. They call them bands. You’d have some configurations would have to be this wide and stuff like this. Then the rig would come over and pick it up, stand it on end, and that would be your separation from one floor to the next. They pour all that in and they’d have... When they come to the mid-floor, they would come up and have a 90 degree turn. And that 90 degree turn would embed into the floor above. So that’s how they continue on. It all locks together.

01:10:44 [When you’re tying that rebar to your... It’s not a solo thing, you’re part of a team or people...who are setting them on saddles or something...?] Oh yeah. There are a pair of guys working here and a pair of guys working there. There might be 3-4 guys working on a wall because as you bring the material in, there would be three or four of them that would probably put it on their arms and then they climb up, and then put it on the wall and snap it with one hand. The other guy is holding it place and stuff. It depends on who’s the approacher on it. There are a lot of different... In some cases, what they’ll do is take the whole works and it would be three times the size of this room. They would make it on the ground and put all their ties in and all that. Then they’ll bring in what they call an evener bar. It’s a beam with hooks in a variety of distances

on the outside. What they'll do is have the rig'll swing over and with the evener bar, they'll pick up the top of it up over here and bring it up like this, carry it over and laid it against the wall and set it down. Tie it all in place. It works neater than hell. That way it's a lot easier for everybody because then its all at your feet. You know? They work layer after layer sometimes and do it that way. So it's a different approach. Everyone's got a little different approach on it. And it depends on how all those configurations. If it's a 90 degree turn here, there and stuff. Things... There can be a variety of different approaches.

01:12:26 [So did you ever work with some guys who were really good to work with and also that weren't too...?] You'll get that, you know? I know that job with Helga Steel. We had a nucleus of guys and we pretty much traveled together. We got along great. Whereas with Kupfer's sometimes, some of these guys... There's more politics going on there. You get politics just like in anything. Some guys would get most of the lion share of the... If there was overtime coming up, you knew who was going to get it. I might get one Saturday a year. And you got a young family and stuff you want to take care of. And some of these guys would get it a dozen or 14 times. You know? And you're hungry. But there would be animosity and some guys would say, "Oh take your job and put it where the sun don't shine." He'd move on to another contractor. You hear that all the time. Some guys like to burn their bridges. I never did but that wasn't the smart thing to do. GIGGLE Work gets slack. You start burning your bridges, you're in a world of hurt unless you're really good at what you do. But then they got an ego trip and some of these guys have an ego the size of a Mack truck. GIGGLE Let me see if I can find this. PAUSE

01:14:00 [Let me ask a couple more questions. Topping out ceremonies? Do you ever get involved in any of the customs in the trade?] Oh yeah. I was working in Milwaukee, on a new federal building down town. They finally... We put the last final piece of these tubes together, tying two buildings together. Then we were working on the hand railings. Kenny Kruska was the main guy from Findorff and he brought a group of people in from the local guys down there and they all...contractors and stuff... You all sit down in the middle in this atrium and what we did... We made a platform like what you see, what they're standing on. A pick. It's what you call a pick, what you stand on...when you're on these platforms. We made a pick set up and then we had four ropes come out of it, put clove hinges on each end and then put... I forget the name of the knot...up on the top. Then they picked it up a little bit. They had a Christmas tree on one end and a flag on the other end. That's the ceremony. And then the overhead tower crane picked it up real slow. These guys are snapping pictures and stuff. We backed off... They were saying... One of the supervisors down there said, "Tell them guys to get the hell out of there. They've done their job." LAUGHS So we had to scatter. We felt used and abused at times. [They used a rope and not chokers and steel cables.] Yeah, to be a little more...trouble, you know. What was handy. It worked. They send it up and all they did was send it up and they swung it over the 12th floor and set it up on the deck up there. It would sit there for a day and then they'd tear it all apart. And that was the end of that business.

01:16:15 I CAN tell you a story about working on that project. They had a tower crane come up in the middle of one of the stacks. They had two tower cranes on there. One level was this and one level was that. Well, they were getting closer on this one than they were on this one

because the square footage is larger over here. So the smaller square footage, they were catching up. One day, they come around, the guy wasn't watching, and they had these two ... BAM ... come together. And here it is... It's right at the top. One supervisor asked me, "Do you want to climb out there and see...? They're not sure if there's any damage up there. See if there's a bunch of fissure cracks" and stuff like that. And I'm thinking...No, you can do it. LAUGHTER I ain't going to go up there. If you want to be some here, you go for it. GIGGLES They eventually had to tear it up, nothing ever came of it. I remember... One tower crane that took care of the larger area, they're about in the 10-11th floor. They had to put another section in...or two. What they do is... This thing has a big ram in here. Inside there's a sleeve. The rubbers were shot on it. So the ram would come up and then it would just die right back because the hydraulics wouldn't hold because the gaskets were gone. So we had to climb up there and beat the ladder all the way up because there was ice all over everything. They brought the tower crane in, the hook, and we disconnected both of them. Then they took it down to the street and took it to some manufacturing place, tore it all apart and got it back together and brought it back in. GIGGLE They put it back in place. What they do is... This thing would come up like this and it would extend itself. Three sides of this tower crane would raise up. It would go out to the street and pick up another section and come in, and drop it on the existing tower. Then this thing would let down on it. That's how they done it. There's so many different ways they can do it. When they come to take it apart, they had the biggest one...in Hennes ??? rig. They brought it up around this alley next to the parking ramp. They boomed it up and the guy couldn't. You gotta boom it up and then you got a jib on the end of it. It gives it a little more reach. It's like this. You can see the jib so it doesn't carry as much. So they got the big block here and a small block there. So he's up over the deck where he can't see from the ground. He steps up on the rig and he forgot that he had tripped on the levers on the thing. The extended part, the big ball that pulls the cable down, that's the big headache, they call it because that's what'll happen if it hits you. LAUGHS And these things go 300-400-500 pounds. What happened was... This thing come up and sucked this thing right up and back, and buckled it right to the cab. LAUGHS He was beside himself. They brought it back down and they got the extra stops on each side. It's going to come down. It's happened where they come right back, snapped off, and then run right back into the cab where the guy is sitting. That can be a little hairy.

01:20:03 What happened down in 9 Springs... The guy is working the clam bucket. Do you know what I mean by a clam bucket? You can see the big bucket where the scoop the mud, bring it over and put it in the thing. They were taking a lot of that stuff out of the sewage plant over there. There's all these PCBs or whatever it is. All that pollution. It's part of that super fund. They were cleaning that all up. He's got the base of these things...both sides of your boom sticking up. There's a huge pin that comes across here. This thing has a lot of wear and tear on it. So he swings over and boom down and the clam would pick itself up. This boom would come back like this. He brought it back like this and the thing snapped across like this and the thing twisted. That happened a couple of times where we had a boom come right down and land on the iron, snap the... On that job in Hartford...they had a rig in there that was able to pick up... It's limit was 10 ton. And they had a big box truck that went over a gym. Box truck means it has four sides like a box. It had a...it goes like that. It goes the whole length of the gym and everyone ties off of that. Everybody... They had cables already on it and stuff. So once they get up there, they can cable it off so the wind doesn't take it. The boom was right up tight. If you're

going to lift a lot of weight, you got to be right up close. He got up there, set it there, and everyone kind of wiped their brow and the boss is stressed. "Oh, you got everything? Okay. Fine. Hook it up. That's great." Here it is the next day... I'm walking by the rig. I hear a whomp... The damn hydraulic line broke on the rig and the headache come down and missed me by about four feet. If that happened a day earlier, it would have taken out about four people. Its that kind of thing that is progressively happening. You can laugh about it afterwards but it's not... It gives you... The old timers would always tell you... When you're working with a rig, stand between the rig and the load because then you have a chance. If it's going over, it's going to go out. So if you're out there, you'll have a chance to get out from under it. One thing about cables and stuff like that. You can hear a whoooooooooosh...like that. That's when the cables are unwinding. And the drag line... They'll come out... You take a cable out and when you're setting stone, you set it from 2 points. They come in a truck, come in like this or this. They'll pick it up with one and then pick it up with another. How they do that... They've got the jib line come down and they'll pick it up here... And they have a line coming from the center of the rig right at the base of the cab. They'll come up and pick it up here. This line will pick it up to a point and this one will hold it to keep it from skipping off the thing. That way they can bring it up, cut it loose, and bring the piece up and set it in place.

01:23:40 But we were working on the Anchor Savings and Loan on the corner of the Square. He had a piece that he picked up off the truck. It didn't quite make it clear of the truck and it broke loose. Thump...on the ground. And we were waiting up there to set it. You don't stand under things either. You always keep an eye out for stuff like that. You got to have eyes in the back of your head sometimes. There are people who get hurt too, who don't realize when they're young... A lot of guys don't think about it until you see something happen...and then you say shoulda coulda woulda whatever. It's a little late then.

01:24:30 Yeah, that Norm Lenzer, he was a character. Fist fighting SOB. [Was he a big guy?] 6' 2" something like that. Kind of long and lean. He was in the Marine Corps and was out on some kind of expedition or something...just in training. A jeep went over his arm so he was not able to stay in the service. He got out of there. He had one arm that was a little crooked but it still had the strength there. So he got into the trades. Yeah. He was... We used to get a kick out of him. He had guts like you wouldn't believe. There are very few people who could keep up...you know, climbing the columns and getting around. But few of those guys used to work out at Turner Hall. It used to be a work out place. Gymnasts and stuff like that. They were getting pretty good at it. They kept themselves in really good shape. But then they drank just as hard as they worked, belligerent bunch of people sometimes. But they would help hold together in a group.

01:25:50 Years ago, they used to travel around in what they called a gang. It was a small group of guys and my Dad was part of a riveting gang. They'd travel from here and there and they would work... Like I mentioned before, he worked on the State Street Bridge in Chicago. It's one of those things he can remember. They built scaffolds up and platforms that they can work off and used riveting gangs. They would throw a few bolts on the thing to connect it and they'd get up there on that. You see that on a lot of railroad track bridges where they have a lot of vibration and stuff. In some jobs, they did it years ago. Then they went to what they call dartlets,

I think it was dartlets. It had the round head on it. Oh look at here. We have a visitor. A big ol' chunk of lead. Is that your dog? LAUGHTER Yeah, they... I'm trying to think of the ones we used at American Family. There was a... They had a funny head on them, the nut head. You'd put the bolt in and tighten it up, just snug it up. Then you put this electric wrench on it. Then when that rattled up, this very thing on the end... You knew you had the proper torque when it would snap this end off. I think it was called a "luck bolt." I think that's what they call it. Then you knew you had a proper torque on the damn thing. Years ago you had to adjust the tork ?? when your cranking on bolts, rattling them up. And then you'd have a guy who would follow through. Sometimes an engineer would follow through and check periodically with a tork wrench to make sure you had enough on it.

01:27:49 I had an experience in one of the first times I supervised a job. It was on the Worzine [sp?] Engineering Building over on the Medical—it's out Mineral Point Road. I think Gammon Road comes across. Not quite Gammon. Back in there. It looks like a concrete building. What it was... It was an L-shaped or a T-shaped building and all of a sudden I'm there supervising the job. The first thing, a guy came out of the trailer, the superintendent. He said, "Well, some of the anchor bolts..." They already had one floor in at ground level because there was a basement in it. We had a row of beams in there. So we had to start along the parameter. Every one of them bolt settings were off. And they are 4 ¾ inch bolts and they're off an inch this way and a half inch to ¾ inch the other way. That was the whole wing. So we have to tip over the columns and cut all the new holes in them. Then we'd tip them back up. An engineer says to me, "We got to put washers on that. You can't just put a big ¾ nut on that. This thing is going to tip over." So okay. We got a bunch of washers and got that all settled. We come to that T-part, and the superintendent says, "Oh, by the way, what I told you the measurements were? That ain't right." So we had to lay out a whole new set of holes. And then when we go to set the stuff, they were squared tubes, like that. Six by six or something like that. The night connections that came out were at the wrong level. So we had to cut them off and re-weld them at a different level. LAUGHS It was one thing after another. They had a supervisor that was just...ARGH The exterior work was all pre-cast concrete. We had to tie the rods in a box, you might say, and some of them were pretty big. 20-25 feet long and 10 feet high or whatever. We would tie all the reinforcing in there and then they poured the concrete in it. After the concrete would set up, they would pick the stone up and set them on horses to dry. Then the guy would come along and sandblast them. There would sort of be a rough edge on it. We go to set some of these things...some of them are over 10-12 ton. LAUGHS We'd swing over and set it up and it would sit on two little bitty lugs. It's surprising. But this engineer, you see this guy doing the welding, he's certified and he's been tested. The guy looked over his shoulder and said, "I don't want him weld any more." So I had to do the welding. I was the only other certified guy there. So you set up and get things tacked in place.

01:31:10 On this one big piece, we had to set... We set it up on there and I should have had another part in line. It had two parts in it. One part come down...you should have had another part in the damn thing because they set it up there... He set it up there and he couldn't hold it in place and the thing kept pulling down. The brakes wouldn't hold it because it was too heavy. So he set it up there, finally got it up in place. Set it on the lugs. It was interesting. These big pieces of concrete, when you set them on these horses, they were 6-8 ton and all of a sudden... Their

horses were kind of old. Three or four of them just went...THUMP THUMP THUMP THUMP
And you just don't slow them down. And they had to start all over again. [A nightmare job.] It
was interesting. Did you ever see any cowbirds? [Yeah, I used to see them all the time.] See the
one out there? We had some red birds coming in here.

[Is there anything you'd like to add...?] I'll think of something once you leave. That's what
always happens. [Well, we have an hour and a half...]

PART TWO OF THE INTERVIEW

[I'm back again because I've got to hear that story about the stockyards you just told me.] Okay.
While working on, I think it was Stoppenbach's, we were putting that three story addition on the
back side next to the kill floor in the stockyard pen. It come break time. An easy way of getting
down instead of flying down a column was to jump on the headache ball. I jumped on the
headache ball and he swung me out over the side. I think this was a little joke on them, is the fact
that he, he swung me right over and dropped me down in front of a big old bull. And there was no
place to go. I didn't know what to do. He's laughing so hard that he pretty near fell out of the
rig. And the rest of them are just a-cackling. And eventually, it come to the point to well, ok, it's
over with. He lifted me up and brought me down on the outside of the fence. But, oh, funny! [So
where was that now?] I think it was in Fort Atkinson and it was for an addition on the backside
of the stockyard. It was either Stoppenbach's or Jones Dairy. Jones Dairy, I think is in Jefferson.
But this was in Fort Atkinson. Stoppenbach's... I don't even know if they're still around.
[Cool...great...]