

DO2 – Don Ouellette, “Restructuring Bridgeport Brass in 1945”

Time-Line: Decade V, Local and National Events, 1945, “September: Bridgeport Brass”

Transcript: p. 13-14

DO: Yes, there was a union. I worked for about three months, got laid off because there was a slack in those days in 1945 for about four months. I sold siding. I was a salesman, just trying anything to keep alive. Then they called me back and another four months later I was laid off again. I went to work at American Chain, working on the--. Making the blades. What was I doing there? The girls would work on making the blades and something would happen and I would repair or break down. Troubleshooter. And they called me back Brass and I went back and then I went to Bullard. Worked on a milling machine there. I liked it there. But then when they called me, I felt that I had to build some time as far as the union was concerned. So then I worked another three or four months and got laid off again and went back to American Chain. Laid off again and back to Bridgeport Brass. Four times in a matter of--. Before the year was over I was laid off five times and then I finally built up enough seniority where there was a layoff there was somebody in the machine shop after me.

DO: When I retired from Bridgeport Brass after thirty-two years, I got a certain payment for so many years, and that was all. I got

four hundred and ten dollars a month pension for thirty-two years.

DO: They had sick days and insurance, but I was not the type, if I had a headache or didn't feel like working, I went to work. I was sent home once because I had been cut on the leg from a saw. Another time they sent me home because I had a fever. Twice, you could say, in thirty-two years I stayed away from work.